

# Pennsylvania Homeschoolers

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A STATEWIDE NETWORK FOR SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT HOME EDUCATION Editors: SUSAN & HOWARD RICHMAN

*Masthead by Molly Richman (Age 9)*

## Compromise on School Age Bill?

A bill, Senate Bill 724, was introduced in the Pennsylvania Senate on March 23rd which would lower the compulsory school age from 8 to 6 on the lower end and raise it from 17 to 18 on the upper end. It was quickly passed out of the Senate Education Committee and was scheduled to be voted on in the Senate on May 4th.

Due to the intense lobbying efforts by homeschoolers across the state through phone calls and in-person lobbying, the Majority Leader of the Senate, Senator Lincoln decided to postpone the vote while he sought a compromise with homeschoolers. Our thanks goes out to the many homeschoolers who responded to this emergency.

On Thursday, the day before this newsletter went to the press, the following compromise was proposed to homeschoolers in Pennsylvania by an aid in Senator Lincoln's office.

The compromise would exempt parents of six- and seven-year-old children who filed an affidavit. Unlike the usual homeschooling affidavit, you would not have to attach objectives, keep portfolios, keep logs, or have your program evaluated. Basically, filing the affidavit, by itself, would be enough for homeschooling six- and seven-year-olds. This would even apply to parents who took six or seven-year-old children out of first or second grade.

In addition, graduates of home education programs would be exempt from the compulsory school laws if they graduate at 16 or 17, even if the compulsory age would be raised to 18.

At the time this newsletter went to press, it was unclear whether we would accept the compromise, or whether we would continue to battle the changes in the compulsory school age. A session at the Lancaster Curriculum Fair on Saturday May 8th was scheduled to permit discussion of this issue. The bill was scheduled to be voted on by the Senators on May 10th. For an update on what happened to the bill, call your state senator, wait for the next issue of the *PA Homeschoolers* newsletter, or send a stamped self-addressed envelope to *PA Homeschoolers*, RD 2 -- Box 117, Kittanning PA 16201, and ask for the latest on Senate Bill 724.

## New Diploma Programs Recognized!

There are now three homeschool organizations giving recognized high school diplomas under the Pennsylvania home education law. The Buxmont Christian Education Institute and the Erie County Home Schoolers have joined the Pennsylvania Homeschoolers Accreditation Agency on a list of recognized diploma options being maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. A current list of these diploma options appear in this issue of and will appear in future issues of this newsletter.

This new list of diploma options appeared in letters sent by Joseph Bard to PHEAA (the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency) and to Penn State University. At the time the letter was sent to Penn State, the university was considering a policy which would have required all homeschoolers to take the GED.

Peter Pryjmak, a homeschool senior from the Greensburg, area had applied to three colleges, including Penn State, and had been accepted to all of them, but Penn State's acceptance was contingent upon him taking the GED even though he was scheduled to receive his diploma from *PA Homeschoolers* accreditation agency on July 10.

He wanted to go to Penn State, but had no intention of going there with this condition. Meanwhile a *PA Homeschoolers* graduate from the previous year, J. Pepper Goslin, was already attending Penn State. Even though he was getting all A's and B's, he was told that he would have to take the GED in order to continue.

Susan and I got involved. After letters and conversations with the admissions people at Penn State and with Joe Bard's office at the Department of Education, Joe Bard wrote a letter to Penn State recognizing the *PA Homeschoolers* diploma as well as the other home education diplomas, and Penn State wrote a letter to Peter Pryjmak dropping the GED requirement.

Susan and I are very pleased with the growing list of diploma granting organizations. We helped the leaders of these organizations submit their standards statements to the Department of Education. In our opinion homeschoolers are served by having many choices in diploma options just as they are served by having many choices in evaluators.