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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 5, 2011

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Rep. Michael P. McGeehan

SUBJECT: **Co-Sponsorship: Legislation amending the PA Whistleblower Law**

To help facilitate the media's ability to obtain information on wasteful government spending, I plan to introduce legislation which will amend the Pennsylvania Whistleblower Law (P.L. 1559, No. 169) to expand the definition of "Appropriate Authority" to include the "media". Under current law, employers are prohibited from discharging, threatening, or otherwise discriminating or retaliating against an employee who reports an instance of fraud, criminal activity or wasteful spending to the employer or an appropriate authority.

As you may know, several Philadelphia School District employees were recently suspended for bringing to light contractual controversies involving millions of taxpayer dollars to the media. The issue involves a \$7.5 million dollar contract to install security cameras at 19 Philadelphia School District public schools deemed "persistently dangerous". Because the "media" is not included in the definition of appropriate authority, protection under the Commonwealth's Whistleblower Law does not apply.

In addition, the legislation will increase the civil penalty imposed on employers found to be in violation of the law from the current fine of *up to \$500* to a fine of *up to \$10,000*. The existing penalty is archaic and does little to discourage intimidation of potential whistleblowers.

If you would like to co-sponsor this measure, please respond to this email or contact Eric Nelson at 772-4029 or via e-mail at enelson@pahouse.net. Thank you.