

May 3, 2019

State Government Committee

Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the 4,500 elected officials who govern the Commonwealth’s public school districts, **we are writing to request your support of House Bill 283 as amended by proposed amendment A01181**, sponsored by Representative Justin Simmons.

Under the current Right-to-Know law, school districts are required to spend staff time and resources in order to comply with requests for records from commercial entities, many from out-of-state companies, for information that will be used for marketing and profit-making purposes. In addition, many of these types of requests are vague, overbroad or voluminous and can take hours to locate a wide array of records, redact information in the records, or require the involvement of a school district’s attorney to evaluate the request.

School districts are also currently unable to recoup any of the costs associated with complying with these requests because the current fee structure in the law does not allow any fees beyond duplication and mailing costs. As a result, taxpayers are being forced to foot the bill for the search, review, and compilation of records requested for the purpose of generating revenue for the requester.

We are encouraged by and support the approach taken by HB 283, with the proposed amendment, to allow agencies such as school districts to charge reasonable fees which can be assessed for the search, review, and compilation of records which are requested for commercial purposes.

As a membership-driven organization that is pledged to the highest ideals of local lay leadership for public schools, PSBA works to support reforms for the betterment of public education and to promote the achievements of public schools, students and local school boards. We want to thank you for your attention to these important issues and the dedication shown to the students of this great Commonwealth.  If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (717) 506-2450 x3716.

Sincerely,

Jonathan D. Berger

Director of Government Affairs

Pennsylvania School Boards Association