TO: The Honorable Members of the PA House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee  
FROM: Alex Halper, Director, Government Affairs  
DATE: Sept. 24, 2019  
RE: Oppose H.B. 432 – Expanding workers’ compensation

I write on behalf of the PA Chamber to urge you to oppose H.B. 432, as currently drafted, which would dramatically expand workers’ compensation eligibility for a number of categories of public employees. We understand bill advocates and organizations representing local governments have been discussing a potential compromise approach and we would encourage the Committee to hold off consideration of the bill to allow these discussions to continue.

H.B. 432 relates to non-physical medical conditions that are alleged to have occurred as a result of employment. Current law has attempted to balance compensability for mental health care—covering conditions that manifest following an injury or an incident outside the normal scope of employment; but not necessarily paying disability wage loss benefits any time an employee experiences a non-physical injury.

To be sure, mental health treatment under any circumstance is critically important and we understand regular health insurance for law enforcement and emergency responders covers this type of care. However, we do not believe H.B. 432 strikes the right balance—potential costs on municipalities and taxpayers are massive; and unlike current practice in which treatment is covered by regular health insurance, under workers’ compensation a significant portion of increased costs would flow directly from taxpayers to plaintiffs’ attorneys.

Unless a compromise is adopted, we urge you to oppose this bill. Please contact Alex Halper at ahalper@pachamber.org or 717-720-5471 with any questions or to discuss.