

4TH DISTRICT

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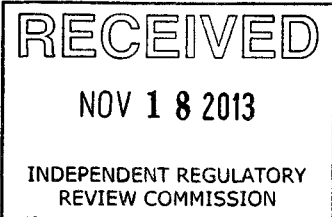
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2976

November 15, 2013

Chairman Sylvan Lutkewitte
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

Dear Chairman Lutkewitte and members of the IRRC:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present my written comments regarding Regulation #6-326: Academic Standards and Assessment to the Commission.

As you are aware, Regulation #6 – 326, would amend current regulations to conform with the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards. I have heard from numerous individuals and organizations through the fourth senate district regarding these standards. The concerns that have troubled me the most are the inability for a standardized test to truly determine a student's ability and the cost of implementation.

Research has shown that children learn differently. Classroom grades are made up of more than just standardized testing. We do not want to send the message to our children that it is possible for them to excel at all their high school classes, yet fail to receive a diploma because of one test that may not be a true indicator of academic success.

To effectively educate our children, we must nurture them and teach them in a way where they can excel. We must ensure that all our students are afforded the same quality education and ability to excel, not the ability to take a costly and potentially imprecise standardized test. Further, I fear that if we place so much emphasis Common Core Standards, our most promising students could view dropping out as a more viable option than being denied graduation because they did not perform well on the exams.

The current proposal could cost at least \$300 million for school districts throughout the commonwealth. In a time in which education funding has been drastically cut and school districts are cutting staff and class offerings just to be able to keep the doors to the building open, we should not be burdening our districts with additional unfunded mandates. Implementing a

program that could reallocate vital dollars away from the classroom in order to implement a test is irresponsible at best.

I believe that the current proposal must be explored in more depth by both the IRRC and the General Assembly. To adopt these regulations without properly exploring their potential impact on our students and school districts is irresponsible.

I thank you for the time to share my concerns and voice my opposition to this regulation in its current form. Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



LeAnna M. Washington
4th Senate District
Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties