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May 18, 2020

House Finance Committee Members

Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Re: House Bill 2460

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the signed organizations who represent school directors, educators, and business officials, **we are writing to request your support for House Bill 2460 and amendment A05782**, which will be considered by the House Finance Committee on Tuesday, May 19th.

House Bill 2460 was introduced by Representatives Stephens, Brown, and Malagari as a means to provide appropriate and measured relief to property owners during this unprecedented health crisis which is having a significant financial impact on taxpayers, as well as state and local governments.  Following in the footsteps of federal and state government decisions to extend tax deadlines, this legislation would extend the discount period for school district property taxes by one additional month, and it would further extend the face value period of property taxes before a penalty could be imposed until December 31, 2020.

Recent projections have shown that, due to the pandemic, school districts could easily lose more than $325 million in local revenue just in the remaining months of the current fiscal year and as much as $1 billion in local revenue for 2020-2021.  These grim projections, as well as uncertainty about future state appropriations, are creating significant turmoil for school districts which are already contemplating programing and personnel cuts as they work to finalize their 2020-2021 budgets.  For these reasons, as well as concerns about the erosion of local control, our organizations are firmly opposed to a property tax freeze.  However, we believe that the proposal in House Bill 2460 strikes a responsible and appropriate balance between providing important relief to taxpayers and recognizing that economically beleaguered school districts need to maintain the authority to create budgets that best meet the needs of their students, employees, and communities.

We would like to recognize and give special thanks to Representative Stephens for his leadership in pushing this issue forward, and we encourage all legislators to support this bill.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out.

Pennsylvania School Boards Association

Pennsylvania State Education Association

Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials