

Dear Advocates for Catholic Education in Pennsylvania:

Good morning.

HB 26 has been introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The legislation proposes granting oversight of employee relations in Catholic schools to the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board. In effect, the bill would force Catholic schools to accept teachers unions, even those who may endorse ideas that go against Church teaching like abortion or gay marriage, and bargain with their representatives. The state government, through the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board, would oversee and rule in any labor disputes. This bill will jeopardize the constitutionally protected religious liberty of the Catholic Church and compromise its teaching mission in Catholic schools. Furthermore, it provides no protections against teacher strikes in private schools, unlike the obstacles to public school teacher strikes that are included in other laws.

The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) opposes HB 26. The Catholic Church has long been supportive of workers; but the government has no place in interposing itself as arbiter within religious ministries.

HB 26 is currently being considered by the House Labor Relations Committee, which includes the following members:

Robert E. Belfanti, Jr. (D-Northumberland) – Chairman
Marc J. Gergely (D-Allegheny) – Vice-Chair
John T. Galloway (D-Bucks) – Secretary
Brendan F. Boyle (D-Philadelphia)
James E. Casorio, Jr. (D-Westmoreland)
Jaret Gibbons (D-Lawrence)
Neal P. Goodman (D-Schuylkill)
Patrick J. Harkins (D-Erie)
William F. Keller (D-Philadelphia)
Kevin P. Murphy (D-Lackawanna)
Cherelle L. Parker (D-Philadelphia)
John P. Sabatina, Jr. (D-Philadelphia)
Tim Seip (D-Schuylkill)
Ken Smith (D-Lackawanna)
Jesse White (D-Washington)

Gene DiGirolamo (R-Bucks) – Minority Chair
John C. Bear (R-Lancaster) – Minority Vice Chair
Sheryl M. Delozier (R-Cumberland) – Minority Secretary
Scott W. Boyd (R-Lancaster)
Jim Cox (R-Berks)
Frank A. Farry (R-Bucks)
Glen R. Grell (R-Cumberland)
Daryl D. Metcalfe (R-Butler)
T. Mark Mustio (R-Allegheny)
Bernie O'Neill (R-Bucks)
Will Tallman (R-York)

If you live in the district of one of these committee members, we especially encourage you to contact them with a personal visit, phone call, letter, fax or e-mail. If your state representative is not on this committee, we will still need his or her support. Please do not hesitate to contact him or her as well.

To get the contact information for your state representative, type in your location using this link: <http://www.votervoice.net/groups/pacc/?screen=userlogin>. It will provide the mailing address, phone number, fax, etc. for your state rep.

Or, feel free to use our system to easily send an e-mail with this link: <http://www.votervoice.net/Groups/PACC/Advocacy/?IssueID=17743&SiteID=-1>

We are very concerned about the impact this legislation could have on Catholic education in Pennsylvania. Your support is appreciated. We will keep you posted on this and other Catholic education issues as they develop.

Sincerely,

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