



anticipated that such contacts would be perceived by homeschoolers as attempts to intimidate them.

In Issue #53 of the PA Homeschoolers we gave the phone number of the Office of School Services (717-787-4860) which people could call to obtain a copy of the BEC and invited them to call someone on our Liaison Committee to ask for an update on the current situation and action plan.

To respond to this BEC, our Liaison committee met together by conference call on November 12 and came up with a plan of action. Our first step was to bring this BEC and its problems to the attention of Gov. Ridge's people who now lead the PA Dept. of Education. We hoped that the BEC was issued by career bureaucrats without the Ridge Administration being aware of its implications. During the meeting we edited and decided to send (and FAX) a letter that I had written to Greg White at the Department of Education. We also approved a letter which Dee Black (HSLDA) had written and was prepared to send to Mary Ann Nobers at the Department.

Our letter received a quick response. A few days later we received a phone reply that Greg White had assigned one of his assistants to look into the matter and by the end of November he called to say that all of the parts of the BEC which we objected to would be withdrawn.

Then in December, the Department of Education issued a revised BEC replacing the bad one, and eliminating all of the language referring to age 8. The revised circular just includes innocuous language about school district's responsibilities regarding students who were 21 years-old or over.

### **Our Thanks to Ridge Administration**

I am sure that the School Services Office at the Department of Education took note that homeschoolers have friends among the Ridge Administration people who head their Department. It is likely that we will see a continuing improvement in relations between that office and the homeschooling community for the remaining years of the Ridge Administration.

If, in the future, your school district tries to exceed the law with their requirements, please write a letter to the

PA Department of Education (School Services Office, Department of Education, 333 Market St, Harrisburg PA 17126-0333). If you do not get a satisfactory reply from the Department, please send your letter and that reply to us and we will take them up with Greg White.

You may wish to take the time now to thank Secretary Hickok and Greg White for removing the parts of BEC 8-95 which would have negatively affected homeschoolers. Their addresses are:

Eugene W. Hickok, Secretary  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Greg White, Policy Director  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

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### **PHAA Incorporates**

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*from Howard Richman*

On January 1, 1996, the Pennsylvania Homeschoolers Accreditation Agency incorporated as a non-profit corporation. The Board of Directors approved the Bylaws and elected officers. The officers are:

Executive Director: Howard Richman

Secretary: Debra Newell

Treasurer: Karen Boyd.

Anyone who wants a copy of the bylaws can find them at our Internet site ([www.penn.com/~pahome](http://www.penn.com/~pahome)) or can send us a self addressed stamped envelope.

The new bylaws give membership privileges to those who were members of the unincorporated association (the homeschooling supervisors who have students in the program and the evaluators listed with a "P" in this newsletter). Also a new class of members was established — "Alumni members" — for both parents who have supervised our

graduates as well as for our graduates themselves.

The only major change made by the bylaws has to do with alumni members. (We worried that having to notify all alumni of our annual membership meeting could break the bank if we didn't ask alumni to pay their way.) Those alumni who want to keep their membership current (so that they will be notified of the annual meeting and can vote) will have to pay a yearly \$5 membership fee. They will receive an alumni newsletter which will go out once a year.

### **Navy Opening to Homeschoolers**

*from Howard Richman*

An out-of-court settlement reached by the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) promises to open the Navy to homeschool graduates on the same basis as traditional school graduates.

While homeschoolers have been able to enlist in the military (for example PA Homeschoolers graduates are currently in the Army, Air Force, and National Guard) those who do so have faced discrimination in their initial choice of military specialties and in their opportunities for certain enlistment incentives such as college loan reimbursements.

According to David Gordon, staff attorney, the HSLDA recently reached an *Agreement in Principle* with the Secretary of Defense arising out of one of their court cases. The Navy has agreed that until the end of 1998, it will open the Navy to homeschoolers admitting them on basically the same terms as traditional high schoolers. At the end of that time, all of the homeschoolers admitted will be tracked for attrition-rate purposes. If their attrition rates are comparable to traditional high schoolers that information will be given to the Department of Defense for use in a revision of enlistment policy which would affect all the military services. This agreement will probably be signed by an attorney representing the Secretary of Defense and go into effect before the end of March (1996).

Until the end of 1998, the Navy will be the only military service that stops discriminating against homeschoolers. After that (if homeschoolers who enter the Navy stick) all of the military services will probably stop discriminating. So, if you have a student who is interested in military enlistment before the end of 1998, urge them to consider the Navy.