

May 10, 2021

The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senate  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

On behalf of our chambers of commerce, representing thousands of Pennsylvania employers, we write regarding the prospects of significant rule changes in the United States Senate.

A defining principle of the U.S. Senate throughout its existence has been respect for rights of the minority party and the ability for Senators to engage in extended debate, which helps facilitate compromise and moderation. Protecting these rights has historically been a bipartisan priority, and for good reason: a party serving in the majority may have the power to curtail minority party rights, but recognizes they will someday rely on those rights when the power dynamic shifts.

We were heartened when you were among a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators who wrote a letter on April 7, 2017 urging preservation of “existing rules, practices, and traditions” and pushing back on calls to eliminate or weaken the filibuster. You opposed “any effort to curtail the existing rights and prerogatives of Senators to engage in full, robust, and extended debate as we consider legislation before this body in the future.”

At the time, Republicans controlled the White House, U.S. House and Senate and some were advocating for filibuster reform or elimination in order to advance the Republican agenda. While pieces of that agenda may have benefited Pennsylvania employers, we did not support filibuster reform at that time, recognizing the harm it would inflict on the institution and instability it would foster by discouraging compromise and leading to more dramatic swings of the pendulum as power shifts over time. Ultimately, Senate Republicans did not pursue broad filibuster reform.

We now find ourselves with Democrats in control and some advocating to curtail the filibuster, including organized labor seeking to pass the PRO Act, an extensive anti-employer rewrite of national labor law that will also harm many workers. As power has predictably shifted, it appears your views may have shifted as well. A March 24, 2021 WLVR article indicated you now support filibuster reform and were quoted saying “Two years ago, I probably wouldn’t have said that. I just have reached the point where I no longer believe the Senate is the institution that it used to be or that I used to believe it was...”

We wish to better understand your position and would welcome the opportunity to discuss your views on potential Senate rule reform.

Thank you for considering this request and our views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Gene Barr  
President & CEO  
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

Dawn Wiringer  
Board President  
Back Mountain Chamber

Helen Kissick  
President & Executive Director  
Beaver County Chamber of Commerce

Kellie Goodman Shaffer  
President/CEO  
Bedford County Chamber of Commerce

Joseph Hurd  
President/CEO  
Blair County Chamber of Commerce

Jordan Grady  
Executive Director  
Butler County Chamber of Commerce

Amy Bradley  
President/CEO  
Cambria Regional Chamber

Michelle Crowley  
President & CEO  
Carlisle Area Chamber of Commerce

Tea Jay Aikey  
President & CEO  
Central PA Chamber of Commerce

Pam Kelly  
President & CEO  
Chamber of Commerce for Greater  
Montgomery County

Guy Ciarrocchi  
President & CEO  
Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry

Tracy Becker  
Executive Director  
Clarion Area Chamber of Business & Industry

James Grunke  
President/CEO  
Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership

Laurie Ryan  
President  
Exton Region Chamber of Commerce

Briana Tomack  
President & CEO  
Greater Latrobe-Laurel Valley Chamber  
of Commerce

Michelle Mikitish  
Executive Vice President  
Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce

Jim Gerlach  
President and CEO  
Greater Reading Chamber Alliance

Jackie Mowen  
Executive Director  
Greater Waynesboro Chamber of Commerce

Stephen Christian  
President & Executive Director  
Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce

Gary Laird  
President  
Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce

Dave Black  
President & CEO  
Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC

Yvonne Martin  
President/CEO  
Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce

Steven Hunsberger  
Executive Director  
Indian Valley Chamber of Commerce

Mark Hilliard  
President  
Indiana County Chamber of Commerce

Rhonda Moore  
Executive Director  
Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce

Karen Groh  
President/CEO  
Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce

Rosanne Barry Novotnak  
President  
Norwin Chamber of Commerce

Brian Schill  
Executive Director  
Peters Township Chamber of Commerce

Chris Heck  
President/CEO  
Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce

Jim Boltz  
President  
Pittsburgh North Regional Chamber

Robert Carl  
President & CEO  
Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce

Ron Aldom  
Executive Director  
Somerset County Chamber of Commerce

Cheryl Kuhn  
President & CEO  
Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce

Holly Przasnyski  
Executive Director/President  
The Chamber of the Northern Poconos

Bernard Dagenais  
President & CEO  
The Main Line Chamber of Commerce

Susan Williams  
President/CEO  
Venango Area Chamber of Commerce

Jeff Kotula  
President  
Washington County Chamber of Commerce

George Book  
President & CEO  
West Shore Chamber of Commerce

Jason Fink  
President/CEO  
Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce

Gina Severcool Suydam  
President  
Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce