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## **Governor Wolf Announces “It’s On Us PA” Legislation** *Proposed statutes will help protect students from sexual assault*

**Harrisburg, PA** – As part of his “It’s On Us PA” campaign to protect Pennsylvania students from a nationwide epidemic of sexual violence, Governor Tom Wolf today announced the introduction of six new pieces of legislation.

“These steps, along with those we have already taken to combat sexual assault, will strengthen the systems we currently have, and create better standards for reporting and responding to sexual assaults whenever they occur,” Governor Wolf said. “It is critically important that we continue the progress we’ve already made, and continue our work to ensure that our k-12 and postsecondary institutions have the tools they need to combat sexual assault.”

In January 2016, [Governor Wolf launched the “It’s On Us PA” campaign](#), inviting education leaders and all Pennsylvanians to be part of the solution to protect students from sexual violence.

Convening four roundtable discussions across the state, and bringing together more than 150 students, educators, administrators, advocates, healthcare personnel, researchers, and policymakers, Governor Wolf and members of his administration heard diverse perspectives and comprehensive ideas on the roles each could play to end sexual violence in Pennsylvania. Thousands of Pennsylvanians, including university and college presidents from hundreds of institutions around the commonwealth signed the [“It’s On Us” Pledge](#).

Additionally, in the 2016-17 budget the Wolf Administration secured \$ 1 million in funding to support evidence-based sexual assault prevention, reporting, and response systems on college campuses. In November 2016, Governor Wolf [announced](#) awards to 36 postsecondary institutions as part of the “It’s On Us PA” Grants Program.

Based on the comprehensive “It’s On Us PA” round table discussions, there are six current items of legislation being proposed in the General Assembly:

- Expand the scope, authority, and capacity of PDE’s Office for Safe Schools to support both K-12 and postsecondary institutions, as well as monitor compliance with existing federal and state requirements related to sexual violence prevention and response.
- Publish an annual report card on sexual violence and harassment in K-12 and postsecondary institutions using existing data reported to the Department and/or other publicly reported data.
- Amend PA School Code to create a consolidated, comprehensive anti-violence and anti-harassment policy for K-12 schools that aligns requirements related to bullying, hazing, sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, and other issues.
- Require postsecondary institutions adopt affirmative consent standards for responding to allegations of sexual violence, and expand K-12 health education standards to explicitly address areas of consent and healthy relationships in middle and high school.
- Require that postsecondary institutions offer online, anonymous reporting options for students as part of their required reporting and response systems under federal and state law.
- Establish amnesty policies protecting students who report sexual assault to postsecondary institutions from being disciplined for other policy violations, such as drug and alcohol use.

“I’m proud to stand with Governor Wolf today in support of the “Its On Us” campaign, and to introduce legislation requiring colleges and universities provide amnesty to those who come forward about sexual violence that they have experienced, or witnessed,” said Rep. Madeleine Dean. “Sadly, most instances of sexual violence go unreported. Beyond the difficulty of coming forward, victims and Samaritans should not fear further punishment for incidental infractions.”

“I am ready to get to work to pass this package of legislation, and to ensure that the state is investing our money as effectively as possible, and I believe that there is no better investment than the safety and security of our young people,” Governor Wolf added. “We cannot allow sexual assault in Pennsylvania to

continue, and we will no longer tolerate its existence in our educational institutions.”

**MEDIA CONTACTS:** J.J. Abbott, 717.783.1116

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