



Pennsylvania Municipal League
President – Derek Slaughter, Mayor, City of Williamsport



Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners
President – Dennis R. Arthur, Commissioner, Tinicum Township

To: Members of the House Labor and Industry Committee
From: Amy Sturges, Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy, The League and PSATC
Re: Opposition to House Bill 183 (PN 130) and House Bill 308 (PN)
Date: February 3, 2025

On behalf of the members of the Pennsylvania Municipal League and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners, I am writing in strong opposition to House Bill 183 and House Bill 308 up for Committee consideration on Wednesday, February 5.

House Bill 183 – Expanding Workers’ Compensation Benefits

House Bill 183 would expand workers’ compensation disfigurement benefits to the full body, creating an unfunded mandate with significant fiscal, legal, and administrative consequences.

The increase in potential claims will increase workers’ compensation insurance premiums for all employers, as well as litigation costs and monetary awards. Local governments will have to compensate for the higher premiums by increasing property taxes. Not only will taxpayers bear the burden of these costs, Pennsylvania will be less attractive to businesses.

Additionally, we argue that the Workers’ Compensation Law was not put in place to provide employees with compensation for physical and emotional distress. The purpose is to compensate for lost wages. If this legislation is adopted, there will be an increase in disfigurement claims. Unfortunately, claimants and their attorneys will be incentivized to file claims because even simple scars will have monetary value. The opportunity to receive a large lump sum award may even induce employees to elect to have surgery when non-surgical or non-invasive treatments are available options. This expansion won’t only stress local governments and other employers, but it will certainly create additional strain on the Department of Labor and Industry, as the number of claims will skyrocket.

Lastly, this bill allows an employee to collect both the permanent disfigurement and disability benefits simultaneously. Allowing double-dipping will not encourage employees to return to work.

House Bill 308 – Establishing OSHA Regulations for Public Employers

House Bill 308 would establish the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requiring the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry to adopt the federal Occupational Safety and Health Standards. As employers, municipalities would fall under these standards.

Compliance would result in a new, expensive, and administratively onerous unfunded mandate on local governments.

Municipalities are certainly concerned with minimizing worker injury to the greatest extent possible, and they are already mandated to follow safety protocols through existing laws. Pennsylvania's municipalities must comply with the PA Worker and Community Right to Know Act which covers exposure to hazardous materials, as well as CDL regulations from PennDOT. Municipalities are also actively engaged in risk management practices as required by their insurers. At this time, there is no indication a universal or pervasive safety problem exists at the local level that would require these additional and burdensome regulations. Our members question if the imposition of federal OSHA standards would actually result in increased worker safety at the local level.

Furthermore, public work does not necessarily match with private employment. How would OSHA regulations apply to the inherently dangerous, yet essential public safety positions of police and fire?

Lastly, we do not agree with the fines outlined in the bill as public tax dollars will be the source of funding. In fact, taxpayer dollars will ultimately pay for this entire mandate. Therefore, we must be certain this is the most appropriate way to promote workplace safety at the local level.

For the reasons above, we ask for a no vote when House Bills 183 and 308 come before the Committee for consideration.