



October 13, 2008

Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Rendell:

Subject: Senate Bill 1258

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) and the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) request your veto of Senate Bill 1258, P.N. 2487, legislation which would limit local assessment appeals.

Interested parties, including your office, worked collaboratively over the summer months to develop compromise language that would have addressed, in the short-term, the symptoms of our inefficient assessment practices which you addressed in your veto message. Unfortunately, Senate Bill 1258, as amended on the House floor and concurred in by the Senate, negates the very reasoned approach taken to balance the interests of school districts and their taxpayers crafted during the summer recess.

On July 14, 2008, you vetoed similar bills (Senate Bill 1247 and House Bill 1438), saying that the legislation did not “protect new property owners from a spot re-assessment process [while providing] reasonable protections to ensure that all homeowners carry their fair share of local property tax burden in the absence of county-wide re-assessment.” And you urged legislators to find a compromise approach while also recommending that the legislature consider a longer term solution. The House’s deletion of the compromise language and the Senate’s quick concurrence disregards your recommendation.

In its current form, the legislation would apply to counties of the 2A through 8th class, and includes language that would limit local taxing districts to appeal an assessment only when a property is subdivided, improvements are added or removed, or a change of land use has occurred on the property. The current language of SB 1258 is as restrictive as the legislation you vetoed.

Senate Bill 1258, like its predecessors, does not ensure that all homeowners will carry their fair share of local property tax burden. Property owners whose properties are under-assessed will be able to pass along their burden of taxes to other property owners.

For these reasons we ask you to sustain your position on this issue and veto Senate Bill 1258. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Stinson Stoup
Executive Director
PASA

Jay Himes, CAE
Executive Director
PASBO

Cc: Senator Jim Rhoades
Representative Tim Seip
Ian Rosenblum, Senior Policy Manager
Anna Fitzsimmons, Executive Director, House Education Committee
Stacey Connors, Executive Director, Senate Finance Committee

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