



TO: The Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania Senate Education Committee  
FROM: Alisha Wells, Manager, Government Affairs  
DATE: Oct. 24, 2011  
RE: Support school choice and expansion of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit

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On behalf of its thousands of statewide member businesses of all sizes and crossing all industry sectors, the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry is writing to express support for legislation that establishes an opportunity scholarship program and expands access to the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program. We respectfully request that you support the Piccola-Williams amendment to S.B. 1.

The short and long-term competitiveness of our state hinges on our ability to provide the students of Pennsylvania with a quality education. A well-educated workforce is a critical component to our state's economic health. Unfortunately, although Pennsylvania continues to invest in public education, we see consistently poor returns. Data from No Child Left Behind indicates that some of our schools are failing to adequately prepare our students for higher education or a position in the workforce. As business leaders, we know that these trends must change in order to ensure a vibrant economy, a good quality of life and the future success of our children.

The Pennsylvania Chamber fully supports Gov. Tom Corbett's education reform policy and recognizes choice as a vital component of this package. Opportunity scholarships would provide low-income families that reside within the boundaries of a failing school district with the opportunity to decide where their child goes to school. The PA Chamber's member-driven education policy specifically supports competition-driven educational systems and programs such as opportunity scholarships and charter schools.

In addition, the PA Chamber supports provisions within S.B. 1 to expand the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program. The EITC program was established in 2001 and enables the business community to help families and organizations provide a better education for Pennsylvania's children. Thousands of schools and low-income children have benefitted from EITC and it is our hope that expansion of this program will allow for increased participation in the program.

We encourage you to vote "yes" on the Piccola-Williams amendment to Senate Bill 1. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Alisha Wells at 717 720-5431 or [awells@pachamber.org](mailto:awells@pachamber.org).

