

2696

**Southeastern
Pennsylvania
School
Districts'
Education
Coalition**

Established in 2006, the Southeastern Pennsylvania School Districts' Education Coalition (SPSDEC) is a grass roots public education advocacy group comprised of more than 116 school board members and administrators from 60 districts in Allegheny, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lehigh, Montgomery and Washington Counties. Our mission is to evaluate, discuss and inform our boards, district constituents and legislators on legislative issues of common interest.

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

October 13 2009

The Honorable Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

**RE: Keystone Exams IRRC #2696: Legislative Intent
SB 281 passed by the Senate on June 10th, 2009 by a vote of 48-1
HR 456 cosponsored in the House by 161 of 203 members on September 14th, 2009**

Dear Chairman Coccodrilli,

In a July 16, 2008 letter to Jim Buckheit, the Executive Director of the State Board of Education, the IRRC recognized several actions taken by the General Assembly regarding proposed graduation requirements indicating "that the proposal is a policy decision of such a substantial nature that it requires legislative review", urging the Board "to work closely with both chambers of the legislature and the House and Senate Education Committees to ensure that the final form regulation is consistent with the intent of the General Assembly.

At that time, the IRRC noted Act 61 of 2008, which stated that "in the 2008-2009 fiscal year, a regulation to change or establish high school graduation requirements shall not be further promulgated, approved or proposed." The Commission also noted SB 1442, passed "by a vote of 48-2 that would prevent the Board from adopting any "Statewide requirements for high school graduation... without an act of the General Assembly."

Almost one year later, on June 10th, 2009 the Senate passed SB 281 by a vote of 48-1, which stated that "any Statewide requirements for high school graduation from a public school entity in this Commonwealth, beyond any Statewide requirements in effect as of the effective date of this subsection, shall be established only by an act of the General Assembly". SB 281 was referred to the House Education Committee on June 12, 2009, where, in spite of the overwhelming vote in the Senate and considerable interest in the House, the Chairman kept it bottled up in Committee until a discharge resolution was presented on August 3rd, 2009. Whereupon SB 281 was re-referred to Appropriations where that Chairman could bury it.

On September 14th, 2009 HR 456, "a Concurrent Resolution urging Governor Edward G. Rendell to cease funding of implementation of high school graduation requirements until the General Assembly establishes a policy by legislation" was introduced with 161 of the 203 members of the House clearly indicating their intent by signing as cosponsors.

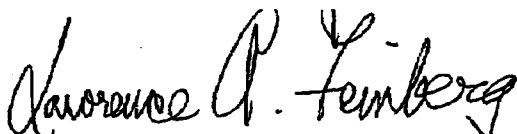
Here are those cosponsors: CLYMER, YOUNGBLOOD, ADOLPH, BAKER, BARRAR, BEAR, BELFANTI, BENNINGHOFF, BEYER, BOBACK, BOYD, BROOKS, BROWN, BURNS, CAUSER, CHRISTIANA, CIVERA, COHEN, D. COSTA, P. COSTA, COX, CREIGHTON, CRUZ, CUTLER, DALEY, DALLY, DAY, DEASY, DELOZIER, DENLINGER, DIGIROLAMO, DONATUCCI, DRUCKER, ELLIS, J. EVANS, EVERETT, FABRIZIO, FAIRCHILD, FARRY, FLECK, FREEMAN, GABIG, GABLER, GEIST, GERGELY, GIBBONS, GILLESPIE, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRELL, GROVE, HARHART, HARPER, HARRIS, HELM, HENNESSEY, HESS, HICKERNELL, HUTCHINSON, JOHNSON, KAUFFMAN, M. KELLER, W. KELLER, KILLION, KIRKLAND, KNOWLES, KORTZ, KOTIK, KRIEGER, LEVDANSKY, MAHER, MAJOR, MARKOSEK, MARSHALL, MARSICO, MATZIE, McILVAINE SMITH, MENSCH, METCALFE, METZGAR, MICOZZIE, MILLARD, MILLER, MILNE, MOUL, MURPHY, MURT, MUSTIO, MYERS, OBERLANDER, OLIVER, O'NEILL, PARKER, PAYNE, PAYTON, PEIFER, PERZEL, PETRI, PHILLIPS, PICKETT, PRESTON, PYLE, QUIGLEY, QUINN, RAPP, READSHAW, REED, REESE, REICHLEY, ROAE, ROCK, ROHRER, ROSS, SAINATO, SANTARSIERO, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SCHRODER, SHAPIRO, SIPTROTH, M. SMITH, S. H. SMITH, SOLOBAY, SONNEY, STERN, STEVENSON, SWANGER, TALLMAN, J. TAYLOR, R. TAYLOR, THOMAS, TRUE, TURZAI, VEREB, VITALI, VULAKOVICH, WANSACZ, WATERS, WATSON, WILLIAMS, PETRARCA, McGEEHAN, HARKINS, CALTAGIRONE, SABATINA, M. O'BRIEN, WALKO, PALLONE, BRENNAN, K. SMITH, KESSLER, SAMUELSON, HARHAI, BUXTON, DeLUCA, DERMODY, WHITE, CASORIO and BRIGGS

It should be noted that the cosponsors of HR 456 included 19 of the 26 members of the House Education Committee, a clear majority. Again, the Chairman of the House Education Committee refused to act on the resolution, in spite of overwhelming bipartisan support for the resolution both in the full House and in his committee.

On October 1st at 12:31 p.m. according to the Legislative Services Floor Amendments time stamp, a Rule 45 memo was filed in the House, stating that "Pursuant to Rule 45, the Majority Chairman of the House Education Committee has refused to call a regular meeting of the Committee to consider House Resolution 456. This shall serve as written notice to the Speaker of the House that the undersigned (this time 20 members of the committee are listed) represent a majority of the members on the House Education Committee and call a meeting of the House Education Committee to consider House Resolution 456." A copy of the memo is attached.

It is my understanding that the Governor then called each of the Democrats who had signed the Rule 45 memo and convinced them to remove their support.

Through a vote of 48-1 on SB 281 in the Senate and cosponsorship of HR 456 by 161 members of the House, the members of the General Assembly have clearly and unambiguously indicated their intent with regard to the Keystone Exam proposal; it has simply been disregarded by the administration.



Lawrence A. Feinberg, SPSDEC Co-Chairman

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

EDUCATION, REPUBLICAN CHAIRMAN
CAPITOL PRESERVATION, CHAIRMAN
GAMING OVERSIGHT

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
FLOOR AMENDMENTS
2009 OCT -1 PM 12:31

October 1, 2009

Speaker McCall,

Pursuant to Rule 45, the Majority Chairman of the House Education Committee has refused to call a regular meeting of the Committee to consider House Resolution 456.

This shall serve as written notice to the Speaker of the House that the undersigned represent a majority of the members on the House Education Committee and call a meeting of the House Education Committee to consider House Resolution 456.

This meeting will be held on Saturday, October 3, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. in 205 Ryan Office Building.

If the House Voting Session Day scheduled for Saturday, October 3, 2009 is cancelled, the meeting will be held on Monday, October 5, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. in 205 Ryan Office Building.

Sincerely,


Representative Paul Clymer


Representative Mike Fleck


Representative Daryl Metcalfe


Representative Duane Milne


Representative Thomas Murt


Representative Rosita Youngblood


Representative Scott Conklin


Representative Patrick Harkins


Representative Barbara Mellvaine-Smith


Representative Michael O'Brien

Representative Bernie O'Neill

Representative Thomas Quigley

Representative Kathy Rapp

Representative Michael Reese

Representative Todd Rock

Representative Will Tallman

Representative John Pallone

Representative Ken Smith

Representative Chelsa Wagner

Representative John Yudichak

CC: Anthony Barbush, Chief Clerk
Marc Levy, Secretary Treasurer of the Pennsylvania Legislative Correspondents
Association