



TO: The Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania Senate

FROM: Alex Halper, Director, Government Affairs

DATE: June 28, 2022

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

The PA Chamber urges you to support H.B. 129, related to remote unemployment compensation (UC) hearings. We understand the Senate may consider the bill this week.

Employers are often requested to participate in hearings to determine a former employee's UC eligibility and ensure benefits are directed appropriately. The stakes are high for employers as well since their 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 or more. 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 leaving their workplace at all.

H.B. 129, as amended with compromise language in the Senate Labor & Industry Committee, provides that UC hearings will occur remotely unless one of the parties requests the hearing be held in person, in which case both parties may be compelled to appear in person.

The pandemic required UC hearings to be conducted remotely and the Department of Labor & Industry should be commended for facilitating this transition, which was widely embraced. 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.

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