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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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TO: Representative Jess Stairs, Education Committee Chairman

FROM: Representative Lawrence H. Curry 

DATE: August 18, 1999

RE: Suggested Amendment to Chapter 354

Original: 2039

Harbison

cc: McGinley

Harris

Nanorta

Markham, Sandusky, Legal, Notebook

I am suggesting an amendment to Chapter 354, on which several members concur.

The amendment is simply to delete from 354.31 (a) (4) the clause "exclusive of professional education courses".

The reasons for this deletion are best stated in a communication to me regarding the issue of pedagogical courses, to wit "...pedagogical knowledge is now vastly richer than it was some few years back. The professional education courses that Chapter 354 erroneously implies are weak in content are being transformed by an infusion of new knowledge, and they are now being integrated with study in traditional disciplines. This integration is nowhere more evident than in the basic psychology courses that are universally part of undergraduate general education and required for the professional education of teachers. A look at federally funded and foundation grants for research at Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania-both Carnegie Research I institutions-will confirm this research activity and its impact on the curriculum. Courses in pedagogy are critically important for new teachers if they are to incorporate the results of research into their teaching, such as findings about memory and the structure of knowledge, analysis of problem solving and reasoning, early foundations of learning, metacognitive processes and self-regulatory capabilities. To downplay the role of professional courses in pedagogy is to risk producing teachers who continue to fail our most needy children, many of whom reside in struggling urban and rural communities."

Recognizing these developments in content for pedagogical courses, it is clear that the effort and results of potential teachers to master that material - the most recent insights on how to educate kids - should not be deleted from "the potential teacher's" grade point average. Thus the clause that accomplishes that in Chapter 354 should be deleted. To retain the clause in Chapter 354 would ignore one of the most important aspects of potential teachers' education.

I am joined by the following members of the Committee in this suggestion: Rep. Richard Grucela, Rep. Lynn Herman, Rep. Edward Krebs, Rep. Phyllis Mundy, Rep. William Robinson, Rep. Jere Schuler, Rep. Sara Steelman, and Rep. Jess Stairs.

cc. Rep. Richard Grucela
Rep. Phyllis Mundy
Rep. Sara Steelman

Rep. Lynn Herman
Rep. William Robinson

Rep. Edward Krebs
Rep. Jere Schuler