



PRESS RELEASE

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PA Chamber applauds Senate passage of education reform bill

HARRISBURG, PA – The **Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry** today applauded the state Senate for advancing legislation (S.B. 1) that would ensure that the state’s public education system better meets the needs of all students.

“Passage of Senate Bill 1 is a good first step toward making sure public education is delivered in a way that matches students’ ability to learn; fostering overall student achievement; and ensuring that Commonwealth taxpayers receive a good return on investment for money spent on education,” PA Chamber President Gene Barr said.

Barr said the reform measures contained in the bill – specifically the creation of an opportunity scholarship program for low-income students in the Commonwealth’s poorest performing school districts and an expansion of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program – infuse fresh thinking into the mindset that the only way to improve education is to spend more.

“The reality is that achievement results have not matched taxpayer money spent on education in recent decades,” Barr said. “Providing an effective and efficient system of public education is an essential function of state government; it’s simply time for a new approach to how this is accomplished in the Commonwealth.”

Barr said consumer choice and competition help drive business success in the private sector. Those same concepts applied to education give options to students who would benefit from alternatives to the status quo, while encouraging struggling schools to take steps to improve.

Barr said the business community supports the governor’s and lawmakers’ educational improvement efforts because today’s students are tomorrow’s workforce.

“Having a workforce that offers the skills employers require starts with a strong educational foundation in the early years of learning,” he said. “Ultimately, Senate Bill 1 will lead to a quality education system that works for everyone.”

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The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry is the state's largest broad-based business advocacy organization, with its membership comprising thousands of businesses of all sizes and across all industry sectors. The PA Chamber is The Statewide Voice of Business™.