



Act 153 of 2014: Requiring comprehensive criminal and child abuse background checks Broader, regularly updated background checks applicable to paid employees and volunteers

On October 22nd House Bill 435 (PN 4225) was signed into law becoming [Act 153 of 2014](#).

The final version of this legislation, which addresses background checks for employees and volunteers arrived on Governor Corbett's desk following a unanimous vote in the Pennsylvania Senate ([RCS# 760](#)) and a 175 to 18 vote ([RCS# 1764](#)) in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

Act 153 of 2014, which was spearheaded by [Representative Dan Moul](#) (R-Adams and Franklin), will have a direct impact on paid employees working with children **and** unpaid volunteers in Pennsylvania, including those volunteering in churches and faith-based organizations.

The law outlines the eight types of "employees" that are subject to comprehensive and regularly updated criminal and child abuse background checks (see Table 1).

This new PA law extends beyond paid employees so that it is applicable to those unpaid volunteers "responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children." The Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) defines "direct contact with children" as "The care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children."

While many community-based programs (e.g., Girl and Boy Scouts, school chaperones, youth sports programs) and religiously-affiliated organizations have long required background checks for volunteers, Pennsylvania law provides a specific directive on the timing and type of checks now required.

These new legal requirements will force many community-based organizations and churches to rework

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