



Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

Strength in Numbers 95,000

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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

Pennsylvania's public-sector unions have called a strategic retreat on pension bill

PA SB 1 PASSES 40-9 IN THE PA SENATE



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ACCORDING TO THE PATRIOT NEWS © ONE OF THE ODDITIES OF THIS WEEK'S PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PENSIONS DEBATE IS HOW SO MANY OF THE STATE'S MAJOR PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS ARE SITTING IT OUT. THEY HAVE, AFTER ALL, RELIABLY OPPOSED MOST PENSION REFORM MEASURES SINCE PASSAGE OF ACT 120 IN 2010. UNTIL NOW, THE COMBINED FORCES OF THEIR DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN ALLIES IN THE STATE HOUSE HAVE BEEN JUST ENOUGH TO STOP OTHER BILLS IN THEIR TRACKS. THIS TIME? NO PITCHFORKS. JUST CRICKETS.

AND THAT, SO FAR AT LEAST, IS GIVING MORE LABOR-SENSITIVE REPUBLICANS AND SOME DEMOCRATS LICENSE TO SUPPORT THE CURRENT BILL, WHICH PASSED THE STATE SENATE ON A 40-9 VOTE MONDAY AFTERNOON. LATER MONDAY, THE BAIL PASSED A PRELIMINARY VOTE IN THE HOUSE STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE, KEEPING ON COURSE FOR A FINAL PASSAGE VOTE IN THAT CHAMBER ON THURSDAY. MAJOR PUBLIC-SECTOR UNIONS LIKE THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF

STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES; SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION (BOTH STATE WORKERS) AND THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (SCHOOL TEACHERS), HAVE ALL AGREED TO STAND SILENT ON THIS BILL. ONLY ONE MAJOR UNION IS SINGING IN A DIFFERENT KEY - THE PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, WHICH SENT A LETTER OPPOSING THE BILL TO LAWMAKERS LAST FRIDAY. THERE APPEAR TO BE TWO MAJOR REASONS FOR THIS MASS STAND-DOWN BY ORGANIZED LABOR, ACCORDING TO SOURCES FAMILIAR WITH THE DISCUSSIONS:

1. THE UNIONS FEEL THE PLAN BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOW - WHILE NOT NECESSARILY HELPFUL TO THE STATE'S CURRENT BUDGET PROBLEMS - IS "LESS HURTFUL" TO STATE WORKERS AND SCHOOL TEACHERS THAN PAST PROPOSALS. AND THE PROSPECT OF DOING BETTER, FROM A UNION STANDPOINT, IS NON-EXISTENT IN THIS POLITICAL GENERATION, WITH ITS HISTORIC REPUBLICAN MAJORITIES IN BOTH THE

HOUSE AND SENATE WHERE THE UNIONS ARE VERY MUCH PLAYING DEFENSE.

2. THERE IS A HOPE THAT THIS BILL, BY REPRESENTING ANOTHER SHOW OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNMENT BETWEEN DEMOCRAT GOV. TOM WOLF AND THE LEGISLATURE, WILL HELP DISARM A TRICKY ISSUE FOR WOLF'S 2018 RE-ELECTION EFFORT. NO UNIONS ARE SUPPORTING SENATE BILL 1, TO BE SURE. BUT, IN THE WORDS OF AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID FILLMAN, "WE'RE NOT THROWING BOMBS AT IT." IN PART, FILLMAN AND OTHERS EXPLAIN, THAT'S

BECAUSE THE UNIONS FEEL THE HARD EDGES OF SOME OF FORMER PENSION REFORM PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN SOFTENED, TO THE POINT WHERE IT SEEMS BETTER TO TAKE THIS BITTER PILL NOW THAN A POISON PILL LATER. TO WIT, WHILE UNION LEADERS HATE THAT THIS PENSION REFORM BILL CREATES A NEW STEP DOWN IN RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE HIRED AFTER 2019, THE REDUCED BENEFIT IS EXPECTED TO BE ONLY ABOUT 10 PERCENT LOWER THAN THE PLAN IN PLACE FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STATE WORKERS HIRED AFTER 2011.

LINK TO COMPLETE ARTICLE IN THE PATRIOT NEWS AT:

[HTTP://WWW.PENNLIVE.COM/NEWS/2017/06/PENSION BILL REPRESENTS IN SOM.HTML](http://www.pennlive.com/news/2017/06/pension_bill_represents_in_som.html)

VIEW VOTE ON PENSION BILL:

[HTTP://WWW.LEGIS.STATE.PA.US/CFDOCS/LEGIS/RC/PUBLIC/RC VIEW ACTION2.CFM?SESS YR=2017&SESS IND=0&RC BODY=S&RC NBR=126](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/rc/public/rc_view_action2.cfm?sess_yr=2017&sess_ind=0&rc_body=s&rc_nbr=126)

VIEW PA SB 1 (701 PAGES IN LENGTH ON LINE AT:

[HTTP://WWW.LEGIS.STATE.PA.US/CFDOCS/BILLINFO/BILLINFO.CFM?SYEAR=2017&SIND=0&BODY=S&TYPE=B&BN=1](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?syar=2017&sind=0&body=s&type=b&bn=1)

