

Legislation Text

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Urging the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to enact House Bill No. 118 which lowers the mandatory school age in Philadelphia from eight (8) to six (6).

WHEREAS, Members of the State House from both parties have supported House Bill No. 118 introduced by State Representative James Roebuck; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 118 would change the definition of “compulsory school age” by reducing the time the child’s parents elect to have the child enter school from not later than eight (8) years to be not later than six (6) years; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Institute for Early Education Research early school experience makes a greater contribution to academic achievement than delaying children’s school entry; and

WHEREAS, The benefits of earlier education are also exhibited to a greater degree among at-risk and socio-economically disadvantaged children wherein access to high quality early childhood education is less available and affordable; and

WHEREAS, A starting age of seven or eight contributes to a large population of over aged middle school students in Philadelphia schools; and

WHEREAS, Delaying the age of school entry has been shown to undermine future prospects for academic success as well as contribute to behavioral difficulties; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is one of only two states (the other being Washington) that has a minimum compulsory attendance age of eight years. Twenty-four other states have a mandatory compulsory attendance age of six years of age, and each of Pennsylvania’s bordering states has a lower minimum attendance age of either five or six years of age; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council urges the members of the General Assembly to enact House Bill No. 118 and commends State Representative James Roebuck and all of the Representatives who have co-sponsored this bill and taken a leadership role in this matter.