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## **Pennsylvania Rejects Metal Bat Ban**

### ***After Hearing Evidence, Governor and Legislative Leaders Announce Opposition; Bill All But Dead***

#### **"I Don't Think This Has a Prayer," Says Committee Chair**

**HARRISBURG, PA** – Weeks after lawmakers heard strong opposition from their constituents, league officials, players, and parents to a proposed ban on metal bats in youth baseball and softball, lawmakers and Governor Ed Rendell have roundly rejected the legislation. This week, a news report said Governor Rendell thought equipment decisions should be left to leagues and officials and that he would veto the bill if it emerged from the Legislature, all but sealing its fate.

"This is great news for the kids and for the games of baseball and softball in Pennsylvania. We take safety very seriously and we have rules in place to protect the players, but we also want to keep our sport fun. We're glad the legislature and the Governor agree with us that these decisions are best left to leagues and the governing bodies, not state government," said Stacey Stuck, Junior Olympic Commissioner for the Amateur Softball Association of PA and State Co-Chair of the Don't Take My Bat Away Coalition.

"I'm proud that our leaders made their decision based on the facts, and the facts are that these bats are just as safe as wood. We welcome a discussion about safety, because baseball and softball are two of the safest sports for our kids to play, and we have a very good story to tell. Now that this is over, we can get back to playing ball," said Abraham Key, President and CEO of PONY Baseball and Softball and State Co-Chair of the Don't Take My Bat Away Coalition.

#### **EXCERPTS FROM NEWS REPORTS FOLLOWING THE HEARING:**

"I've gotten over 100 letters and e-mails from people all over the state," said Rep. Louise Bishop, D-Philadelphia, committee chairwoman. "They don't like us taking their metal bats away. I don't think this [idea] has a prayer."

"I will oppose this bill," said Rep. Bryan Cutler, R-Lancaster. "This is government reaching too far and trying to micromanage sports at the local level."

"I am tired of the General Assembly going where it doesn't belong," said Rep. Dan Moul, R-Adams.

Rep. Frank Andrews Shimkus, D-Lackawanna: "I have to oppose this bill. The Little League's No. 1 priority is safety. [Bat use] is something we should leave to the Little League."

*(Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 9/28/07).*

After a 90-minute hearing by the House Children and Youth Committee on the proposed metal bat ban, the chairwoman, Rep. Louise Williams Bishop (D., Phila.), said it had virtually no chance to pass. "The committee thus far has not been favorable," said Bishop, who has received more than 100 letters in opposition.

"Judging from some of the comments, it doesn't sound too optimistic for the bill's future," said the bill's sponsor, Rep. Michael Carroll (D-Luzerne).

*(Associated Press, 9/28/07).*

The bat bill is a long shot to become law, according to state Rep. Steven W. Cappelli, R-Williamsport. "I am very confident that this legislation will not get out of committee," Cappelli said.

*(Williamsport Sun-Gazette, 9/28/07).*

A spokesman for Governor Ed Rendell told CBS 21 Sports Director Jason Bristol on Tuesday that the Governor would veto any bill banning non-wood bats, unless it contains a provision to compensate all local little leagues for the cost of wood bats. Chuck Ardo, the Governor's Press Secretary, also said Rendell believes the choice of whether to use metal or wood should be left up to coaches and parents.

*(WHP CBS Channel 21, Harrisburg PA, 10/16/07)*