

TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY NICHOLAS A. BARNA
Tyler Hill, Pennsylvania

My name is Nicholas A. Barna and it is a privilege to submit written testimony before the Labor Relations Committee regarding House Bill 2626. I live in Northeastern Pennsylvania in a place called Tyler Hill. I am married with 4 children, all of which were educated in an evangelical Christian school called Damascus Christian Academy, and at Baptist Bible College and Cedarville University. After completing his undergraduate work, my son graduated from Syracuse Law School and is currently working with a firm in Buffalo, New York. While attending Baptist Bible College, my son played basketball with Frank Shimkus, who is the son of The Honorable Frank Andrews Shimkus. I graduated from Wilkes University in 1968 and while attending Wilkes University, I heard The Honorable Eddie Day Pashinski and his band many times.

I have had the opportunity to review the transcript of the first hearing. I have also had the opportunity to review the letter of June 18, 2008, from Ted Clater to The Honorable Eddie Day Pashinski, as well as the testimony on behalf of the Keystone Christian Education Association before this committee on August 18, including the written testimonies of Ted Clater, Jeffrey A. Hollier, Ph.D., Pastor Jonathan Lucas, and a fellow colleague, Attorney Gregory R. Reed. Without repeating what they said, let me certify to you in the strongest terms that I can, that I am in full agreement with the position of Clater, Hollier, Lucas, and Reed with regard to this bill. In addition, I speak at various evangelical Christian churches and evangelical Christian schools in the Scranton region, and I voluntarily represent them in legal matters. Therefore, not only do I believe whole heartedly in the premises set forth by Clater, Hollier, Lucas and Reed, but it is my observation that the entire Christian community of both churches and churches with Christian schools agree with the position set forth by Hollier, Lucas, Reed, and especially Ted Clater.

I urge you to reread the aforementioned documents, and please consider the consequences and ramifications of the implementation of this bill, should it be enacted. Clearly, this bill would authorize government to not only infringe upon but also to actually usurp the authority of pastors, priests, clergy, deacons, and elders as they exercise their role in leading this part of their church ministry in a manner consistent with the goals and priorities of their faith community. Traditionally, historically, and constitutionally, the government has refrained from interfering with Church ministries. This bill would infringe upon the right of Church ministries to conduct

these Church ministries in accordance with Biblical doctrine.

Please note that I am not anti-government. I served as an Assistant District Attorney for Wayne County for 4 years, and as District Attorney for 8 years. I know that government has a purpose. I enjoyed teaching and preaching on Romans 13, which defines government as a God-ordained institution, established to punish evil and promote good. I pray faithfully for our government leaders. However, just as the government is a God-ordained institution, the family is a God-ordained institution, and so is the Church a God-ordained institution. The government should not infringe upon the other two God-ordained institutions.

I have no formal Biblical training. However, I have been blessed with the opportunity to teach Bible to seventh, eighth and ninth graders in a Christian school for over 20 years at the beginning of each day, before I began work at my private law office. In addition, I coached the basketball team and was the yearbook advisor. While teaching at the Christian school, I observed that the teachers worked for little or no pay, but considered teaching in an evangelical Christian school a ministry and an honor to serve the Lord in the capacity of a Christian school teacher. I chose to educate my children in the Christian school, not because I have anything against the state run public school, or because I felt that the Christian school had any higher academics, but because I wanted my children taught Biblical doctrine in every class, and Biblical truths taught in a special Bible class. The Christian school held both teachers and students to a high standard of conduct, and any violations of that standard could result in immediate dismissal. The government's interference in any type of situation would compromise the authority structure of the Church and its ministries. By teaching or having my children educated in a Church run school, I am obligated to submit to those authorities, rules and regulations of that school. If I do not like them, I simply can leave. However, no government agency should be able to tell the Church how to run its ministries.

Again, I respectfully request that you review the testimony and letters of the aforementioned people in every detail, and I urge you to vote NO with regard to House Bill 2626.

Thank you for your kind attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely Yours,
NICHOLAS A. BARNA, ESQ.