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August 15, 2011

The Honorable Ron Miller, Chairman
PA House Labor and Industry Committee
115 Ryan Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2093

Dear Chairman Miller:

I write on behalf of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry to express support for four bills that address forced union membership in Pennsylvania and will be the subject of a House Labor and Industry Committee public hearing on August 16, 2011.

The PA Chamber supports the establishment of Pennsylvania as a "Right to Work" state. Pennsylvania currently has no law to protect employees from being compelled to join a union and/or pay contributions to a union as a condition of employment. The absence of such protections is unfair to those who are forced to pay dues to and be a member of an organization with whom they may disagree and otherwise would not voluntarily choose to join. Forced union membership is even more unreasonable when you consider the vast sums of money spent by the labor community on lobbying, campaign donations and political activism.

As a state-wide advocate for the business community, it would certainly be convenient and profitable for the PA Chamber if businesses wishing to incorporate in Pennsylvania were forced to join our organization. Of course, it does not work that way. The PA Chamber, along with any other membership-based organization, must work to attract new members and demonstrate effectiveness to retain existing members. There is no reason why unions could not operate the same way...unless they doubt their ability to demonstrate effectiveness.

Establishing our Commonwealth as a Right to Work state would also help improve the perception of Pennsylvania's business climate, which is viewed unfavorably by many business and industry leaders. In *Chief Executive Magazine's* annual Best/Worst States For Business Study, Pennsylvania was ranked a dismal 39 out of 50 and was highlighted as one of five states with the biggest drop over the past five years. Certainly numerous factors are used to determine this ranking – yet it is worth noting that nine of the top ten states are Right to Work States and none of the bottom ten offer Right to Work protections for their citizens.

The PA Chamber supports HB 50, which would establish Pennsylvania as a Right to Work state, and HB 51, HB 52 and HB 53, which specifically protect from forced union membership, public education employees, state employees and local government employees, respectively. We urge the committee to consider these bills when the House returns to session. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alex Halper
Manager, Government Affairs

cc: Chairman Bill Keller