

ED NEILSON, MEMBER
169TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

27A EAST WING
P.O. BOX 202169
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2169
PHONE: (717) 787-4331
FAX: (717) 772-9962

ACADEMY PLAZA
3256 RED LION ROAD
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19114



COMMITTEES

CHILDREN & YOUTH
POLICY
VETERANS AFFAIRS & EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS

House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Ed Neilson

DATE: June 21, 2012

SUBJECT: Co-Sponsorship Request – Amending Title 18 to Provide Protection to Individuals with a Physical or Mental Disability

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation that will amend Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to provide protection to individuals with a physical or mental disability from ethnic intimidation.

Hate crimes are inexcusable illegal acts of violence, and any individual that voluntarily engages in such activities must be penalized. The United States Department of Justice found that individuals with a disability are twice as likely to be victims of an act of violence as compared to the general population. Across the United States, the Pacific Standard Organization found 47,000 rapes, 79,000 robberies, 114,000 aggravated assaults, and 476,000 simple assaults were against individuals with a disability, in 2009. While the Commonwealth provides adequate consequences to those individuals that target acts of violence towards others based on specific characteristics, it is essential that we expand protection to include those individuals with a physical or mental disability.

As provided in 18 Pa.C.S. §2710 (Ethnic Intimidation), individuals commit illegal acts of ethnic intimidation if the act is committed with “malicious intention toward the race, color, religion, or national origin of an individual or group of individuals.” My legislation would further expand the offense of ethnic intimidation to include malicious intention against individuals with a physical or mental disability. As currently established in the statute, individuals that are convicted of ethnic intimidation will continue to be sentenced to a grading classification one degree higher than the classification established for the initial illegal act.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation to protect individuals with disabilities, please contact Carla Walker at 717-772-2297 or cwalker@pahouse.net.