



Bucks County Association of Township Officials

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August 24, 2015

Honorable Stephen Barrar
18 East Wing
P.O. Box 202160
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Senate Bill 299

Dear Representative Barrar,

Please allow this letter to serve as an official position of the Bucks County Association of Township Officials (BCATO) in regards to Senate Bill 299, an Act amending Title 35 (Health and Safety) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for incentives for municipal volunteers of fire companies and nonprofit emergency medical services agencies. BCATO is comprised of 30 townships of the second class and represents the legislative interests of its supervisors, managers, tax collectors and auditors.

Senate Bill 299 was introduced to help municipalities recruit, retain and reward volunteer firefighters and emergency medical service technicians by granting to municipalities that levy an Earned Income Tax the option to waive that tax for volunteer firefighters and volunteers at nonprofit emergency medical service (EMS) agencies. Under the legislation, municipalities would have the authority to set the amount of the tax credit, delineate the guidelines of the program and specify the number of calls to which volunteers must respond. Municipalities would not be required to participate in the program; it would be purely a local option.

BCATO's official position on this legislation is to fully support its intent based on answers to the following questions that need to be addressed:

1. If a municipality implements this legislation, then how does it affect a volunteer who resides in a municipality that did not implement the legislation?
2. Are fire police eligible for the incentive?
3. Since the state would allow municipalities to produce this incentive, would it be willing to match it 50%?

Although we support the concept of the legislation, we agree that the questions posed should be vetted before any long-term unintentional consequences happen.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions as you consider your stance on this legislation.

Respectfully,

Daniel F. Rattigan
President, BCATO

cc: Honorable Gene DiGirolamo
Honorable Bernard T. O'Neill
Honorable Steve Santarsiero
Honorable John T. Galloway
Honorable Tina Davis
Honorable Frank A. Farry
Honorable Marguerite Quinn
Honorable Katharine M. Watson
Honorable Scott A. Petri
Honorable Craig T. Staats
David M. Sanko