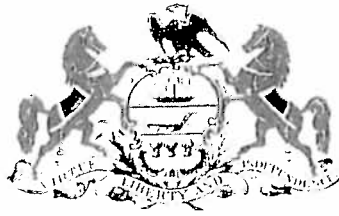


GORDON DENLINGER, MEMBER
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 10, 2011

FROM: Rep. Gordon R. Denlinger 

TO: All House Members

SUBJECT: Reintroduction of Legislation
(Prior HB 2009 – Amish Firefighter Facial Hair Restrictions)

In the near future, I will be re-introducing legislation which amends Act 61 of 1995 (State Fire Commissioner Act) by requiring that State Firefighter certification requirements must be tolerant of a person's religious freedoms. Currently in my district, volunteer firefighters of the Amish faith who have facial hair (beards) are not allowed to undertake firefighter training/testing for state certification by the State Fire Commissioner. In many Lancaster County volunteer companies, Amish males constitute over 75% of the total force.

With the advent of modern breathing apparatus, I believe that facial hair should not be considered a dangerous factor, given the fact that the other alternative would be to have Amish volunteer firefighters who cannot be properly trained/certified because of this existing facial hair requirement, thereby creating a more direct safety hazard. Facial hair is a religious requirement of married Amish males; therefore, I feel that this religious practice should not be a barrier which restricts proper training and certification for these dedicated volunteer public servants.

If you would like to be a co-sponsor of this legislation, please contact Jessica Murphy at Jlmurphy@pahousegop.com.

Prior Co-Sponsors: DENLINGER , BEAR , BELFANTI , BEYER , BOYD , BROWN , CALTAGIRONE , CAUSER , CLYMER , CREIGHTON , CUTLER , FLECK , GEIST , GINGRICH , HARRIS , HENNESSEY , HESS , HICKERNELL , JOSEPHS , KOTIK , MAJOR , METZGAR , MILLER , MURT , M. O'BRIEN , PARKER , PHILLIPS , RAPP , REICHLEY , ROHRER , STERN , STEVENSON , STURLA , SWANGER , TRUE , YOUNGBLOOD and FARRY