

# The Indiana Coalition for Public Education

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**FOR RELEASE: MAY 7, 2018 7 A.M.**

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## **BILL PUTS 5,000 STUDENTS AT RISK OF BULLYING AND ABUSE**

INDIANAPOLIS, MAY 7, 2018 -- The safety and education of more than 5,000 Muncie public school students are at risk if the Indiana General Assembly passes House Bill 1315 in the May 14 special session, according to the Indiana Coalition for Public Education (ICPE).

“The bill is flawed and incomplete,” said Vic Smith, an ICPE board member. “The future of Muncie students is too important to rush to pass a bill that could put students in danger.”

House Bill 1315 would put the Muncie Community Schools (MCS) district under the control of Ball State University and exempt the district from many laws that govern Indiana’s public schools.

ICPE opposed many provisions of HB 1315 during the regular Indiana General Assembly 2018 session. The bill seemed dead after it failed to come up for a vote on the final day.

“Now the bill will be brought back in the Indiana General Assembly May 14 special session, and it’s as bad as before,” said Smith.

The organization cited 10 reasons it is asking General Assembly members to vote no on the bill:

1. MCS will not be subject to the bullying prevention law.
2. Muncie taxpayers could permanently lose their district, because there is no time limit for the district to be managed by Ball State University.
3. After the legislative session ended, Ball State publicly said it doesn’t have the time or resources to manage MCS.<sup>1</sup>
4. MCS will be exempt from the law requiring instruction about child abuse and child sexual abuse.
5. MCS will be exempt from the law that reduces student restraint and seclusion.
6. MCS won’t have to issue an annual performance report.
7. MCS will be exempt from the law requiring the superintendent’s contract to be made public.
8. MCS won’t have to check employees’ references.
9. The bill will allow non-resident outsiders to serve on the Muncie school board and vote on raising the school taxes of residents, an historic first for Indiana.
10. MCS will be exempt from the law requiring instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation -- and hundreds of other laws, putting the safety and education of more than 5,000 Muncie public school students at risk.

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<sup>1</sup> The Star Press, March 23, 2018

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“This is the worst form of this bill,” said Smith. “Just before the final day, amendments made by the Senate to improve the bill were stripped out.”

General Assembly leaders announced April 20 they would resurrect House Bill 1315 in the one-day special session and allow no amendments and no public testimony.

“We regret that much-needed financial relief for the district is now tied to a flawed bill,” Smith said. “We would prefer to see the proposed financial relief considered separately. Muncie students should not lose protection of the bullying law or of any of the hundreds of other laws the Indiana General Assembly has passed to protect the state’s other public school students.”

ICPE is a grassroots, bi-partisan, not-for-profit, taxpayer group focused on preserving public dollars for public schools. For more information about the Indiana Coalition for Public Education, visit [icpe2011.com](http://icpe2011.com).

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EDITORS NOTE: Indiana Code numbers for the cited laws MCS would be exempted from are available upon request.