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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

PA JOB LOSS THROUGH ROBOTS & AUTOMATION AND RETAIL COLLAPSE IN PA

MEMORANDUM

Posted: June 12, 2017 04:24 PM
From: [Representative Michael H. Schlossberg](#)
To: All House members
Subject: Request for Co-sponsorship: Studies on Robots and Automation Affecting Pennsylvania Workers & Retail Collapse

The economy has undergone seismic shifts. All evidence points to these shifts continuing for the foreseeable future. We need to better understand how these shifts affect Pennsylvania. To plan for the future, we need to understand what jobs currently anchoring communities will not exist, what new skills workers will need to compete in the changing economy, the demand for services and how tax revenues will change.

With this in mind I will be introducing two pieces of legislation. Both will direct the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct comprehensive studies on two subjects that will affect Pennsylvania's economy: Robots & Automation and Retail Collapse. I hope you will join me in co-sponsoring each of these measures.

Introduced as **HR438**

Robots and Automation

Every day, emerging technologies are seeking to improve our lives. For the most part, these technologies are attempting to make tasks more efficient and convenient. Yet, these technologies often come at a price, creating special challenges to workers vulnerable to job displacement. Some scholars are predicting a massive labor re-organization, similar to what the world experienced during the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century.

Because the long-term effects associated with these technologies remain widely unknown, several states, including New York and Virginia, have introduced legislation to conduct studies on the matter. Based on the data collected, solutions will be sought to staunch any ill-effects to the respective state's workers and economy. Further, education solutions will be pursued to prepare future workers for tomorrow's workforce.

My legislation will direct the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a comprehensive study on the effects of robots, automation and artificial intelligence on Pennsylvania's workforce and economy. Additionally, the measure will establish an advisory committee comprised of a variety of representatives from manufacturing and technology to education, ensuring a wide range of authority and insight into the issue.

Looking out for our workers and the future economy of the Commonwealth is paramount to maintaining a healthy and prosperous Pennsylvania. I hope you will join me in co-sponsoring this important legislation.

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[View Attachment](#)

Document #2

Introduced as **HR439**

Retail

Nationwide, retail stores, malls and shopping centers sit shuttered and abandoned. Once a hub of opportunity and community, they have been forced to close due to the shift in the way Americans purchase goods and services. Consumers increasingly purchase online rather than shopping in a physical store. As this trend continues to decimate the suburban landscape, many experts predict a large movement in the work force, similar to that experienced during the 20th century decline of urban retail in American downtowns.

Many areas around the Commonwealth have experienced the closing of major department stores in their communities. The list of store closures and the numbers of displaced workers grows daily. Last month, economic experts reported the fast pace of stores closing in 2017 is higher than that experienced at the height of the Great Recession in 2008. We must investigate this problem in an effort to seek viable solutions.

I plan to introduce legislation directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a comprehensive study on the impact of retail store closures in the state. The study will focus on retaining workers, effects on the state economy and repurposing locations vacated by retail stores.

Identifying solutions to reuse and revitalize shuttered stores and shopping complexes is vital in creating jobs and promoting a healthy state economy. I hope you will join me in co-sponsoring this important measure.

[View Attachment](#)

