

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1422 Session of  
1997

INTRODUCED BY STRITTMATTER, SEMMEL, E. Z. TAYLOR, WAUGH, ZUG,  
ROHRER, ARMSTRONG, CLARK, BOSCOLA, TRELLO, FLICK, HENNESSEY,  
BARRAR AND LEH, APRIL 30, 1997

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, APRIL 30, 1997

AN ACT

1 Providing for the establishment of a Spending Affordability  
2 Committee.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Spending  
7 Affordability Committee Act.

8 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

9 The General Assembly finds and declares that State  
10 expenditures for operating and capital programs must be  
11 controlled so that the level of State spending is consistent  
12 with the economic growth of the Commonwealth.

13 Section 3. Spending program.

14 (1) The control of spending shall be exercised through  
15 the budgetary process as well as through legislative  
16 oversight and program review.

17 (2) The budgetary process focuses on spending for the

1 next fiscal year and provides careful scrutiny of new  
2 programs or expansion of existing programs and services and  
3 weighs the incremental cost of the State budget in light of  
4 the priority needs of the citizens.

5 (3) Legislative oversight seeks to eliminate  
6 inefficiencies in governmental activities and to evaluate  
7 programs in order to eliminate those no longer required and  
8 to avoid overlap and duplication of services and activities.

9 Section 4. Legislative Policy Committee.

10 (a) Establishment.--The Legislative Policy Committee is  
11 hereby established and shall consist of the President pro  
12 tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
13 Representatives, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate  
14 and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the House of  
15 Representatives.

16 (b) Goal of program.--

17 (1) The Legislative Policy Committee shall be  
18 responsible for coordinating the spending affordability  
19 program of the General Assembly by appointment of a Spending  
20 Affordability Committee and by selection of program  
21 evaluation projects and direction of oversight activities.

22 (2) The goal of the spending affordability program is to  
23 limit the rate of growth of State spending to a level that  
24 does not exceed the rate of growth of the State's economy.

25 Section 5. Spending Affordability Committee.

26 (a) Establishment.--On or before June 1 of each year, the  
27 Legislative Policy Committee shall establish a Spending  
28 Affordability Committee comprised of an equal number of senators  
29 and representatives. The Committee membership shall include:

30 (1) The President pro tempore of the Senate and the

1 Speaker of the House of Representatives.

2 (2) The chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the  
3 Senate and the chairman of the Appropriations Committee of  
4 the House of Representatives.

5 (3) The Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate and  
6 the Majority and Minority Leaders of the House of  
7 Representatives or their designees.

8 (4) Other members of the Senate and the House of  
9 Representatives who may be appointed by the President pro  
10 tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of  
11 Representatives.

12 (b) Chairman.--The chairman of the Spending Affordability  
13 Committee shall be designated jointly by the President pro  
14 tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of  
15 Representatives.

16 (c) Advisory committee.--The President pro tempore of the  
17 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives may  
18 appoint an advisory committee of citizens to assist the Spending  
19 Affordability Committee in its deliberations.

20 Section 6. Study of spending and economy.

21 (a) General rule.--The Spending Affordability Committee  
22 shall review in detail the status and projections of the  
23 revenues and expenditures of the State and the status and  
24 projections of the economy of the State.

25 (b) Considerations.--In evaluating future State  
26 expenditures, the Spending Affordability Committee shall  
27 consider economic indicators such as personal income, gross  
28 State product or other data.

29 Section 7. Report.

30 (a) General rule.--On or before November 1 of each year, the

1 Spending Affordability Committee shall submit to the Legislative  
2 Policy Committee and the Governor a report with recommendations  
3 on fiscal goals for the State budget to be considered at the  
4 next regular session of the General Assembly, including:

- 5 (1) a recommended level of State spending;
- 6 (2) a recommended level of new debt authorization;
- 7 (3) a recommended level of State personnel;
- 8 (4) a recommended use of any anticipated surplus; and
- 9 (5) other findings or recommendations that the Spending

10 Affordability Committee considers appropriate.

11 (b) Analysis.--If the report recommends expenditures in  
12 excess of the annual increase in personal income, gross State  
13 product, or other data that the Spending Affordability Committee  
14 used to measure the growth of the State's economy, the Spending  
15 Affordability Committee shall provide the General Assembly with  
16 an analysis as to the extent the recommendation exceeds those  
17 economic indicators.

18 Section 8. Action by appropriations committees.

19 The Appropriations Committee of the Senate and the  
20 Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, in  
21 considering a proposed State budget, shall consider the  
22 recommendations of the Spending Affordability Committee and  
23 shall report a budget bill that conforms to those  
24 recommendations. However, if the level of the budget bill in the  
25 report is above those recommendations, the Appropriations  
26 Committee of the Senate and the Appropriations Committee of the  
27 House of Representatives shall provide, with the report, an  
28 analysis stating the extent to which the budget bill exceeds the  
29 recommendations and explaining the budget committee's rationale  
30 for exceeding the recommendations.

1 Section 9. Staff.

2 (a) General rule.--The Department of Revenue shall provide  
3 staff service for the Spending Affordability Committee.

4 (b) State units.--The departments and agencies of the  
5 Commonwealth shall cooperate with the Spending Affordability  
6 Committee and provide information to the Committee and its staff  
7 as requested.

8 Section 10. Duty of Department of Revenue.

9 On or before June 1 of each year, the Department of Revenue  
10 shall report to the Legislative Policy Committee the extent to  
11 which the State budget as enacted by the General Assembly  
12 conformed to the recommendations of the Spending Affordability  
13 Committee.

14 Section 11. Program evaluation.

15 On or before June 1 of each year, the Legislative Policy  
16 Committee shall select units or programs that the Legislative  
17 Policy Committee believes should be subject to legislative  
18 review and assign the selected units and programs to an  
19 appropriate committee for review and recommendations during that  
20 legislative interim.

21 Section 12. Duties of presiding officers.

22 (a) General rule.--When the General Assembly is not in  
23 session, any decision that relates to or affects a member of a  
24 committee of the General Assembly shall be made to a Senate  
25 member, by the President pro tempore of the Senate; and as to a  
26 member of the House of Representatives, by the Speaker of the  
27 House of Representatives.

28 (b) Specific duties.--The responsibilities of the President  
29 pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of  
30 Representatives under this section include the following:

- 1           (1) Appointing members of committees.
- 2           (2) Appointing officers of committees.
- 3           (3) Setting the dates, times and places for committee
- 4 meetings.
- 5 Section 13. Effective date.
- 6       This act shall take effect in 60 days.