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**House of Representatives**  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg

**MEMORANDUM**

**Committees**

Appropriations  
Judiciary  
Subcommittee on Courts, Chairman  
Insurance  
State Government

**Appointments**

Public School Employees'  
Retirement System,  
Board of Trustees  
South Central Pennsylvania Caucus, Chairman

**TO:** All House Members  
**FROM:** Representative Glen R. Grell  
**DATE:** April 7, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** Cosponsor Legislation – Prior HB 2496

In the near future, I plan to reintroduce House Bill 2496 to permit judges to admit the testimony of licensed psychologists in determining insanity.

Currently, state law specifies that only psychiatrists can testify at the initial determination of insanity. The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards estimates that approximately 100 psychologists are proficient in forensic psychology and could offer expert opinions; in fact, some courts already allow them to testify. With this amendment, the law would clarify that courts have the discretion of accepting testimony from a wide range of qualified professionals. The proposed language of the amendment has been agreed upon by the professional associations representing both the psychologists and the psychiatrists.

My legislation does not alter the standards for an insanity defense in Pennsylvania. In fact, current state statute provides that defendants may summon other experts, such as a psychologist to testify on their behalf. Recognizing psychologists as evaluators of the insanity defense is consistent with the scope of the practice and the recognition of psychologists in a variety of other forensic areas.

Insanity determinations are rare and constitute less than 1 percent of all homicides. This legislation benefits our courts and judicial process by providing a wider range of qualified persons as expert witnesses.

If you wish to join me in cosponsoring this bill, please contact my office at 783-2063 or via email at [lkoch@pahousegop.com](mailto:lkoch@pahousegop.com). I would appreciate your support and cosponsorship.

GRG/lak