



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

May 18, 2016

TO THE HONORABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA:

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 15 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, I am returning herewith, without my approval, House Bill 805, Printer's Number 1843.

For months, the Department of Education and I have sought input on how to improve accountability in education. We have engaged with stakeholders including educators, parents, lawmakers, administrators, higher education faculty, and industry and workforce leaders to determine how best to measure success in the classroom and how to increase accountability. We believe that our common goal should be working together to invest in education, strengthen accountability, and place more educators in overcrowded classrooms to provide our children with the attention they deserve as well as the tools they need.

This bill relies heavily on a single score from the teacher evaluation system, as opposed to using the entire method of evaluation. At a time when there is bipartisan agreement that we need to reduce our reliance on high-stakes testing, we should not use high-stake test scores as the benchmark for teacher quality. The teacher evaluation system was created in 2012 to evaluate teachers on multiple measures of student success. As designed, teachers who did not achieve satisfactory scores across the multiple measures would lose any acquired protection from seniority. This evaluation process was designed to identify a teacher's weakness and then provide the teacher with the opportunity to improve their teaching through coaching and mentorship. Teachers who do not improve after being given the opportunity and tools to do so are the ones who should no longer be in the classroom. This is the system we should be using to remove ineffective teachers.

I am committed to greater accountability in our schools, but we should be working together to create a wide-ranging system that focuses on real, proven strategies to prepare our students and measure teacher effectiveness. I believe this bill does not address the broader issues at play with our evaluation and testing systems.

For the reasons set forth above, I must withhold my signature from House Bill 805, Printer's Number 1843.

Sincerely,

TOM WOLF  
Governor

16 MAY 18 PM 3:07

HOUSE COUNSEL  
CHIEF CLERK'S OFFICE