



**Written Statement of Michelle Staton
Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development Partnerships
before the House Labor & Industry Committee**

regarding House Bill 1725 (CareerBound) and the proposed “PA WInS Program”

**Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
December 5, 2013**

Chairman Scavello, Chairman Keller, and members of the House Labor & Industry Committee. On behalf of Secretary Hearthway, thank you for allowing the department to submit a written statement on two workforce development legislative proposals before the committee today.

House Bill 1725, known as “CareerBound,” seeks to strengthen and enhance partnerships between Pennsylvania’s education system and businesses. The proposed legislation establishes a competitive pilot program that would encourage partnerships between Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs), businesses and the education community. The entities would work together to develop an innovative plan on how to expose high school students to an array of career opportunities. The department would be responsible for developing program requirements and selecting up to seven pilot programs. Program funding would be generated through tax credits purchased by businesses. The department is supportive of innovative ways in which the education and workforce systems can be better linked to train the 21st century workforce but has concerns with the funding mechanism and is still evaluating that portion of the legislation.

The second proposal under consideration is PA WInS – the PA Workforce Investment Strategy. Under PA WInS, LWIBs would collaborate with local businesses that share common interests, challenges and training needs to form a “Cooperative Workforce Investment Partnership” (CWIP). These partnerships would work together to establish and operate training programs at various host locations. To fund the program, participating CWIPs would be eligible for a tax credit. This proposal is very similar to an existing program called Industry Partnerships (IPs). IPs are a multi-employer collaborative effort that brings together businesses around a common purpose of improving the competitiveness of an industry cluster. Unlike PA WInS, IPs are funded through a line-item in the state budget. Again, the department supports these types of partnerships at the local level, however we have concerns that PA WInS would be duplicative to the existing IP program.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to submit remarks for the record. As always, should you or committee members have additional questions or concerns, the department is available as a resource.