

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Tim Briggs

SUBJECT: Introduction of Legislation – Radon Testing in Schools

In the near future, I intend to introduce legislation to address what is a potential health hazard to our children in their own schools: the presence of radon contamination.

Radon gas is a radioactive, colorless, tasteless and odorless gas which occurs naturally. Next to smoking, radon gas inhalation is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the U.S. each year. If the gas is inhaled, the radon atoms decay in the airways or the lungs. This causes lead atoms to attach onto the nearest tissue which ultimately results in the development and spread of cancerous cells in that tissue.

The accumulation of this gas from natural sources can occur in large buildings and schools, especially in confined areas such as attics, and basements. Some schools have been tested and found to contain radon levels as much as 8 times greater than that deemed dangerous by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Currently, the Commonwealth does not require school buildings to be tested for radon contamination.

My legislation would have Pennsylvania school districts complete a radon test of each school within that district every five years. Furthermore, any newly constructed school buildings must be tested within nineteen months of the date of occupancy, and any remodeled school buildings must be retested within nineteen months of completion of the remodeling. It would also require parents to be notified in writing when their child's school is tested for radon gas and what levels of radon contamination were found, if any.

If you would like to join me in co-sponsoring this legislation to protect the children of our Commonwealth from this silent killer, please contact Anne Foreman at aforeman@pahouse.net or 717-705-7011.