

School Board Members, Administrators, Business Groups and Education Advocates Join in Support of House Bill 805, the Protecting Excellent Teachers Act

“Pennsylvania’s children deserve a high-quality education. The passage of House Bill 805 will assure that the best educators in the Commonwealth are kept in our classrooms.” – **Kathy Swope, president of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association and president of the Lewisburg Area School Board of Directors.**

“House Bill 805 provides school districts with relief from a very restrictive mandate, granting them needed flexibility to make entirely objective reductions in staffing in challenging financial circumstances. While no school district wants to be in the difficult position of having to furlough employees, House Bill 805 ensures that those decisions can be made in a way that ensures the retention of the most effective instructional staff.” – **Hannah Barrick, director of advocacy for the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials.**

“House Bill 805 takes the important and long-overdue step to provide school districts authority to adjust the number of professional educators each employs based on available resources while protecting and keeping its best educators in the classroom. These are reasonable changes to long-outdated state requirements that most other states never had or eliminated long ago.” – **Jim Buckheit, executive director for the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators.**

“With the commonsense changes contained in House Bill 805, Philadelphia schools will have the ability to keep their best teachers in the unfortunate case of layoffs. The current law is outdated and out of step with what principals, parents, and young teachers want. If we are serious about providing all kids access to quality schools, we need to start by keeping the best teachers in the classroom.” – **Mike Wang, executive director of the Philadelphia School Advocacy Partners.**

“The current seniority-based system leads to the furlough of effective educators and does not value an educator’s impact on kids. In the unfortunate case of a reduction in force, this legislation will help schools protect excellent teachers and keep them in the classroom. House Bill 805 strikes a balance; while it prioritizes performance, it also permits seniority to be used as a tie-breaker for decision-making at the local level.” – **Jon Cetel, executive director of the Pennsylvania Campaign for Achievement Now (PennCAN).**

“To be competitive in the 21st Century global economy, Pennsylvania firms need the best prepared workforce. This means keeping our very best teachers in the classroom. The Pennsylvania Business Council is very pleased the General Assembly has passed legislation that makes merit and skill the most important criteria for the tough decisions about economic furloughs. All teachers should be respected. Neither seniority nor cost should be the driving factors in furlough decisions. Our students and the quality of their education have to be our first priority.” – **David Patti, executive director of the Pennsylvania Business Council.**

“Layoffs or furloughs under any circumstance are very difficult situations but in this case, it’s particularly tragic if any of Pennsylvania’s brightest and most effective teachers can’t be retained simply because of seniority. The very concept of LIFO [last in, first out] conflicts with basic principles of workplace management and optimizing workforce talent. Keeping the best teachers in the classroom is critically important to prepare students today to be the skilled workers, entrepreneurs and business leaders of tomorrow.” – **Alex Halper, director of government affairs, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business & Industry.**