

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 1476

PRINTER'S NO. 2070

AMOUNT

\$1,092,000

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

March 30, 2012

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Corman

HISTORY OF BILL

Referred to APPROPRIATIONS, March 30, 2012

Reported as committed, April 2, 2012

First consideration, April 2, 2012

Second consideration, April 3, 2012

Re-committed to APPROPRIATIONS, April 3, 2012

Re-reported as committed, May 8, 2012

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF BILL

Senate Bill 1476 appropriates \$1,092,000 from a restricted revenue account within the General Fund to the Office of Small Business Advocate ("OSBA") in the Department of Community and Economic Development ("DCED").

The OSBA is administratively included within the Department of Community and Economic Development. However, the Small Business Advocate Act specifically provides that the Secretary of DCED is not in any way responsible for the policies, procedures, or other substantive matters developed by the OSBA to carry out its duties under the act.

The OSBA is charged with representing the interests of small business consumers of utility services in proceedings before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission ("PUC") and the comparable federal regulatory agencies and in court. The OSBA is funded for its utility regulatory functions by assessments levied by the PUC on the public utilities subject to its jurisdiction. No General Fund revenues are used to support the OSBA's operations.

In 1993, the OSBA was assigned additional responsibilities involving the administration of Pennsylvania's workers' compensation system. The costs incurred by the OSBA in discharging those duties are paid from assessments made by the Insurance Department against the insurance companies that write workers' compensation insurance policies in Pennsylvania.

Senate Bill 1476 reflects the Governor's recommended FY 2012-13 budget of \$1,092,000 for the OSBA, which is level-funded compared with the FY 2011-12 appropriation in the same amount.

This act shall take effect July 1, 2012, or immediately, whichever is later.