



PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION of TEACHERS

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE LEGISLATURE

FROM: JERRY T. JORDAN, PRESIDENT, PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

RE: School Code Legislation (HB 178); Marcellus Shale Tax

SEPTEMBER 21, 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerry', is located to the right of the header information.

Both legislative chambers must proceed with urgency towards the settlement of a budget spending plan that invests in our children and communities and holds large corporations accountable. It is discouraging that, months after passing a compromise budget, a spending plan remains elusive. It is incumbent upon the House to negotiate a plan that implements a tax on the Marcellus Shale, and prioritizes investing in public education. Further, the Senate must continue to hold fast to their rejection of the House approved spending plan.

As you work towards a resolution, please consider the following:

SCHOOL CODE LEGISLATION: Economic Furloughs

The Senate's school code vehicle, HB 178, contains language that allows for public school employees to be terminated for economic reasons and removes all due process from layoff provisions in collective bargaining agreements. This language should be removed from HB 178.

- This explicitly prohibits collective bargaining agreements from preventing or even addressing economic based layoffs. This legislation further solidifies the collective bargaining restrictions on educators and local public school districts.
- **HB 178 seeks to scapegoat educators by utilizing an exceedingly flawed evaluation system as a means of determining layoff procedures.** The evaluation system, Act 82, has been a catastrophic failure in its implementation. Act 82 is a punitive means of measuring educator "performance" rather than a holistic approach to improving school resources and the funding inequities that continue to adversely affect districts across the state.
- Moreover, this language applies only to professional educators employed by Public School Districts, not to employees of Charter and Cyber Charter Schools that are funded by the taxpayers in those Public School Districts.

This anti-educator, anti-seniority, anti-union language must be removed from HB 178.

SCHOOL CODE LEGISLATION: Additional areas of concern

A number of other provisions have been floated as part of a school code vehicle during this budget cycle. We urge that legislators reject the following, either as part of the school code, or as standalone legislation:

- SB 228 [Economic furlough]: **OPPOSED**
- SB 229 [Elimination of guaranteed sick leave for educators]: **OPPOSED**
- SB 383 [Guns in schools]: **OPPOSED**
- SB 756 [Punitive evaluation changes]: **OPPOSED**
- HB 97 [Charter 'reform']: **OPPOSED**
- HB 164 [Prohibition of union leave]: **OPPOSED**
- HB 250 [EITC expansion]: **OPPOSED**
- HB 857 [Amends private academic schools out]: **OPPOSED**
- HB 1495 [Layoffs]: **OPPOSED**
- HB 1717 [Individual Scholarship Empowerment Accounts]: **OPPOSED**

FUNDING LEGISLATION

The time for a tax on the Marcellus Shale is now.

The PFT has long advocated for a severance tax. With the IFO's promising revenue estimates issued this spring coupled with the need to fund the FY 2017-18 budget package, it is imperative that the legislature to enact a true severance tax now.

The IFO projects in 2018-19, a modest 6.5% severance tax would generate \$712 Million in revenue. This would balloon to an estimated \$1.1 Billion in 2022.* Taxing an industry flush with money simply makes sense.

Schoolchildren across the Commonwealth are constitutionally entitled to a thorough and efficient public education. **We urge House and Senate leadership and members to enact the passage of a true severance tax.**

**Full IFO analysis:*

http://www.ifo.state.pa.us/download.cfm?file=/Resources/Documents/Revenue_Proposal_Analysis_April2017.pdf

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