

**M E M O****TO: All Senators****DATE: February 22, 2011****FROM: Senator Lisa M. Boseola**

Handwritten signature of Senator Lisa M. Boseola in black ink.

SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship of Legislation

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation to remove back-end referendum exceptions contained in Act 1 of 2006. This legislation will require more school districts that seek to raise local property taxes above the rate of inflation to place the question on the ballot before the voters.

State-wide data shows that the PA Department of Education has granted 1,315 referendum exceptions since 2007, the year Act 1 went into effect. During this time, local school property taxes have increased without voter referendum by more than \$656 million. The Act 1 exception process, with its prevalent loopholes, does not hold school districts accountable enough, nor does it stop burdensome property tax increases from being imposed upon our citizens. Rather, annual tax increases continue year-after-year without the approval of the electorate via referendum.

Hundreds of school districts have skillfully evaded and avoided a referendum votes by the electorate and instead implemented significant tax hikes on hard working families during one of the worst economic climates we have faced in decades. Also, it is critical to note that PDE has not rejected one request for a school district exception in the past year.

Granting over a thousand referendum exceptions in a short number of years is clearly not a trend the homeowners of our Commonwealth can afford. Therefore, my bill will hold our school boards more accountable with taxpayer money, and it will also allow the electorate to be heard via enhanced referendums as it pertains to Act 1 by removing and changing the following exceptions from Act 1:

- School districts' share of pension costs;
- Maintenance of revenue sources and;
- Increasing the growth district component from 7.5% growth over three years to 10% over three years.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Julie Carraghan at my office at 7-4236 or via e-mail at jcarraghan@pasenate.com.