

November 20, 2015

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to ask for your support of House Bill 414 which will soon be before the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill was favorably amended and reported from the Senate Finance Committee on November 18 to include comprehensive municipal uniformed union pension reform.

As you know, the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce strongly believes that meaningful municipal-level pension reform is necessary. For a number of years we have been a part of the *Coalition for Sustainable Communities* – a coalition of over 25 chambers of commerce and business organizations, the Pennsylvania Municipal League, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

The *Coalition for Sustainable Communities* has lobbied for common sense local fire and police pension reform for over five years. We have done so because these pension costs are almost always a substantial expense of municipal government budgets and continue to rapidly grow well beyond what is fiscally sustainable for taxpayers and local governments. The consequence of widespread, underfunded pensions is less public safety, more debt, higher taxes, a diminished and less attractive community environment for businesses and families alike, and a threat to the pension plans themselves.

The amendment that was incorporated into HB 414 blends the concepts of multiple legislative proposals as well as the majority of the recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Municipal Pension Reform chaired and supported by Auditor General DePasquale.

We commend state policy makers for working to address both state-level and municipal-level pension reform. Therefore, the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce strongly supports this legislation, and we encourage you and this Committee to support it and move it through the legislative process.

Sincerely,



Dennis Yablonsky
CEO, Allegheny Conference on Community Development