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To: Members of the House of Representatives

Attn: Representative Stephen Kinsey

Date: March 23, 2015

RE: Introduction of Legislation- **Amending title 18 of PA consolidating statutes, in forgery/fraudulent practice, providing for academic fraud.**

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In the near future, I intend to introduce legislation that would amend the Crimes Code (18 Pa.C.S.) to add and define academic fraud as an offense.

Briefly, under this legislative proposal, a person would commit academic fraud if he, with the intent to defraud or with knowledge that he is facilitating a fraud to be perpetrated by another person, assists a student or offers or attempts to assist a student in obtaining or attempting to obtain, by fraudulent means, any academic credit, grade or test score or any transcript, diploma, certificate or other instrument purporting to confer a degree from an institution of higher education located in the Commonwealth. A person would also commit academic fraud if he would give or change an academic credit, grade or test score in exchange for a good or service, thing of value or money. Under these circumstances, academic fraud would be graded a third degree felony.

Academic fraud involving student athletes could be graded a felony of the second degree if the perpetrator (1) accepted a good or service, thing of value or money for teaching a no-show class; (2) steered a student athlete to a no-show class in order to help the student achieve or maintain eligibility for competition; (3) made or attempted to make unauthorized changes in a grade or course credit by forgery; or (4) engaged in a systematic, ongoing course of conduct with the intent to defraud a person in order to ensure the academic eligibility of a student athlete.

As many of you know, incidents of academic fraud have increased dramatically over the last several years. For instance, in 2014, The University of North Carolina announced academic fraud, which had occurred over an eighteen year period, which may have involved up to 3,100 student athletes enrolled in no-show classes, and which had no faculty involvement and did not require class attendance. An investigation of academic fraud at the University Of Notre Dame

resulted in the suspension of four football players. In 2014, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) reported that it processed a record twenty-two major violations and handled roughly five thousand secondary violations of academic fraud. Some commentators suggest that the unprecedented increase in academic fraud or academic dishonesty is the result of, in part, enhanced academic standards required by the NCAA's member schools, new eligibility requirements for incoming student athletes, stricter academic requirements for postseason eligibility, and online learning.

I thank you in advance for joining me as a sponsor of this legislative proposal.