



TO: The Honorable Members of the PA House Labor and Industry Committee

FROM: Alex Halper, Director, Government Affairs

DATE: April 20, 2021

RE: Support H.B. 129 – Remote UC hearings

On behalf of the PA Chamber I urge you to support H.B. 129, providing for remote unemployment compensation (UC) hearings, which the committee is scheduled to consider today.

Employers are often requested to participate in hearings held to determine a former employee's UC eligibility. Employer input is important to help ensure benefits are directed appropriately; and the stakes are high for them as well, as taxes may increase when former employees qualify for benefits.

Employers understand their obligation but have long sought an alternative to in-person hearings, which can easily consume half a day: rural employers report long drives; urban employers report traffic and parking difficulties; and small business owners throughout the Commonwealth, who may not have HR or support staff, report challenges their experience leaving their workplace.

The pandemic has required UC hearings to be conducted remotely and the Department of Labor & Industry should be commended for facilitating this transition. Claimants, employers and administrative personnel have demonstrated their ability to handle this process and effectively utilize modern technology. Remote hearings have worked and should be part of lawmakers' efforts to develop a more efficient UC system going forward.

Accordingly, we urge you to support H.B. 129. Please contact Alex Halper at ahalper@pachamber.org or 717-645-8730 with questions or to discuss.