



The Spirit of '76

LOCAL 1776
Association of Catholic Teachers

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Dear ACT Member,

In the January Newsletter, I spoke of the importance of House Bill 26 and that it would be reintroduced into the new session of the State legislature. We have just received word that Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski asked his colleagues in the PA House of Representatives to sign on as cosponsors of House Bill 26.

Now, we need all of you to contact your local member of the State House and urge him/her to sign on. Time is of the essence. The best method for contacting Representatives is either by phone or e-mail. Your message should be short and to the point. It is extremely important to let the representative know that he/she represents you. "Hello, my name is _____. I am a teacher in a Catholic high school and I live in _____. As your constituent, I am counting on you to cosponsor House Bill 26 which is being sponsored by Rep. Eddie Pashinski."

If the Representative was a cosponsor during the last session of the legislature, thank him/her for their past support and ask them to continue their support by again becoming a cosponsor. (The list of former cosponsors is printed below.) If the Representative was not a cosponsor in the past, be sure to let him/her know of your disappointment. Urge them to sign on this time. Please ask them for a firm commitment to be a cosponsor.

If you are sending an e-mail, explain to the Representative that House Bill 26 will close a loophole in the existing law by providing coverage to employees of religiously-affiliated employers under the PA Labor Relations Act. Catholic school teachers and other such employees are the only workers in Pennsylvania lacking coverage under either state or federal labor laws - no one should be forced to accept such second-class citizenship. The current situation is unfair.

A.C.T. for Better Catholic Schools



Once amended, the PA Labor Relations Act will not present a problem with the principle of separation of Church and State. An identical amendment to the New York Labor Relations Act has been in effect since the 1960's. The New York Labor Board has never in that time been asked by the Catholic teacher unions in New York State to intervene in a dispute regarding any type of religious issue.

The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference and the bishops of Pennsylvania are telling the legislators that if this becomes law and Catholic school teachers organize, this will bankrupt the dioceses. This certainly has not been the case in the almost forty years that Catholic school teachers have been unionized in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton.

Here is the list of past cosponsors: PASHINSKI, MUNDY, BELFANTI, McCALL, EACHUS, SURRA, DEMODY, ADOLPH, BLACKWELL, CARROLL, CASORIO, COHEN, CONKLIN, CURRY, DeLUCA, DePASQUALE, FRANKEL, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY, GEORGE, GERBER, GERGELY, GIBBONS, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HALUSKA, JAMES, JOSEPHS, KENNEY, LEVDANSKY, MAHONEY, MANDERINO, McGEEHAN, McILVAINE SMITH, MELIO, MURT, M. O'BRIEN, OLIVER, O'NEILL, QUINN, RAMALEY, RAYMOND, SAMUELSON, SHIMKUS, SIPTROTH, K. SMITH, SOLOBAY, STABACK, R. STEVENSON, VITALI, WAGNER, WANSACZ, WOJNAROSKI, YOUNGBLOOD and YUDICHAK.

To find the name of your State Legislator, go to the following site:
www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm

To find the name, phone number and e-mail address of your legislator, go to the following web page:
www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/email_list.cfm?body=H

Please make your contacts today. We need to get this legislation passed as quickly as possible. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call the ACT Office.

Sincerely,



Rita C. Schwartz
President