



Senate of Pennsylvania

Senator Anthony H. Williams

Democratic Whip

8th Senatorial District

366 Main Capitol Building

Harrisburg, PA 17120

(717) 787-5970; FAX: (717) 772-0574

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 3, 2011

TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Anthony H. Williams

SUBJECT: Co-Sponsorship Request – **Passing the Trash**

In the near future, I intend to introduce legislation that will amend the Professional Educator Discipline Act to address the failure by school administrators to discipline sexual abuse by educators. Perpetrators often relocate and victimize new children because of this loophole. This tragedy is known colloquially as “passing the trash”.

Students who have been sexual abused by educators are more prevalent than most people realize. According to the Associated Press, more than 2,500 educators in the United States were punished for sexual misconduct from 2001 to 2005. In at least 1,800 of these cases, the victim was a child. This epidemic is further magnified by the loophole that allows teachers to quietly resign from that school district and relocate without the new school district be alerting of the abuse.

This legislation will provide a three-pronged solution to rectify this injustice and close the loophole:

- Require school administrators to disclose allegations of sexual abuse for each educator given a reference.

- Prohibit confidentiality agreements between the school and the alleged abuser
- Prohibiting teachers from forfeiting their teaching certification in lieu of facing discipline

My bill will also make it easier for victims of abuse or suspecting co-workers to report the problem. For example, the mandated reporting period for allegations of abuse to the Department of Education will be reduced from 60 days to 20 days. In addition, registered sex offenders will not be allowed on school grounds without written notification and permission from the superintendent. Pennsylvania is one of the few states without a law to this effect.

If you wish to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Donald Gordon, Esq., at 787-5970 or email dgordon@pasenate.com.