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Buckheit, James

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From: Bill Bartle [wbartle@verizon.net]**Sent:** Thursday, May 29, 2008 10:35 AM**To:** j buckheit@state.pa.usINDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION**Subject:** Support for proposed rulemaking

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

I am writing to express my strong support for the State Board's proposed rulemaking to change the high school graduation requirements in Pennsylvania to ensure that all graduates have the basic knowledge and skills required to transition to postsecondary education, 21st century careers, and productive citizenship.

Although the regulations do not change the state's basic requirement that every student achieve proficiency of the state's academic standards, it does provide additional assessment tools that students can use to demonstrate proficiency. One of these tools is Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs) that could replace final exams in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies.

It's clear from the fact that nearly half of the Commonwealth's graduates do not score proficient on the 11th grade PSSA or the 12th grade retake that we have a problem that needs to be addressed. These students graduate based on 501 different and unreliable local assessments that, based on the fact that over half of community college freshmen require remediation before they can take college-level coursework, do not adequately assess student achievement.

It is unfair to give students a diploma when they have not achieved the state academic standards. It sets them up to fail. It's also reprehensible that there are different standards for different students in this state -- based on what school district you attend and where you live.

Pennsylvania must do a better job preparing students for the rigors of the world they will face when they leave high school. To do so, it's critically important that we ensure every single student has achieved the state academic standards when they graduate. I believe that the Board's proposed regulations will clearly move us in the right direction.

Sincerely,
William J. Bartle
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