



PHOENIXVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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March 4, 2024

Senator Bob Casey
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator John Fetterman
142 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan
1727 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Casey and Fetterman and Congresswoman Houlahan,

We, the undersigned School Board Directors of the Phoenixville Area School District (PASD), write to request your assistance in reforming the requirements to host Junior Reserve Officer Training units at high schools across Pennsylvania and the United States.

Since 2015, Phoenixville has been the home to a strong Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (AFJROTC) unit that provided valuable services to our community, taught our students self-reliance, self-discipline and other leadership characteristics, and prepared dozens of students for successful careers in the United States Armed Services or other public service fields.

Unfortunately, on November 15, 2023 a letter was sent to Phoenixville Superintendent Missy McTiernan informing her that due to a failure to meet minimum enrollment standards set forth under Title 10 U.S. Code 2031 and in "The best interest of the Air Force," that the program would be deactivated at the end of the school year. As of the date of this letter, the PASD AFJROTC unit has 62 dedicated, active student members who will lose out on this important citizenship program if our unit is deactivated. The minimum number of cadets required by law is 10% of the student population or 100 students, whichever is less – an unreasonably high minimum, particularly for small and medium sized schools, that would require it to be among the largest extracurricular activities in the school.

While we recognize that JROTC programs are not recruiting programs and do not obligate students to any future military service, students who join the unit are likely interested in serving our country in some way. At a time when our nation faces a decline in many forms of national service and our Military's recruitment chiefs warn we are in a "recruiting crisis," we should be doing everything possible to promote public service and open, not close, doors for students who show interest in learning about leadership and the core values of our Military.

We believe that a review of the laws governing JROTC programs in the United States is not only in the interest of our 62 students but will benefit students across Pennsylvania and help demonstrate the virtue of public service for students across the nation. Further, given the importance of addressing the military recruitment crisis, we are hopeful this review could attract broad bipartisan support.

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Please do not hesitate to reach out to us to discuss this issue further or if you have any additional questions. Thank you for your continued support of our students and our public education system and we hope you agree this is an important issue worthy of Congressional review and action.

Sincerely,



Susan Turner
Board President



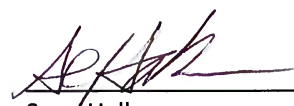
Scott Overland
Board Vice President



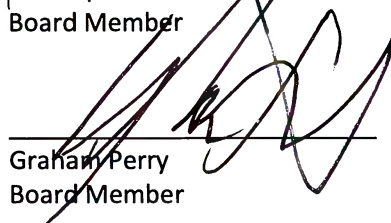
Dr. Stephanie Allen
Board Member




Caitlyn Carminito
Board Member



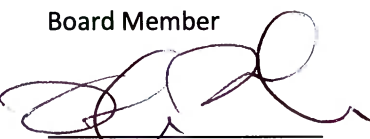
Sean Halloran
Board Member



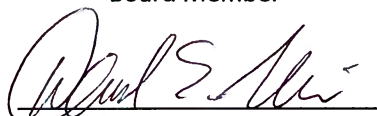
Graham Perry
Board Member



Frank Venezia
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Victoria Walker
Board Member



Daniel Wisner
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