



## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

### **January, 2004**

#### *School Police Officer Training.*

Recently, the House of Representatives passed House Bills 857 and 856 which, if fully enacted, would amend Section 7-778 of the Public School Code and the Municipal Code to require peace officer training for all school police officers.

Section 7-778 of the School Code enables school districts to hire school police officers to exercise the same powers as municipal police officers including issuing citations, making arrests and carrying firearms. At present, although properly appointed school police officers hold the same powers as municipal police officers, they are not required to be certified or to obtain the same training as municipal police officers. Specifically, HB 857 would require all school districts to provide the proper training to their school police officers as set forth in the Municipal Code and would give school police officers a two year grace period to obtain the proper training. In addition, HB 856 would require every school district that employs school police officers to report to the Department of Education the following information: (1) the number of school police officers employed; (2) the municipalities comprising the school district; and (3) the date and type of training provided to each school police officer.

The Bills have been passed to the Senate for a vote. For updates on these Bills please, revisit this page.

#### *Wage Payment and Collection Law.*

House Bill 1128 recently was passed by the House of Representatives which seeks to amend the Wage Payment and Collection Law to expand the definition of “employer” to include the Commonwealth and all political subdivisions including public school districts.

The Wage Payment and Collection Law, 43 P.S. §260.1 *et seq.* allows employees to recover unpaid wages and liquidated damages from employers who wrongfully withhold their wages. At present, the Wage Law does not cover public school districts as employers and therefore, public school employees can not make claims for unpaid wages under the Wage Law. Although this legislation would have little impact with regard to many school employees who are part of a collective bargaining unit and would most likely resort to the grievance/arbitration process to resolve such claims, other employees not represented by unions would now have a process to individually challenge any failure to pay wages in a timely manner.

The Bill has been passed to the Senate for a vote. For updates on this Bill, please revisit this page.

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