



Senate Education Committee

Senator Mike Folmer
Chairman

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BILL SUMMARY Senate Bill 1030, Printer's No. 1242 Prime Sponsor: Senator Corman

A. SYNOPSIS:

Senate Bill 1030 amends the Public School Code to clarify the Commonwealth's role in regulating a religious educational facility.

B. BILL ANALYSIS:

Senate Bill 1030 amends the Public School Code to limit the Commonwealth's involvement in a religious educational facility's program content, curriculum, faculty, staff, training or principles of religious development or spiritual formation. A religious educational facility is any qualified church or religious institution that provides to children aged two years and seven months and older schooling and programs in the following categories:

- **Pre-kindergarten, pre-school or nursery school**-offers instruction for a minimum of 60 days per academic calendar year to five or more pupils for two to six hours per day. It may extend to seven, if it is in operation at the same time as the instructional day of the religious kindergarten, elementary or secondary school operating on the same premises. These schools must register with the Department of Education.
- **Before or after-school program**-operates for no more than five hours per day on the premises of the religious school attended by the pupils of that school during the regular academic year and is staffed by the regular classroom teachers or staff members at that school.
- **School vacation program**-operated by a religious elementary or secondary school or a vacation Bible school during days when school is not open.

A religious educational facility is subject to background check and child abuse reporting requirements. Nothing in this new section should be construed as preventing the Commonwealth from the following relating to the religious educational facility:

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- Adopting or enforcing regulations that would prohibit physical health or safety threats, unsanitary or dangerous conditions, or any form of child abuse defined by law.
- Imposing staff-child ratio or staff training requirements to prevent threats to physical health or safety or unsanitary or dangerous conditions. (Any before or after school program on the premises of a religious school and staffed by the regular classroom teachers or staff members that maintains the same or similar staff-child ratios as those maintained during the regular school day are not subject to minimum staff requirements).
- Submitting to inspections as authorized by law.
- Compliance with the relevant law, regulations or program guidelines when governmental funding is provided (i.e. Head Start, Pre-K Counts, child care assistance or child care services).
- Compliance with the health and safety laws and regulations promulgated by the appropriate agency or political subdivision (including building and zoning requirements).

This act shall take effect in 60 days.