



WEST
CHESTER
AREA
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

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**Written Testimony to the House Commerce Committee
Public Hearing on House Bill 795
June 9, 2009**

The West Chester Area School District supports House Bill 795 which would allow for the publication of legal notices on the Internet in lieu of newspapers of general circulation. Our District spends approximately \$18,000 per year in advertising expenses and the passing of House Bill 795 would help alleviate those costs and allow us to use those funds in other educational areas.

We currently incur advertising expenses whenever a bid needs to be held under Section 807.1(a) and Section 751(a) of the Pennsylvania School Code. A legal notice for each bid is placed in two local newspaper publications for three consecutive weeks and these costs can add up quickly. Also, all school board meetings and special meetings are posted in these publications before they are held.

House Bill 795 would grant us the authority to post notices for these items on our District website at no additional cost to us. Our webmaster can easily post notices on the home page of our website for the public to view and these notices will be available 24 hours a day. A newspaper ad is only visible to those who purchase a newspaper on the day the notice is publicized and to those in our local area who have availability to that paper.

Newspapers have also yielded inconsistent results in responses to bids we have published. Most of the bids we conduct are not responded to by people who see our legal notice in a local newspaper. Many bidders respond to the District either from past business or through trade journals that monitor the newspapers for the vendors and then notify them of our bid notice. Trade journals would easily be able to monitor our website for bid notices without the District having to pay a newspaper to publish a notice.

We have recently submitted two mandate waivers to our school board for approval which would allow us to waive the advertising requirements of 807.1(a) and 751(a). Upon approval, those waivers will be submitted to the Department of Education, and hopefully be approved as was the waiver recently submitted by the Upper Moreland School District. House Bill 795 will prevent other school districts from having to submit a mandate waiver in order to realize a cost savings in advertising expenses.

In conclusion, the West Chester Area School District believes that House Bill 795 would be a great benefit to school district operations and save our District money. It is our belief that many more people will see the public notices on our District website than do in a local newspaper. Thank you for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Brian R. Pawling
Purchasing Supervisor