



PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION of TEACHERS

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE HOUSE

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

RE: School Code Legislation (HB 178); Charter School Legislation (HB 97); Marcellus Shale Tax (HB1401)

OCTOBER 18, 2017

It is incumbent upon the House to negotiate a plan that implements a tax on the Marcellus Shale, and prioritizes investing in public education.

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

SCHOOL CODE LEGISLATION: Economic Furloughs

The School Code vehicle, HB 178, currently 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, hampering their ability to implement practices that best support strengthening public education.
- **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 taxpayer funded cyber charter and charter schools.

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

HOUSE BILL 97: Charter Expansion

House Bill 97, presented as charter “reform,” simply fails to address in any substantive way the funding discrepancies that exist between charter, cyber charter, and public schools.

Instead, it establishes a new funding advisory commission that consists of solely political appointees to review charter funding mechanisms. Charter funding has been subject to a significant amount of research, both within our organization and in the broader education community. Subjecting Pennsylvania’s charter funding to additional review by a political committee is simply another means of kicking the can in the name of “reform.” [p.8-16]

Additionally, the adopted Senate amendment (A02449), further opens the door for decreased charter oversight and increased charter expansion.

I am attaching my July memo on HB 97, which outlines in more detail our opposition.

FUNDING LEGISLATION

The time for a tax on the Marcellus Shale is now. We are in SUPPORT of HB1401.

It is imperative that we fund a budget that invests in children and communities.

A shale tax simply makes sense. With HB1401 projected to generate \$400 million annually, it is our best path forward towards funding critical programs and services.

Please vote to invest in our children and communities and pass HB1401. Tax the shale.

Contact:

Hillary Linardopoulos

PFT Legislative Representative | hillaryL@pft.org | 215-587-6752