COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING
ON COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

STATE CAPITOL
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HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

JUNE 4, 2019
10:02 A.M.

BEFORE:

HONORABLE CURT SONNEY, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE JAMES ROEBUCK, MINORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE ROSEMARY BROWN
HONORABLE VALERIE GAYDOS
HONORABLE MARK M. GILLEN
HONORABLE BARBARA GLEIM
HONORABLE DAVID HICKERNELL
HONORABLE MIKE JONES
HONORABLE JOSHUA KAIL
HONORABLE MICHAEL PUSKARIC
HONORABLE MEGHAN SCHROEDER
HONORABLE CRAIG STAATS
HONORABLE JESSE TOPPER
HONORABLE CAROL HILL-EVANS
HONORABLE MARY ISAACSON
HONORABLE PATTY KIM
HONORABLE STEPHEN MCCARTER
HONORABLE DAN MILLER
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MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Good morning, and welcome to the House Education Committee's Public Hearing on compulsory school age in Pennsylvania.

I'd like to remind everyone that this is being recorded and to please silence your cell phones. I think we'll start with asking the members to introduce themselves. We'll start over on the right.

(Committee member introductions.)

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you. The current compulsory school age laws provide that students must attend school beginning at age 8 and a 17-year-old student can drop out without the permission of their parent or guardian.

There's a proposal to lower the compulsory school age from 8 years to 6 years old and limit the ability of a 17-year-old to drop out of school without the permission of their parent or guardian. We're here this morning to hear testimony on this proposal.

Chairman Roebuck, do you have any
MINORITY CHAIRMAN ROEBUCK: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I'm James Roebuck, Democratic Chair representing the 108th Legislative District in Philadelphia. I want to thank Chairman Sonney for holding this very important hearing regarding the compulsory school age required for all students across the Commonwealth.

After looking over the agenda, I believe that much of the testimony reflected this morning will reflect the goals and values that are shared by many members of this Committee to bring Pennsylvania's compulsory school attendance age in line with other states, increase school-going rates for all students ages 6 and above across the Commonwealth.

I'd like to point out that over the years, there have been calls for legislative action to lower Pennsylvania's compulsory school age from the current requirement of 8 years down to 6.

In fact, beginning in 2001 with House Bill 2030, each session thereafter until 2008, I sponsored legislation to lower the compulsory
school age from 8 to 6.

In 2008, after many years of pushing the issue, I was able to get into law, Act 61 of 2008, which allowed the school age in the Philadelphia School District to be lowered from 8 to 6.

December 2008, the School Reform Commission amended the School District's age attendance policy to lower the age to 6, which has resulted in the enrollment of approximately an additional 700 students in the district at that time.

I would like to note that Elinor Z. Taylor was Chair of the Committee, introduced a companion bill to mine in 2003, House Bill 1221 to raise the compulsory school age from 17 to 18 to help reduce the number of students who drop out of school at 17 before graduating.

So it took over a decade. I'm pleased to see this issue is being considered by this Committee. I would also note that legislative issues are important, education components of the Governor's Statewide Workforce Education and Accountability Program.

Also, last month, the State Board of
Education introduced and passed two resolutions supporting legislative efforts to lower the state's compulsory school attendance and raising the dropout age.

I'd like to thank Representative Dan Milne for introducing House Bill 593 and recognizing the importance of addressing this issue.

I certainly look forward to the discussions we'll have today, and I hope that we'll move forward in enacting legislation that will both lower the school age and also increase the age at which a student can drop out of school.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.

And we've been joined by Representative Brown.

REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Good morning.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Good morning.

So we're ready to begin.

Secretary Rivera, thanks for being here this morning.

SECRETARY RIVERA: Thank you.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: We know this is one of the Governor's proposals, and so we're
anxious to hear your testimony. Thank you.

SECRETARY RIVERA: Thank you, Chairman Sonney, Chairman Roebuck. Thank you for the invitation; but most importantly, in convening this opportunity and the Committee to discuss, a great opportunity we have before us at this time of the year.

I also want to take a moment and commend you in assembling a room, as I walked in and was able to connect with some former colleagues and new friends. You have an extremely knowledgeable and robust set of professionals and advocates in the room, so I'm sure you're going to absolutely be more than informed as you work through the day. So I look forward to continuing to engage on this issue.

You have my written testimony in front of you, so I'm not going to read through my full written testimony. What I will do is take a few minutes and just hit some key talking points that we've engaged in over the course of the past year. But even longer, having been in the field of education for, you know, practically half of my life now.

And you, first, I wanted to discuss the
lowering of the compulsory age from 8 to 6 and also understanding that we are going to continue to look and to engage in the efficacy of even starting earlier and the need for kindergarten preparedness for us here in Pennsylvania.

And I think first and foremost, it's important to just highlight the fact that the Commonwealth's current compulsory age of school entry was established in the 19th Century, 1895 to be exact, and does not reflect the needs of children or families in the 21st Century.

Pennsylvania's just one of two states in the nation that allows children to wait until age 8 to enroll in school. Washington State is the only other. And over the course of the past few years, we know how much we like to highlight our successes, so we don't want to be one of the only two states that allows students to start as old as 8 years old.

So we also know that we're lagging behind our peers in this geographic area. New York, New Jersey, Ohio, West Virginia, all require that children begin school by the age of 6 years old, while Delaware, Maryland, Connecticut, Washington, DC, and Virginia have
set their compulsory school age at age 5. So it's estimated that this change will increase enrollment by approximately 3,300 children between the ages of 6 and 7 statewide. This means that 3300 more students will have regular access to school libraries, computers, and stable and nourishing meals. It means greater support for more Pennsylvania families.

And we know that the change helps more children get off to a good start in school and will prevent students from falling behind their peers who enter school at an earlier age.

We also know in terms of quality of life, working parents will have the comfort of knowing their child will have access to education at a critical time and their child's developmental years.

And we also have to revert back to research, which overwhelmingly shows that an earlier start in formal schooling can help improve language and literacy skills, increase student achievement, enhance social and emotional skill development and decrease the need for remediation in later years.
We know that lowering the compulsory attendance age for our youngest learners is not just an acknowledgement of research that clearly demonstrates the benefits of high-quality, early education programs to childhood development. It's also the recognition of the need to support PA families whose challenges are diverse, whether single-parent households or those working multiple jobs. Too many households struggling to make ends meet or even grandparents stepping into the role of caregiver and families that have been fractured by the opioid epidemic.

So we know that by engaging with our earliest learners, not only are we advancing an education agenda, we're helping support communities longitudinally.

Next, I just wanted to discuss a few talking points for the other recommendation around compulsory age; and that is raising the dropout age from 17 to 18 years old. You know, first, I think in terms of making the case, you know, the numbers actually are a telling story. Currently, nearly 14,000 of Pennsylvania's children leave school every year
without obtaining a high school diploma. The current law was also established in 1949, at a time when a high school diploma provided an opportunity for well-paying and promising careers directly out of high school.

Even traditional skill trades are increasingly technologically sophisticated, requiring students to develop additional necessary skills that allow them to compete in rapidly-changing 21st Century markets.

The paradigm shift requires a comprehensive approach. And I'd like to share, folks, when we're discussing how we've evolved and even around our career and technical education standards or working towards an industry certificate, there was a time where early on in your high school career you could choose a pathway and it kind of fractured out if you wanted to go what we consider the old vocational route or the lower-degree route to the more-advanced degree route. That's no longer the case.

When you think about, you know, those options in high school, they're much more vertical. So, you know, the skills that you
need to be able to read a trade manual, for example, and work towards an industry certificate in career technical education are practically the same skills you need to be successful in your first couple of years in college.

And the skill that you need to attain a two-year degree is very linear with a skill that you will need to attain a four-year degree and beyond.

So the time by which, you know, you didn't have to worry about how long students were in school or the skills they needed to receive while in school would still allow for a differentiated career pathways.

Now the need to educate children earlier and often through the ages of 18 is much more pronounced. We know that, you know, as we look at the numbers now, just over -- we identified a postsecondary attainment goal. And currently, just 40 percent of our current Pennsylvania residents between the ages of 24 and 65 hold some form of postsecondary degree.

And we worked with Georgetown University on education and workforce estimates, and we
know that by 2025 over 60 percent of individuals
to be employed in the Commonwealth are going to
require some type of postsecondary degree,
whether that's an industry certificate, a 2-year
degree and a 4-year degree.

Specifically, in the next ten years,
we're going to require 33 percent of
Commonwealth residents who are looking for
employment, ages between 25 and 64, 33 percent
to hold a certificate or an Associate's Degree;
22 percent of jobs will require a Bachelor's
degree, and 11 percent of jobs will require an
individual holding a Master's degree or higher.

And yet, in 2016-'17, nearly 14,000
students in Pennsylvania left high school
without obtaining a diploma. More than 10,000
of these students dropped out before the ages of
18, over half of which were students of color
and nearly two-thirds were from low-income
families.

So I sympathize with the students and
their families, but we also have to consider the
long-term cost of this decision to the
Commonwealth. Students who leave school without
a high school diploma achieve a median annual
salary of just over $26,000, which pales in comparison to a median salary of $45,000, achieved by their peers who hold a high school diploma. So students now stand to benefit from the first initiatives of this kind. And coupled with the PA Smart Initiative, our advances in career and technical programs, our focus on STEM and computer science education, our corporate partnerships and apprenticeships, not only are we asking you to consider an increase in the compulsory age where we're going to work to put the systems of support in place to help meet the differentiated needs of students in high school.

So that concludes the highlights of my testimony, but I wanted to just put some of those facts out there. And I can make myself available for questions.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.

Representative Topper.

REPRESENTATIVE TOPPER: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. You had said I think the 3300 number would increase between ages 6 and 7. Was that correct?

SECRETARY RIVERA: (Nodding in the affirmative.)
REPRESENTATIVE TOPPER: So right now, what do you think the percentage of children starting school at age 8 actually is?

SECRETARY RIVERA: So we ran the numbers in aggregate, and I don't want to misspeak; but I know the number dwindled significantly when it went to 8 years old. But as we looked at the 6 and 7 year olds, 3300 -- let me pull the actual number. Let me disaggregate that data --

REPRESENTATIVE TOPPER: Right. Because I think there's a big difference between 7 and 8, you know; and we're dropping it two years -- looking to drop it two years, as opposed to just one. And I understand that 8 is probably about as far as we'd want to go on the other scale.

I don't know that -- I mean, any of us who have had kids understand that year makes a big difference. Every kid's different. I'm very concerned when we talk about limiting the flexibility of parents to make some of those decisions. So it would be helpful to me as a Committee member, I think, to look at what it would mean in terms of going from 2 years, back from 8 to 6 versus just actually going from 8 to 7. Because like I said, the number, if I heard
correctly, that was addressing essentially 7 year olds that would be enrolling now as 6 year olds; is that correct?

SECRETARY RIVERA: Six and 7 year olds is the 3300 number, yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE TOPPER: Right. Okay. So if we could take a look at something like that, I think it would be helpful.

SECRETARY RIVERA: And if you don't mind, in addition to desegregating the numbers, I also put in there a little blurb around the difference in the academic standards. So when you consider a 7-year-old starting school for the first time and only 5 year olds normally enter kindergarten and then a 5 to 6 to 7 year old will be entering first grade. And so a student could technically be going into first grade for the first time. And then just the difference between first-grade readiness for those that have gone into kindergarten. So I'll just give you a little blurb around the skill sets needed to transition from --

REPRESENTATIVE TOPPER: And we've made a pretty significant investment and talked about early childhood education and creating -- make
sure there's opportunities that kind of address -- I guess that's the other part that when I think of addressing the idea of parents who need the social aspect of being able to make sure their kids are someplace safe. I do think we're also addressing that in a lot of other ways. And I don't want that to be a primary consideration either as we look at this issue.

So I appreciate your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SECRETARY RIVERA: Thank you, sir.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.

Representative Jones.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Couple questions for you, Mr. Secretary, if you don't mind. Kind of argue -- take both sides of the argument a little bit.

First, a quick comment: I hope we don't tie the starting age and the graduation age together. That should be two separate -- I could see where some of us may go one way on one and a different way on the other, so I hope they're not tied at the hip.

But in any event, I am -- I'll say to your point, I'm picturing an 8-year-old starting
kindergarten. That child is then 13, possibly even 14 years old in the fifth grade if my math is correct. And the other way to look at it, you could have a senior in high school who's, I think, pushing 20 if not possibly 21. So I'm just curious if there's any -- if those have been raised as issues. Like, do we -- I mean, there aren't many kids starting at 8 or probably even 7; but I am curious about the dynamics of a 13-year-old 5th grader and/or whatever example you want to use. But you know what I'm saying, or what would that be, an 18-year-old 9th grader or something like that. Is that something you've heard anything about? And I do have a second question then.

SECRETARY RIVERA: Sure.

So absolutely. There's probably a greater likelihood of an 8-year-old or a 7 or 8-year-old would be moved into an age-appropriate classroom; and there are laws that at least govern that. You don't have a student too overaged in a specific classroom. But the challenge in that, is that you can have a student walking into a classroom for the first time and just not even having the
basic skills of, you know, engaging in a literacy center, for example, and then having to learn that from scratch.

On the upper age recommendation for compulsory age, currently by law if a student has an IEP, we allow them to stay in school up until their 21st birthday. And schools, for the most part, do a really good job in differentiating, you know, the learning plan for those students who are overaged.

Now, we're here to discuss the compulsory age; but I will share with you, what we're doing anyway is working with school districts to put a system of support in place for overage students.

So we understand that today there are overaged, under-credited students that require some specialized instruction, whether that's in a traditional setting, nontraditional setting, whether we're looking at, you know, career pathways or even looking at some of our adult basic-ed classes. We're going to continue to push those systems of support.

One of the reasons I mentioned SWEAP, really quickly is, we want to give school
districts, you know, the resources and the supports to look at, you know, programs, for example.

I mean, many students who may have fallen deficient, you know, could be in need of some other services, whether it's something addressed by the community school model, something looking at middle to high school transition.

So we're going to continue to work to that and to provide more holistic support for students who might be classified as more at risk. This recommendation is solely -- currently, if you're 17 years old, you can show up to the main office and say I don't want to go to school anymore; and you can sign yourself out, which is what we call kind in the ad world, this would ask that a student can't decide themselves to stop attending school until 18.

If a parent still, you know, wants to work with a differentiated plan or a student wants to go to a GED program and even a higher-ed option, that's still an option under the compulsory school-age recommendation.

This would just force a 17-year-old to
consult the parent or some other guardian before signing themselves out of school.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you. I appreciate that. You hear that's not maybe as big a concern as I thought it might be.

So now, I always get nervous whenever I see the state and the word compulsory in the same sentence because I'm not really -- it's rarely a good thing.

So I'm curious: A parent has a student that's 7, and they decide that that student's not ready to start elementary and we the State say yes, they are. I don't know see any other way to word that, but to say this implies that we know better than the parent what is in the best interest of the child.

Is there any other possible way to read that? Because I don't -- I can't see what it is. They say they shouldn't be there. We say they're going to be there. That implies we know better for those, however many thousands of children, what's in their best interest than the parent does. Is that correct?

SECRETARY RIVERA: So what this would -- the compulsory school age requirement would
require the student receive some form of education. And as I'm sure you're going to hear today -- I know you're going to hear today, there are homeschooling options; there are, you know, private options; there are independent options; then there's the public school option. So all of those options would remain on the table. But this would require the parent to identify some form of education and educational attainment and opportunity for their student, you know, as early as 6 years old and then, you know, continuing to have the conversation around kindergarten as well.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you very much. That's a good solid response. I appreciate it.

SECRETARY RIVERA: No. Thank you, sir.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY:

Representative Gillen.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLEN: Thank you for being here, Mr. Secretary. I've enjoyed working with you and your team in the past, and I am an advocate for early childhood education. One of the public schools that I represent, I was at their pre-K program a couple weeks ago and I
think they're doing an outstanding job.

My question is relative to the data stream, if one exists. On students who entered as a 7-year-old or an 8-year-old and the outcomes for those particular students consummating their educational career, what distinctions you might have seen -- or maybe you're not familiar with the data stream and you can get back with me later on that.

SECRETARY RIVERA: So the data that we collected to estimate the 3300 this year, we haven't gone back; so it would require -- we start to collect state data at about -- at third grade, as you know. So we would probably have to go back at least three to four years, and we haven't done that.

I can ask. I just don't want to commit to pulling a data set that I don't know we have. I can ask. I can go back and try to pull that information.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLEN: Thank you. So if I understand your answer, we're not sure what the outcomes are then?

SECRETARY RIVERA: So in terms of -- we haven't -- I haven't looked to collect data from
the current third graders that started first
grade or kindergarten at 7 or 8 years old, so
I'd have to do a little digging.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLEN: Okay. Thank
you, Mr. Chairman.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.

Now, Mr. Secretary, have you identified
a cost to lowering the age?

SECRETARY RIVERA: Uh-huh. We think
that for the lower age, the cost would probably
be in the $20-million range; but, you know, I'd
also remind the General Assembly, we have the
basic education funding formula that takes
student population into account; so it would be
commensurate with the formula, which is add to
the district enrollment.

Now, if we wanted to make a
recommendation to see an increase across the
state to support the bill, that's absolutely a
conversation we can have. But those students
who haven't started are dispersed across the
Commonwealth, they would be included in the
school districts total population.

So, you know, we don't think that it
would require new teachers, per se; but it would
add a student to dozens in classrooms and school districts.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.

Any other questions?

(No response.)

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY RIVERA: Thank you, sir.

Thank you.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: And we've been joined by Representatives Miller and Representative Kim.

Next up will be Rich Askey, President of the Pennsylvania State Education Association; Dr. Richard Fry, President of the PA Association of School Administrators; and Beth Jones, Secretary of PA Coalition of Public Charter Schools.

We'd ask you to all identify yourselves when you begin, for the record; and you can begin whenever you're set up and ready.

MR. ASKEY: Good morning. I am Rich Askey. I wish to thank Chairman Sonney, Chairman Roebuck, and the members of the House Education Committee for allowing PSEA to be part
of this hearing today. It's an important issue for us.

       Just as a little background, I am a music educator with over three decades of experience, most of which was spent teaching in the Harrisburg School District at the elementary level.

       Currently, I am the president of the Pennsylvania State Education Association, the State's largest union of educators and education support professionals.

       On behalf of our 180,000 members, again, I want to thank you for inviting PSEA to provide testimony regarding proposed changes to Pennsylvania's compulsory school age.

       PSEA believes that Pennsylvania's current laws pertaining to mandatory student attendance do need to be reviewed and possibly revised. We view Pennsylvania's policy for compulsory school age as the baseline from which a myriad of other educational policies are built, and it is not an isolated policy.

       Any changes to it, therefore, need to be considered within the context of what is best for student developmental learning and preparing
them for lifelong success, as well as the
ability of students, educators, and schools to
meet any new requirements.

With those factors in mind, PSEA
supports Governor Wolf's proposal to reduce the
minimum age from the current 8 years of age to 6
years.

This change reflects national policy and
aligns our statute with what is already common
practice for most students in Pennsylvania.
Updating Pennsylvania's policy for the minimum
starting age for school is a good start. It is
only words on paper, however, if not coupled
with significant and sustainable investments in
high-quality early childhood education.

PSEA appreciates the bipartisan
commitment on this issue over the years and
urges you to continue to invest in high-quality
pre-K in the fiscal year '19-'20 budget.

More than 97,000 eligible 3 and
4-year-old children don't have access to
high-quality pre-K. PSEA recently partnered with
the pre-K for PA campaign to survey our members
teaching kindergarten about their perception of
the impact of high-quality, publicly-funded
pre-K in-school readiness. Not surprisingly, the responses clearly showed resounding support for high-quality pre-K, recognizing that children who don't attend such programs are clearly starting behind their peers who did, in terms of academic, social, and emotional development.

An additional $50-million investment in fiscal year '19-20's state budget, as Governor Wolf has proposed, would provide 5500 children access to pre-K and would continue Pennsylvania's bipartisan commitment to chip away at this gap.

In addition to supporting pre-K, PSEA also supports universal full-day kindergarten to help ensure children have a continuum of learning and educational services from a young age that will help them through their entire academic career.

The administration has proposed conducting a study to evaluate the long-term impacts of providing universal access to free, full-day kindergarten for all children in Pennsylvania.

PSEA supports this data-driven approach
to evaluate the policy and identify potential challenges to be addressed prior to full implementation.

Governor Wolf has also called for an increase in the maximum age for compulsory school attendance from the current 17 years of age to 18, raising the maximum compulsory age, if combined with a system of supports, could be valuable for reaffirming the state's expectation that its students will attain certain educational levels and help thousands of young Pennsylvanians every year who fail to earn a diploma.

While PSEA does not have an official position on the Governor's proposal for raising the maximum compulsory attendance age to 18 years of age, we do support House Bill 112 sponsored by Representative Dan Miller that requires parental consent for anyone 17 years of age seeking to drop out of school. Without consent, the compulsory age is 18.

The real issue, though, is not so much identifying the specific age for remaining in school as it is collectively working together to reduce Pennsylvania's dropout rate.
Decades of research demonstrate that dropping out of school is a long-term process that can be observed as early as elementary school and is the result of student, family, and school factors that can electively disengage students from formal education.

The most effective prevention programs address all three areas to reengage students in learning. It is essential, therefore, that Pennsylvania ensure comprehensive supports for students across the pre-K12 continuum to keep them engaged in learning and to provide them with the tools they need for future success.

This support system must include evidence-based programming, high-quality early learning, pupil services that help improve our students physical and mental wellness, high-quality career education and workforce readiness programs and student transition programs focused on the middle grades into high school.

PSEA is eager to continue to partner with you and other policymakers to expand Pennsylvania's efforts to support and retain our students most at risk of dropping out of school.
Thank you.

MR. FRY: Good morning, Chairman Sonney, Chairman Roebuck, and distinguished members of the House Education Committee. My name is Rich Fry. I'm Superintendent of Big Spring School District in Cumberland County, the western part of Cumberland County.

I'm also president of PASA, the State Association for School Administrators, representing superintendents, assistant superintendents, and other school leaders throughout the state.

You have a copy of our written testimony, so I am not going to read through that entire written format; but I will give you highlights of some notes, much like Secretary Rivera did, and reiterate some of his points.

PASA's in full support of the Governor's proposal on both ends, with lowering the compulsory age from 8 to 6 and then also raising from 17 to 18. We're also in support of Representative Dan Miller's House Bill 112 in that regard. When we look at going from 8 to 6, as stated by Secretary Rivera, we are one of two states, the State of Washington being the other.
It's really important, as school districts, we talk about cradle to career. We want students through our doors as quickly as we can get them there.

When they're not through our doors, we're building relationships with community organizations around us so we can have seamless support, be it quality daycare, quality pre-K programs; the sooner the better.

Pennsylvania's a state that prides itself on choice. This type of legislation absolutely doesn't take away the choice of a family to start their student when they see it's fit to do that. We have some of the most progressive homeschooling legislation in the country. It still allows families to do that.

We want kiddos through our doors so they can get language acquisition skills and move from a literacy perspective that has them prepared by age 8, which is when we start mandated state assessments as driven from the federal level.

Language acquisition is absolutely critical, and getting them through the doors and having relationships outside our doors to build
that is imperative and one of the reasons at the front-end that we support this legislation.

Also, engagement. Secretary Rivera talked about engagement on the back end. And these are absolutely two separate discussions: starting age and when we allow someone to sign out, which is a very serious consequence, when a student on their own at age 17 signs out. Two separate issues.

But on the front-end, it's also all about building relationships, building relationships with families and making sure families are engaged. That engagement, if not in place by third grade, and we don't have those relationships in place, we're not going to get the full effect.

So the goal on the back-end is to make sure our students are life ready, career ready. That's why cradle to career is so imperative. And as we look at the back-end, some of the significance of 17 to 18, as families or students maybe do disengage a bit or find some things that cause them pause with public schooling, we want to make sure that we have opportunities to reengage.
Right now, with 339 plans and trying to get students career ready, some of those opportunities include internships, co-ops, apprenticeships. Many of those are limited by age.

So if we have a student coming in at age 17 to sign out, that student isn't eligible for internships throughout much of the state. Those internships, from a legal perspective and for many businesses, don't start until age 18. It would open up the opportunity for, again, more options that we can build bridges with families.

Secretary Rivera talked about the statistics of what a dropout costs our system. The more opportunities we have to engage those families is critical, both in the urban setting and in the rural setting; and I represent a rural school district.

Seventy percent of school districts throughout the state are rural school districts. We have to build on those back-end opportunities to make our young people lifelong learners. The class of 2032, 70 percent of the jobs we're preparing them for don't exist today. They're not out there.
So the key is to make sure they're lifelong learners, to have two more years added to the window to prepare them in that process would absolutely be paramount and still allow for the choice that every resident of the Commonwealth currently has. If they so want to choose, they can certainly do that.

PASA stands behind the proposal by the Governor and also Representative Miller's House Bill 112. We think it's a step in the right direction, and we would encourage your support as well.

Thank you.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.

MS. JONES: Good morning, Chairman Sonney, Chairman Roebuck, and Honorable members of the House Education Committee.

My name is Beth Jones, and I'm an educator with over 25 years of experience in Pennsylvania's public and public charter schools.

I'm a founder of Collegium Charter School, the current CFO of Insight PA Cyber Charter School and a founder of the Coatesville Charter School of Innovation, which is currently
in the application phase.

I'm here before you because I serve as the secretary on the Board of the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools, which represents both brick and mortar and cyber charters across the Commonwealth.

I would like to thank the Committee for holding a hearing on the important topic of compulsory school age, in an effort to gain a better understanding of how Pennsylvania's current laws are impacting schools and students.

The Charter School Coalition is in favor of lowering the compulsory school age from 8 to 6 years and eliminating the ability of a 17-year-old to drop out of school without the permission of their parent or guardian.

Children need connections in an educational community, and they need to graduate from high school. Our current compulsory education law allows families to shelter children from an educational community until age 8, an age by which most children have been receiving schooling for at least three full years; thus, denying those children opportunities to be educated.
I strongly believe in the choice of families to educate children in the method best suited for their children and their family, whether that's traditional public schools, public charter schools, public cyber charters, private schools, parochial schools, or homeschooling.

But listen, young children want to learn. They possess an innate curiosity to explore and grow, and our laws should not allow parents to reject opportunities for their children to begin their education with their peers.

And our older students need the support of the law to demonstrate to them the critical importance of remaining in school and graduating from high school. We all recognize how difficult adult life is without a high school diploma, at a minimum.

We cannot continue to have a law in the books that permits a juvenile an opportunity to leave school before graduating. Simply by having this law, we are essentially saying to teens, go ahead; leave school; it's okay. But we all know it is not.
By extending the upper age limit of compulsory education requirements, Pennsylvania's graduation rates will increase, and these students will be more capable of meeting the needs of 21st Century employers and the prerequisites of postsecondary education.

Again, I thank the Committee for inviting the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools to participate in this morning's discussion on compulsory school age.

The Coalition is committed to its mission to advocate for legislation and policies that positively impact Pennsylvania schools and the students and families they serve.

Changing Pennsylvania's compulsory school age will position our young students for early educational success and ensures that students remain in school until a majority age, providing them opportunities to graduate and setting a path for greater career and lifetime earning potential.

Thank you again for this opportunity, and I'm happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.
First, I'd like to announce that we've also been joined by Representatives Kail, Isaacson and Gaydos.

Representative Gleim.

REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: I just have a policy question actually out of this idea in the bill, is that we're allowing the parents to help their child opt out at 17, but we're not allowing the parents to allow them to opt out at the compulsory age of 6.

So can you explain to me why one is optional and the other is not?

MS. JONES: Well, my opinion, it shouldn't be optional. I feel like the student should remain in school, but I feel like we have to move -- there's only so much that you can move at one time.

And right now, I think it's more critical to get the younger students in school early, because if you set them on a path to success at an early age, they will naturally want to remain in school until they graduate.

MR. ASKEY: I also think that we're, overall, just looking for a better standard in Pennsylvania's educational policy of making sure
that our students have the best opportunities.

   It's clear over and over again when you
look at research that the sooner our students
start, the better off they are; so I think we're
just thinking of setting a standard for what's
best for our kids.

   MR. FRY: Representative Gleim, it's
also about the given in the statement. And the
given would be that by age 6, the family would
have to make a decision and if they're coming
through the doors or deciding for a charter,
then that would be the decision, or they could
choose from a homeschool perspective.

   But engagement is just not about the
student. We engage the families. So we want
them through the door; we want to build bridges
with them at that point. And on the back-end,
it's making sure we have that communication with
those parents at age 17 to say, listen, here's
the statistics; here's what it looks like in
Cumberland County; you know, here's what it
takes, here's what the earning potential is
without. We educate the family on that, and it
takes a parent's signature to be able to
withdraw at that point. Right now, it doesn't.
At age 17, it's quite scary to have the ability to sign out as a young person.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Representative McCarter.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. There are a couple other things that I think are critically important as we analyze both of these particular decisions, and a very interesting one and I thank Dr. Fry very much for bringing up the concept of lifelong learning.

Back when we set the compulsory ages, or at least one of them back in 1895, the idea of lifelong learning was something that was not on the table. Literally, life spans at that particular time were under 50 years of age. And so when we talked about students being able to sign themselves out or starting school at age 8, there was a far different criteria, I think, in looking and analyzing the situation than we have today.

I was a teacher for 35 years, also; and I surely know that the nature of students at age 17, most would never consider dropping out of school. However, there is a small percentage
that would at the top of the scale that we're
talking about of signing themselves out of
school.

And we also know that every year you
stay in school your average yearly earnings
increase and your lifetime earnings increase, as
well, from a financial standpoint. And they
also, I would suspect, become better citizens,
knowledgeable citizens within our society.

So my question to all three of you would
be, basically, I'm trying to find a reason not
to support this from a standpoint of the 21st
Century.

Is there any reason that I would have
not to be able to support from an economic
standpoint, from a social standpoint, or from a
philosophical standpoint at this point of not
being able to support these changes that are
proposed?

MR. FRY: The analogy I would have,
about ten years ago at Big Spring, we mandated
full-day kindergarten. And though it made great
sense and the research was very strong that we
wanted our students through our doors again
early and a language acquisition, our community
-- there were folks that were absolutely not in support of that, and our board was very split, a five/four vote; we got full-day kindergarten roughly ten years ago.

And it's probably one of the biggest decisions that seated board made and boards after that in support of it. Because again, with skills that they need to obtain to become lifelong learners to set those building blocks, it was a decision that was absolutely profound for our district, but yet had some controversy.

I see this very similarly. My community looked at it, it should be their choice. They should be able to choose half-day or full-day. That's no different than in this decision. My perspective is, we're not taking that choice away.

If a family does not want to send their child, they have the opportunity to homeschool; and we do our best to build bridges with those homeschool students.

So from a philosophical standpoint, I don't believe we're taking anything away. We're just saying, as a Commonwealth, we want our students in our buildings, with our charters,
wherever they need to be, at an age that's appropriate to start the learning process from a language acquisition.

Because by the age of 8, if there's deficits, we're playing catchup from there on out; and that lasts a lifetime when we talk about lifetime learners.

MR. ASKEY: If I may, I'd like to just talk as someone who taught in the Harrisburg School District for over 30 years and explain to you what I saw a difference in.

About 15 years ago under a different administration, we had a stellar pre-K program in Harrisburg School District. I worked with those kids, and I had those kids after they went through that pre-K program. The difference that I saw in the students that attended that pre-K program and the students that did not, was clear.

The students that attended that pre-K program were far advanced academically, socially, and emotionally. Also, Harrisburg gives you lots of opportunities, let's just say that.

I also was able to work in the
alternative high school program, and I saw that giving students close to the end of their public education an alternative track so that they could achieve their high school diploma and we could engage those students, we could engage those parents, we could engage the community around them, it made a huge difference.

And our -- we had many many students that were able to get a high school diploma that if they did not have those supports and did not have the push to make sure they crossed the finish line, would not be living the life they are living today.

MS. JONES: So I'll be real direct to your question: I don't have any reason why you should not support this. It's in the best interest of our younger students and our older students across the Commonwealth.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Representative Miller.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Chair for putting on this hearing today on such an important
A lot was said. I know time is short. I just kind of wanted to go off another Representative's thoughts. You know, I may be the only Representative here in Harrisburg who signed himself out of school at 17.

So about three months before I was 18, I walked. I didn't ask my parents' permission. I didn't even talk to them. They didn't know about it for 72 hours, and I left in my senior year.

And I left with an idea of what I wanted to do, and I learned a lot very quickly; and it was a mistake. It was a massive mistake with a lot of repercussions.

One of the issues as to why I kind of jumped on this topic was also in relation to foster kids. Because when I was a solicitor for CYS, I can't tell you how many times we would have conversations with kids who were in the foster care system, frustrated for A, B and C or whatever reason that they had, and they were able to walk.

And as soon as that 17 thing hit, our ability to help a population in particular that
maybe wouldn't have a chance or as great a chance as I did to rebound were rushing out and making a decision to get out, of not only the school district but the system itself.

So I just wanted to mention that and to provide some degree of context as to why I think it is important that we put in at the bare minimum some type of discussion that occurs before we trust a 17-year-old to make such a fundamental decision without, in my case, any dialogue with anyone at all.

And if I could look back and change anything in my life given what came from that decision, I would change that. It has nothing to do partying or being there for senior year or whatever else. It was a bad call. And some of the other kids who went along the same path I did, it was even worse.

But I am concerned about the kids today, especially in the foster care system where the courts have no ability to make those types of decisions.

And I was wondering if anybody had any quick moment to talk -- to mention about kids with disabilities and IEPs and the value,
perhaps, of transitioning sooner from an IFSP into an IEP as another type of population in need?

MR. FRY: So, obviously, under IDA, our transition goals start at age 14 with our IEP population. And again, it's all about building programs. At Big Spring, we have a program called Hire Me, where part of our transition goals, our students that qualify, our IEP students are working at Shippensburg University in a variety of tasks, much like an internship.

It has been such a phenomenal program for those students the last three years that we've built that in for our regular-ed students beyond Shippensburg University, that we're now expanding our apprenticeships, internships, and co-ops that it's part of a personalized diploma process.

So again, build that bridge with those students. Again, foster children have many starts and stops and advocacy and their feeling of having an advocate for them is not an easy route to build for school districts. But if we have options that have relevance for them, we can make some strides. And to have that
opportunity potentially to age 18 when again, they could be on the floor in a manufacturing facility or -- it opens up a whole different realm that we can maybe, maybe light that fire to help grow that lifelong learning process and give them an opportunity.

So from an IEP with those transition goals, we want to make sure that we get them some relevance as quickly as we can, starting to build those skills at age 14 with their goal-setting process, and then give them the opportunity prior to age 21 for many of them, that they have the opportunity to build that.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY:
Representative Gillen.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLEN: So, Dan, part of your pathway that led you to the Legislature was dropping out of high school at 17? Did I hear your testimony correctly? Go ahead. I'm only messing with you.

Rich, thank you for your distinguished service in the Harrisburg School District teaching and music. We're a homeschool family, and I have a daughter who plays the harp. We've got one that plays the violin. We've got a
piano player, a clarinet player; and I'm struggling with the harmonica.

My colleague is sitting down on the other side, Patty Kim, and I know you've worked hard to make the Harrisburg School District a better place. Nonetheless, there are challenges; and it's been in the newspaper recently relative to a prospective state takeover.

Eleven percent proficiency in math; 22 percent in reading calls for rising levels -- the need for academic achievement and the failure to comply with Pennsylvania Department of Education directives.

You're asking for more students. You'd like more 6 and 7-year-olds in that environment. Could someone explain to me the ability of the school district right here where we stand, where we sit to absorb more students and give them a quality education?

MR. ASKEY: Well, I think, first of all, you have to do what is best for the children and what is best for the community. And right now, I can only testify to a previous administration that was giving our students the best
opportunities possible, where academic achievement was growing, where they were receiving exactly the education that they needed to under that administration.

There are problems. I'm not going to sit here and say there are not problems in Harrisburg, but there is the fact that it is the only place as public education is, the only place that our doors are open to everybody. And we service those students.

And when communities are struggling, the schools are there to help them; and that's what the teachers and the support staff of Harrisburg School District are there to do, to support the students and give them the best opportunities that they can.

MS. JONES: I'm certainly not an expert in Harrisburg schools. That's not a place where I've had any experience, other than what I read in the newspaper.

But I will remind everyone that parents have choice. So it's not as Representative Gillen said, where they just can only go to the Harrisburg School District. This compulsory-ed age change would be reflected to charter
schools, as well as homeschooling organizations, so that students can start being part of an educational community. Doesn't necessarily have to be the traditional public school environment.

And I would just remind everyone that just because something might be difficult, especially thinking about those 17-year-olds who are adamant that they want to drop out and they know what's right; but just because it's difficult doesn't mean that we shouldn't take this opportunity to make changes that we know are for the better of our students.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.

Any other questions? I'd like to thank the testifiers. Thank you.

MR. ASKEY: Thank you.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Next up is Angela Davis, Christian Homeschool Association; and Ellen Kramer, Catholic Homeschools of Pennsylvania.

For the essence of time, since we do have your written testimony, I would ask that you would be very, very brief in remarks so we could get right to questions; because we do have to get to the floor. We're running a little bit
late.

So please introduce yourselves and be as brief as possible. Thank you.

MS. DAVIS: Okay. Good morning,
Chairman Sonney, ranking member Roebuck, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Angela Davis, and I'm the Director of Support Services and Administration for Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania, better known as CHAP.

I'm also a parent who's had two children graduate through homeschooling in Pennsylvania and have successfully completed college. I don't have to tell the Education Committee how studies show that homeschooling works and that the average test results in homeschool students in Pennsylvania alone is 30 to 36 percentile points above the US public school average.

CHAP is a nonprofit organization. We have over a thousand family members that are homeschooling compliant with Pennsylvania's Homeschool Law, so our mission is to provide support for those families and all.

But CHAP is opposed to House Bill 593 and the proposed expansion of the compulsory
attendance age for several reasons. I'll just touch on those.

As you've said, I've heard actually some very positive things about education in Pennsylvania here today. But for homeschoolers, there could be an ambiguity of the diploma program for those that are 17 and finished and completed all of their things. You know, do they have to have the written proposal and things like that from the parents and stuff, or are they guaranteed a diploma?

The delay in starting a formal education, the mandatory part of it for lowering the compulsory age is another concern for homeschooling families, and the additional financial burden that would be placed on homeschool families and all taxpayers with any increase in regulations.

As you're well aware, homeschooling parents in Pennsylvania must file a notarized affidavit, record hours of instruction, maintain a portfolio including required testing. They have to have their children evaluated by a qualified evaluator and submit the evaluator's certification to the superintendent of the local
school district. And these are required for the compulsory attendance school age of 8 to 17.

    If you're changing it from 6 to 18, you've now added two to three years of evaluations and you're saying that homeschoolers would need to have -- I've spoken to an evaluator, and they said that -- she expressed great concern and that evaluating children under the age of 8, could be detrimental to the child.

    At these young ages, education's done through play, experience and immersion learning. A portfolio can't adequately represent this type of education and allow an evaluator to objectively state that appropriate education is taking place.

    That's what's required by the Homeschool Law and the compulsory ages. So that's why we're opposing making this mandatory, because it would affect the Homeschool Law as it now stands in Pennsylvania, and just the added cost for families. They're already invested in their children in educating.

    I would just give you a couple of examples, because I work in the CHAP office and get a lot of phone calls from families that are
interested in it. When the schools districts were experiencing some budget impasses and delayed opening their schools, the CHAP office received several phone calls from families and they wanted to start their education, they wanted to know, okay, what do I need to do? The schools aren't open; they're delayed and all. So where can they obtain a curriculum? What are they teaching and all?

Parents do want to teach their young children. And many of them found that once they started in the homeschooling thing, they continued; and that was a better option for them. But mandating and requiring all the legal paperwork and recordkeeping and things like that can keep them.

Prior to 2014 when Pennsylvania was viewed as one of the five most difficult states in which to homeschool -- in 2014, our Homeschool Law was improved and families gained a little more freedom to educate their children, from some of the burdens and regulations that had been on there.

In the CHAP office, we receive calls from families that have job opportunities to
move to the state of Pennsylvania, but they're
reluctant because they say, I want to homeschool
and I've heard such arduous things about the
homeschooling laws in Pennsylvania.

I don't want to see a further mandate
and expansion of that to give the idea that
Pennsylvania is not involved in giving parents
the choice to make their homeschooling
educational laws.

Homeschoolers are important, but
sometimes a forgotten population in
Pennsylvania's education community. We oppose
this legislation because it places additional
and unnecessary burdens on our families.

There's an estimated number of 66 to
80,000 cases, K-12 homeschooling students in
Pennsylvania, just in the spring of 2018.
Please remember this population when you
consider this bill.

I speak for many homeschool families who
oppose this bill. The Homeschool Legal Defense
Association recorded 8,723 messages sent to
Pennsylvania House of Representatives opposing
this bill through their messaging tool in the
last week. I'm sure there were additional
homeschooling families voicing their opposition as well. So please reject this intrusive piece of legislation, as it will increase the tax burden on all families in Pennsylvania.

If you have questions or desire further dialogue, please feel free to contact the CHAP office. I do have some folders with homeschooling information if you're interested at all, and you're all welcome to attend our annual homeschool convention coming up this month on the 14th and 15th in Lancaster.

Thank you very much for providing me the opportunity to share CHAP's view for opposing the legislation.

MS. KRAMER: Representative Sonney, Representative Roebuck, and members of the Committee, my name is Ellen Kramer and my husband and I are the cofounders of the Catholic Homeschoolers of Pennsylvania.

We began homeschooling in 1992, and we have addressed this issue as homeschoolers many times. I've lost count of how many times this compulsory attendance age issue has come up.

Being very realistic here, you have my testimony. There are some other things I want
to say in addition to that. People don't know, en masse across this state, unless you publicize that you're changing the law, they do not know that the compulsory attendance age is 8. They think that the compulsory attendance age is 5 and that they have to get permission for their children to go to school at 6.

I know, because I was there; and I've talked to hundreds of families who are in that situation. Unless people are beginning to homeschool and they start asking around about how do I do that and what do I do with the school district and paperwork and so forth, that's when they find out.

People in Pennsylvania do not know where -- the people who sat here earlier are saying that there's numbers of people who are not educating their kids until age 8 and that it's any kind of an issue, I don't understand. I just don't get it. Because that's not the reality in the state. Everybody thinks it's 5, and they think they need permission to have their kids not enter school if they're going through the school system at age 6.

So the only people that this affects, in
reality, is the homeschoolers, and as Angela said, doing the evaluations and paperwork for 6 and 7-year-olds.

And quite often, it's even come up just in the last week or two, I was addressing a question on Facebook with people who were saying, if my child turns 8 next school year, when do I have to start doing the paperwork? So people still, even within the homeschool community, they don't always have clarity on that; but they know that 8 is the compulsory age only if they're homeschooling.

The other thing is age 17. I have a daughter who now has an MBA; and, in fact, two of them have Master's degrees. The third one is chomping at the bit, but starting a family before he was able to do that.

My youngest wasn't able to start at HACC, and she just wanted to take one course that semester. They wouldn't let her start because they were afraid that she was going to be fully a college student; so she had to wait three days till she turned 17, in order to take a class.

There shouldn't be -- you shouldn't
always look at children who aren't in the kindergarten to 12 age as dropouts. If they're not in school, they can be. They don't necessarily have to quit school, but they can be going to college.

There's children I know in the school system that couldn't move as fast as they needed to, and they started college at age 15. There are children who do that, and the parents will homeschool rather than complaining about the homeschool and how they're not helping their child through; or the other end, they're falling through the cracks.

They'll homeschool. They'll take the responsibility themselves. They don't go around knocking the school systems. They just do it themselves. And when their children are ready to move to the next level and not be in a lower academic setting, they're moving them on to college; and we need to acknowledge that aspect as well.

And homeschoolers, typically, there's co-ops, there's all sorts of things that have the kids getting all excited about education. They are the lifelong learners. And even the
parents, I still learn all sorts of stuff. I have hundreds of books in my attic I still haven't read. And my husband said, Why don't you sell them? I said, No, I'm going to read them because I want to learn all that stuff.

I don't read any fiction. I read all nonfiction, and my kids do, too. So we need to realize that the homeschoolers are really the only ones who are going to be affected by this.

I have not heard any evidence of a child entering a public school at age 8 and going into first grade. I haven't heard it. I would challenge somebody to find that, but I haven't heard it.

And if parents do have their children at home and they aren't sending them to school because they have a bad immune system or some other issue is going on, they're doing something with them.

The lady who said that kids want to learn, she was perfectly right, they do; but parents also want to teach and parents don't want to see their children, you know, dependent on them for the rest of their life. They want them to succeed; they want them to grow and
perform. So I would urge you to not lower the
compulsory attendance age.

Thank you.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you.

Representative Kim.

REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Thank you so much
for your testimony. I'm a big supporter of this
bill, so it was really nice to hear your
perspective, and it's an important one for
homeschoolers. I think homeschool parents do a
great job with students.

I'm going to put you on the spot a
little bit. I don't think it's either reject or
vote this in. I think we can massage this bill
so that it can work for everyone.

Would you be okay with bringing down the
compulsory age to 6 but there are no
requirements for homeschoolers to put in
paperwork until 8? Would you be open to that?

MS. KRAMER: I personally don't know if
there would be people, other than homeschoolers,
who would have an issue with that.

REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Okay.

MS. KRAMER: In Philadelphia right now,
it is that age 6 and 7, they just have to notify
them that the children are being home schooled.

REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Right.

MS. KRAMER: But I don't know that that
-- homeschoolers aren't looking to be the
exception. We really aren't.

REPRESENTATIVE KIM: I understand, yeah.
But we want to work with you --

MS. KRAMER: But right now, nothing's
broken. And so by passing legislation to lower
the compulsory attendance age, it's not fixing
anything.

REPRESENTATIVE KIM: Okay. But what I'm
hearing correctly, and correct me if I'm wrong,
that the paperwork, the expenses is the largest
burden if we bring down the compulsory age. So
I was trying to work around that, that you
wouldn't have to notarize and do affidavits
until age 8; because, yeah, I mean, performance
for a 6-year-old, how do you really gauge that?
They're so young.

But would you be okay with a bill that
paperwork is only required at 8, even though the
compulsory age is at 6?

MS. KRAMER: I guess I would look at
that and say -- because it sounds like I've
heard from others that were here today saying, 
Oh, we're mandating compulsory -- you know, the 
age for it, but they have choices; they can 
homeschool.

Homeschool is a choice, but it's a 
dedicated choice and it takes effort and things. 
I don't want this law to go through and then the 
homeschoolers for 6 and 7-year-olds to be 
suddenly flooded and increased with, Oh, yeah, 
we're going to homeschool and all these intent 
notices, if their objection is just they really 
don't want formalized education for that child. 

So it doesn't really sound like a win to 
me for homeschoolers. It sounds like, you know, 
you're making an exception, making an out; and 
you're going to increase the number of 
homeschoolers, which is great, you know, as they 
start. But are they doing it for the right 
reasons that we want them to -- that they choose 
to homeschool?

REPRESENTATIVE KIM: All right. Thank 
you for your feedback. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: Thank you. 
And we do have to wrap it up. We have to get to 
the floor. If members have any additional
questions, they can submit them to me or
Chairman Roebuck; and we'll make sure that the
correct testifier gets to answer those
questions.

So thank you very much for joining us
here today.

MS. DAVIS: Thank you.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SONNEY: This meeting
is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the hearing concluded.)
CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the proceedings are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on the within proceedings and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

_______________________________
Tracy L. Markle, Court Reporter
Notary Public