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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**HOUSE BILL**

**No. 1666** Session of  
2007

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INTRODUCED BY K. SMITH, CARROLL, EVERETT, FAIRCHILD, GOODMAN,  
JAMES, KENNEY, R. MILLER, MUNDY, READSHAW, THOMAS, WANSACZ,  
YOUNGBLOOD AND YUDICHAK, JULY 3, 2007

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JULY 3, 2007

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AN ACT

1 Requiring State agencies to conduct public hearings in certain  
2 geographic areas of this Commonwealth prior to implementing  
3 pilot programs.

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

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Give  
8 Pennsylvanians a Voice Act.

9 Section 2. Legislative intent.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) The Commonwealth administers various programs  
12 intended to enhance the well-being of its citizens and  
13 promote economic development.

14 (2) Many of these programs are funded through Federal  
15 and State appropriations, and the ongoing challenge of  
16 maintaining and improving efficiency in these programs is an  
17 ongoing process.

18 (3) The continual erosion of Federal resources across

1 all program areas increases pressure on State officials, as  
2 well as the General Assembly, to continue to provide much  
3 needed benefits and services.

4 (4) Reductions and eliminations in Federal funding  
5 necessitate changes in the administration of programs and  
6 services.

7 (5) These changes often result in significantly reduced  
8 benefits as well as revisions in how they are administered,  
9 sometimes causing additional administrative burdens on small  
10 vendors.

11 (6) Before implementing significant administrative  
12 changes, State agencies should provide that portion of the  
13 public to be impacted by the changes with an opportunity to  
14 comment on the potential consequences of the changes.

15 Section 3. Definitions.

16 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
17 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
18 context clearly indicates otherwise:

19 "Executive agency." A department overseeing a specific  
20 industry or program area under the jurisdiction of the Governor  
21 as defined in Article II of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177,  
22 No.175), known as The Administrative Code of 1929.

23 "North central." That geographic area of this Commonwealth  
24 that encompasses Bradford, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming,  
25 Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga and  
26 Union Counties.

27 "Northeast." That geographic area of this Commonwealth that  
28 encompasses Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe,  
29 Northampton, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming Counties.

30 "Northwest." That geographic area of this Commonwealth that

1 encompasses Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie,  
2 Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren  
3 Counties.

4 "South Central." That geographic area of this Commonwealth  
5 that encompasses Adams, Berks, Blair, Bedford, Cumberland,  
6 Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster,  
7 Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, Schuylkill and York Counties.

8 "Southeast." That geographic area of this Commonwealth that  
9 encompasses Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and  
10 Philadelphia Counties.

11 "Southwest." That geographic area of this Commonwealth that  
12 encompasses Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria,  
13 Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland  
14 Counties.

15 Section 4. Public hearings required.

16 (a) General rule.--Whenever an executive agency proposes to  
17 make a significant change in the administration of or benefits  
18 available through a program funded in whole or in part with  
19 revenues from the Commonwealth and makes a determination to  
20 implement a pilot program to review the impact of the changes,  
21 the executive agency shall conduct at least one public hearing  
22 in the geographic area of this Commonwealth that will be  
23 affected by the proposed changes.

24 (b) Statewide pilot programs.--If the proposed changes will  
25 be implemented in a pilot program conducted on a Statewide  
26 basis, at least one public hearing shall be held in each of the  
27 following geographic areas: the Northeast, North Central,  
28 Northwest, Southeast, South Central and Southwest.

29 Section 5. Effective date.

30 This act shall take effect immediately.