



Background Information - Support for HB 156 - The Pennsylvania Safe School Act (PASS Act)

AAUW-PA became a member of the Pennsylvania Safe Schools Partnership in October 2012. We join with other members of the Pennsylvania Safe Schools Partnership to support the passage of HB 156.

INTRODUCED BY TRUITT, FRANKEL, SIMMONS, KNOWLES, DUNBAR, QUINN, GINGRICH, MCGEEHAN, HAGGERTY, V. BROWN, STEPHENS, CONKLIN, C. HARRIS, CARROLL, FLECK, HESS, DAVIDSON, PASHINSKI, HAHN, BARRAR, MAJOR, MARSICO, SAYLOR, WATSON, O'NEILL, DAVIS, HELM, CORBIN, ROEBUCK, ROCK, READSHAW, SCAVELLO, ROSS, R. BROWN, THOMAS, GIBBONS, BOBACK, ROZZI, FREEMAN, MACKENZIE, R. MILLER, SONNEY, DONATUCCI, MOUL, BENNINGHOFF, MURT, GABLER, GOODMAN, MOLCHANY, SIMS, J. HARRIS, MATZIE, PARKER, BRIGGS, STURLA, KORTZ, PAINTER, SCHLOSSBERG, MUNDY, SANTARSIERO, COHEN, DEAN, BROWNLEE, KINSEY, MCNEIL, KIM, P. MICCARELLI, M. K. KELLRT, PETRI, REED, HENNESSEY, TAYLOR, HACKETT, SNYDER, HARKINS, SCHLEGEL CULVER, D. MILLER, SCHREIBER, LUCAS, VEREB, DIGIROLAMO, MCCARTER, SWANGER, SABATINA, REGAN, BARBIN, CRUZ, TOO HIL AND CHRISTIANA

The Pennsylvania Safe Schools Act - House Bill 156 (PASS Act) - would create an online database, where school districts would be required to report incidents of bullying, and would establish a deadline for investigations, create reports, and send email updates to school and state officials.

All teachers would be required to take bullying-prevention training every five years. The training would provide prevention and remediation techniques for teachers and staff to use in dealing with bullying incidents. It would use positive behavior support as a tool to change behaviors, and to make sure that all students are protected no matter where or who they are. It ensures accountability and follow-through so that no student is vulnerable.

- School districts would be required to develop clearer and more comprehensive policies to define bullying, to establish procedures for responding to bullying, to report incidents, and to train school district employees to respond to bullying.
- The Department of Education (PDE) would develop a model policy and on-line training for school districts that do not wish to develop their own policies and training programs.
- The PDE would be required to develop an on-line "Safe Schools Portal" that would be used to track incidents of bullying and violence in all PA school districts.
- The "Safe Schools Portal" would periodically generate reports and email them to principals, superintendents, PDE officials, and legislators on a specified schedule. School districts are already required to report these incidents to PDE. The online "Safe Schools Portal" would simplify the reporting process and save administrators time and effort.

There are currently 49 Republicans and 49 Democrats who support this bill. Representative Paul Clymer, the Chairman of the House Education Committee, has not brought the bill to the floor for a vote. The Pennsylvania Family Institute claims that passage of the bill will interfere with "religious expression" because the bill protects LGBT students. The Pennsylvania Family Institute also objects to the requirement of enumeration in the bill. The Institute is trying to prevent Representative Clymer from bringing the bill to the floor for a vote.

Information for this document was obtained from the National Safe Schools Partnership (NSSP), from Pennsylvania Safe Schools Partnership, and from the office of PA Representative Dan Truitt.