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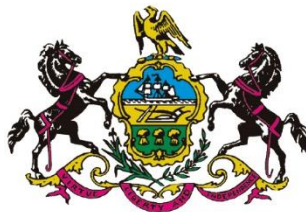
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August 19, 2021

The Honorable Jake Corman  
President Pro Tempore  
Pennsylvania State Senate  
350 Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Kim Ward  
Majority Leader  
Pennsylvania State Senate  
Senate Box 203039  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3039

The Honorable Jay Costa  
Democratic Leader  
Pennsylvania State Senate  
Senate Box 203043  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3043

Dear Senators Corman, Ward, and Costa:

Recent news accounts indicate there is widespread bipartisan support in Pennsylvania's General Assembly to make the reports of expenses by Senators and staff more available and transparent. Increasing public access to expenses is a welcomed and needed step. I certainly support the effort.

However, expense transparency alone does not go far enough. To increase accountability, the General Assembly needs to swiftly move to eliminate "per diem" payments and institute other necessary reforms.

This session I have authored four reform bills that are unfortunately sitting idle in committee. Similar measures have been offered over the past several sessions. They, too, were assigned to committee where they languished amid multiple controversies and public angst.

This year, in addition to the proposal to eliminate per diems (SB 362) with reimbursement for actual expenses, one measure (SB361) would replace automatic cost-of-living adjustments by a once-per-decade raise consideration following the decennial U.S. Census and calculated by the Consumer Price Index. Another bill (SB363) would eliminate state vehicle leases for members of the General Assembly, instead reimbursing for actual mileage and tolls for documented government travel. The last bill in the reform package (SB364) bans gifts of any value to members of the General Assembly.

These bills are critical to the process of restoring confidence in the General Assembly. Their continued exile in committee, without a vote and full Senate consideration, represents an appalling failure and an opportunity lost that will continue to undermine the institution.

I am confident that if the leadership of our respective bodies would allow their members to decide the issue, the outcome would favor the transparency you profess to seek. Therefore, I request that the reform package – including the measure that ends “per diem” payments – be scheduled for consideration in September.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Brewster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jim Brewster  
State Senator