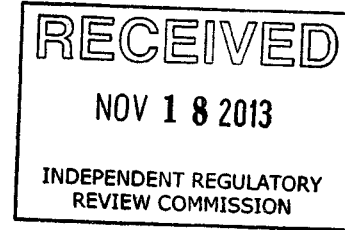




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# 2976



Nov. 15, 2013

The Honorable Silvan B. Lutkewitte, III  
Chairman  
Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14th floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

RE: Re: Final-Form Regulations #6-326 - Academic Standards and Assessments

Dear Chairman Lutkewitte:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry and our thousands of members throughout the Commonwealth, I write to express support for the final-form regulation 6-326 related to academic standards and assessments.

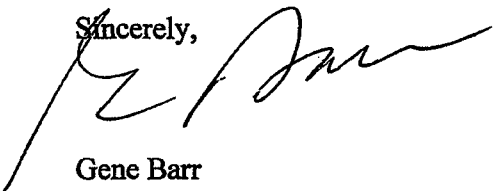
Members of the PA Chamber are employers of all sizes, crossing all industries in every region of the state. As the largest broad-based business advocacy association in the Commonwealth, we are familiar with and engaged in a wide range of public policies that impact different segments of the business community and employers in general. A challenge that permeates virtually all sectors of our economy is the difficulty employers experience finding qualified applicants to fill positions.

This unfortunate reality was further substantiated by a survey we conducted in April 2013 of 464 PA Chamber members in which we asked various workforce-related questions. Not surprisingly, a clear majority (72%) of respondents cited difficulty hiring employees with adequate skills, training, or education. Even more disconcerting was the fact that a majority of our members believe the problem has gotten worse and will become even more daunting in the years ahead. This situation is unacceptable and addressing it will require participation from all stakeholders and a willingness to thoroughly review and improve the manner in which Pennsylvanians are educated and ultimately prepared for the workplace.

Accordingly, the PA Chamber's Education Policy position statement calls for an "alignment of education standards with college and workplace expectations," and I believe the academic standards and assessments proposed in this regulation are consistent with this objective. Today's students will be tomorrow's workforce in an increasingly global and competitive economy and they deserve a system of accountability and support to help ensure they possess the knowledge and skill set to prepare them for productive adulthood.

Thank you for considering our view on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Gene Barr  
President and CEO