

**Testimony to the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee**  
***Senate Bills 1130/1131***

**11/30 Visitors Center, Chambersburg, PA**

**October 9, 2020**

***Senator Doug Mastriano, 33<sup>rd</sup> District, Chair***

Senator Mastriano and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the merits of Senate Bills 1130 and 1131 and the importance of periodic reviews of state agencies for the purpose of validating their relevance, and to evaluate as to whether certain functions should be consolidated to effectuate greater efficiencies in the delivery and administration of programs and policies. Too often agencies and/or programs are created to address a specific circumstance(s) or need(s) and while the original intent might have achieved the intended effect, over time the agency or program becomes bastardized by taking on roles and responsibilities that are on the periphery of its mission. As a result, it generally leads to duplication of programs and services, delivery and administrative inefficiencies, and public confusion.

Because I do not have enough knowledge or interactions with the agencies identified in SB 1130, I am not qualified to speak to them specifically, with the exception as I stated previously: apply a standard of

periodic review of all agencies to validate their relevancy and efficiencies.

With respect to SB 1131 and the need to consolidate workforce development programs, you are on the right track. Currently, workforce development is fragmented as there are eight agencies of which I am aware engaged in workforce development to include Labor & Industry; Department of Community & Economic Development; Department of Education; Department of Aging; Department of Corrections; Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; and the Department of Human Services. It is an alphabet soup of programs that is confusing to the public as each has its own funding, rules and regulations. In addition, there is the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) that annually channels upwards of a \$100 Million into Pennsylvania and is administered by a network of regional workforce development boards. In total, when calculating federal and state funds, as much as \$175 Million is being spent annually in our Commonwealth and the question is “are we receiving a commensurate return on our investment?” Is there a better way to consolidate and direct our workforce dollars to assure better outcomes? In my opinion, the answer to the first question is no and the

answer to the second is yes.

While, one can argue effectively that workforce development should be consolidated within the Department of Labor & Industry or into a newly created Department of Economic and Workforce Development, one could also argue that it could be consolidated in the Department of Education. The primary purpose of education from pre-school through post-graduate education is to teach and train individuals to be productive and contributing members of society. The whole purpose of our vocational education system (CareerTech Centers), which is housed in the Department of Education, is workforce development. Take OVR as another example. It seems to me that it should be consolidated in the PDE where millions of dollars are invested annually in teaching students with special needs. It appears to me that there is a natural synergy. Who is better at delivering training programs than educators...that's what they do!

Perhaps we could direct more of our workforce development dollars into expanding and enhancing our educational programs so that we need far less remedial training post-graduation to enter the workforce. If our

workforce has the requisite employability skills upon graduation from high school and/or post-secondary schools, employers will generally invest in whatever additional training specific to the employer.

Pennsylvania's long-term economic sustainability will be inextricably tied to an educated and trained workforce. Regardless as to whether our workforce development programs are consolidated in PDE or L&I or a new agency is created, workforce development needs to be concentrated primarily in one agency for operational efficiency, and so that employers and the public at large know how to access necessary resources.

So, to conclude, as president of the Franklin County Area Development Corporation and vice-chair of the southcentral workforce development board, I support the core principles of SB 1131. Again, thank you for allowing me to testify today and I will answer any questions.