



Pennsylvania Municipal League
President – Derek Green, Councilmember, City of Philadelphia



Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners
President – Nathan Silcox, Commissioner, Hampden Township

MEMO

TO: Members of Senate Local Government Committee
FROM: Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, PML and PSATC
DATE: April 27, 2021
RE: Bills scheduled for Committee on April 28, 2021

On behalf of the members of the PA Municipal League and PA State Association of Township Commissioners, I am writing to provide our position on several bills coming before the Committee tomorrow, April 28.

Senate Bill 477 (J. Ward) – Support – provides for building permits to be forwarded to county assessment offices.

Senate Bill 478 (Dush) – Support – provides for municipal purchasing and contracting when no bids are received after two consecutive advertisements.

Senate Bill 479 (Hutchinson) – Support – places ethics requirements on Act 47 coordinators.

Senate Bill 480 (Kearney) – Support – provides for updates and technical changes to the Borough Code.

Senate Bill 524 (Yaw) – Oppose – limits the Home Rule process of appointing a government study commission to investigate the pros and cons of a home rule charter.

Under this bill, a ballot question asking if a municipality should form a government study commission is being limited in two ways. First, in regards to the number of times the question can be asked in a four-year period. And, second in regards to when the question can be asked – only during a municipal or general election.

We are agreeable to limiting the number of times the ballot question can be presented to the voters in a given period. We are not agreeable to removing the primary election as a time when the question can be presented to the voters. The question to form a study commission can come directly from the voters themselves through initiative. And under this bill, such an initiative could potentially be delayed by months waiting for the next municipal or general election. Voter turn-out and transparency are given as reasons for limiting the question to municipal and general elections. We contend that if a primary election can be used to ask voters to change the state's constitution, it should be just fine for the very local question of forming a study commission to look at a Home Rule.

Thank you for your consideration.