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Dec. 3, 2013

The Honorable Paul Clymer  
Majority Chairman  
House Education Committee  
216 Ryan Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2145

The Honorable James Roebuck  
Minority Chairman  
House Education Committee  
208 Irvis Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2188

**Re: Support reforming teacher seniority-based rules for school districts in Pennsylvania**

Dear Chairmen Clymer and Roebuck:

On behalf of our thousands of members throughout the Commonwealth, the PA Chamber of Business and Industry writes to express support for reforming teacher seniority-based rules for school districts in Pennsylvania, a topic for which the House Education Committee has scheduled a hearing today.

As the largest broad-based business advocacy association in the Commonwealth, we are familiar with and engaged in a wide range of public policies that impact different segments of the business community and employers in general. A challenge that permeates virtually all sectors of our economy is the difficulty employers experience finding qualified applicants to fill positions.

This unfortunate reality was further substantiated by a survey we conducted in April 2013 of 464 Chamber members in which 72 percent of respondents cited difficulty hiring employees with adequate skills, training, or education. Even more disconcerting was that a majority believe the problem has gotten worse and will become even more daunting in the years ahead. This situation is unacceptable and addressing it will require participation from all stakeholders and a willingness to thoroughly review and improve the manner in which young Pennsylvanians are educated and prepared for the workplace.

Accordingly, our Education Policy position statement calls for: holding educators accountable for student performance; increasing authority and flexibility superintendents and principals have over management and personnel decisions; and rewarding teachers whose performance contributes to growth in student achievement while at the same time fairly and efficiently removing ineffective educators.

Proposals to reform teacher seniority-based rules for school districts in Pennsylvania are consistent with this policy position and I urge your support. Today's students will be tomorrow's workforce in an increasingly global and competitive economy and they deserve a system of accountability and support to help ensure they possess the knowledge and skill set to prepare them for productive adulthood.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex J. Halper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alex Halper  
Director, Government Affairs