



TRANSPARENT TIMES

A Publication of the Pennsylvania House
State Government Committee
Representative Daryl D. Metcalfe, Chairman

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2011 COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOKING AHEAD THROUGH 2012

A Year in Review

With the recent passage of Senate Bill 1249, the Congressional Redistricting Act of 2011, the House State Government Committee concluded an active and historic year. In total, the Committee held 38 open and transparent Committee meetings and successfully passed 27 bills to the floor of the House, addressing issues ranging from states' rights to reducing the regulatory burden of state government on small businesses.

The Committee also held 12 public hearings, where members were able to hear valuable input from the public on a broad spectrum of legislative issues, including making English the official language of Pennsylvania and reducing the size of the state legislature.

Six pieces of the legislation passed out of the Committee were also signed into law during 2011. This includes the PennWATCH legislation (House Bill 15), sponsored by Representative Jim Christiana, which will establish an online database of state expenditures. Other bills signed into law included legislation to increase the penalties for violation of the Sunshine Act and legislation

which requires the Independent Regulatory Review Commission to consider whether a regulation is based on and supported by empirical, replicable and testable data.

The Committee also passed House Bill 934 (Metcalfe), which would require all voters to show photo identification each and every time they vote. House Bill 934 was successfully passed on the floor of the House and is currently awaiting Senate approval. Chairman Metcalfe hopes the legislation will be able to take effect for the 2012 presidential primary.

The Committee also addressed the illegal alien invasion occurring in Pennsylvania. A total of six bills from the National Security Begins at Home legislative package were passed out of committee, tackling issues including E-Verify, public benefits and sanctuary cities. House Bill 439, sponsored by Representative Mark Mustio, is currently awaiting Senate approval. This legislation would allow the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs to revoke the license of any individual or business who knowingly hires an unauthorized alien.

Looking Ahead through 2012

The State Government Committee does not plan to slow down in 2012. In anticipation of state budget shortfalls and increasing accountability throughout state government agencies, the Committee expects to address the issue of performance-based budgeting. House Bill 726, sponsored by House Majority Whip Stan Saylor, would provide for budgeting to link a state agency's appropriation to the agency's performance. During 2011, the State Government Committee held a public hearing and informational meeting on the issue of performance-based budgeting.

Committee members and other legislators have also expressed an interest in state pension reform. Chairman Metcalfe plans to hold meetings on the various pension bills in the Committee, including switching from a defined-benefit plan to a defined-contribution plan and establishing an optional retirement program.

Other legislative issues that Chairman Metcalfe and Members have expressed an interest in moving forward with include protecting marriage and increasing freedom in the workplace. House Bill 1434, sponsored by Chairman Metcalfe, would amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to define marriage as a legal union of "one man and one woman." House Bill 942, sponsored by Representative Curt Schroder, would ensure that no employer would be allowed to deduct any money from an employee's wages for political purposes without written authorization of the employee. This requirement would include that portion of labor organization dues deductions that are used for political purposes.

The State Government Committee also plans to further its initiative to pass legislation to increase government transparency, protect taxpayers and facilitate policies that enable job creation in the Commonwealth.

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