



**FOX CHAPEL AREA**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Oral Testimony of  
Douglas M. Weisband  
Before the  
State Government Committee  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Legislative Hearing on House Bill 520,  
"An Act Amending Title 25 (Elections) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes"  
May 2, 2008

Madam Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for granting me this opportunity to speak with you today.

In our nation's earliest elections, candidates were chosen in a smoke filled room by the political party leader. In 1832, when the first National Party Convention assembled, the ability to pick the party nominees became essential for the democratic process. The nominating process is still a crucial procedure and everyone who is eligible to vote for our president needs to be able to vote in the primary as well.

At the last hearing in Philadelphia, the question of whether we should pass this reform as a bill or as an amendment to our State's constitution was raised. Our intention for House Bill 520 is to resolve the date discrepancy as well as the consequential voter disenfranchisement, both of which are issues viewed as obstacles in the eyes of many of America's youth.

As my colleague mentioned before, it has been suggested that this issue could be solved by creating a constitutional amendment. However, it is to my understanding the processes of amending the State's constitution are more extensive and complicated than those of having a bill passed. In fact, it takes two years to amend our State's constitution. If money is the concern, then passing this as a bill instead of as an amendment will be a cost-effective solution.

As I mentioned, if House Bill 520 is transformed into an amendment, a significant amount of time will be needed for it to have a chance to pass. And time, in this instance, is of the essence. House Bill 520 has received a considerable amount of media attention and is currently on the minds of voters and politicians alike. We must capitalize on this momentum and on the progress that has been made in and out of these hearings. If House Bill 520 is not passed now, or even if it is introduced again later, its significance and interest to the public may be lost. Consequently, its passing will become an arduous task to complete. House Bill 520 is a feasible aspiration that may be lost if we do not act on it now.

As I conclude my testimony, I would like the committee to know how wonderful it is to be involved in such an astonishing experience. I am just one of many students involved in this political process in Pennsylvania who are now working together for a better future. Once again thank you Chairman Josephs, members of the committee, and my dedicated teacher, Mrs. Klein. Thank you also Representative Dermody and Representative Grucela for your unwavering support.