
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 9

Session of
2003

INTRODUCED BY DeLUCA, BEBKO-JONES, CRUZ, GOODMAN, HARHAI,
HORSEY, JAMES, KIRKLAND, MELIO, MYERS, PRESTON, THOMAS,
WANSACZ, WASHINGTON, WATERS, J. WILLIAMS AND YOUNGBLOOD,
MARCH 12, 2003

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 12, 2003

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," providing for weight standards for
6 textbooks.

7 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

8 (1) Backpacks of elementary and secondary school pupils
9 often contain textbooks, binders, calculators, personal
10 computers, lunches, a change of clothing, sports equipment
11 and more.

12 (2) Elementary and secondary school pupils are carrying
13 backpacks weighing as much as 40 pounds.

14 (3) Chiropractors, physical therapists and pediatricians
15 are seeing an increased number of children for spinal column
16 injuries, nontraumatic back pain and significant postural
17 changes from overloaded backpacks.

18 (4) Chiropractors and pediatricians recommend that
19 backpacks not exceed more than 15% of a pupil's body weight.

1 (5) In 1999 more than 3,400 pupils between 5 and 14
2 years of age inclusive sought treatment in hospital emergency
3 rooms for injuries related to backpacks or book bags
4 according to the United States Consumer Product Safety
5 Commission.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
9 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
10 section to read:

11 Section 801.1. Maximum Weight Standards for Textbooks.--On
12 or before July 1, 2005, the State Board of Education shall adopt
13 maximum weight standards for textbooks used by pupils in
14 elementary and secondary schools. The weight standards shall
15 take into consideration the health risks, including, but not
16 limited to, injury to the spine, to pupils who transport
17 textbooks to and from school each day.

18 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.