

PENNSYLVANIA PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

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Affiliated with: – International Association of Fire Fighters, American Federation of Labor, Congress of Industrial Organizations, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, Local Labor Unions



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From: Art Martynuska

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Subject: Act 47 and Act 111

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On Thursday, December 8, 2011, a special Joint Committee of the Pennsylvania House and Senate convened the second and final day of testimony and evidence on the need to reform Act 47.

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I was invited to testify on behalf of Pennsylvania's Firefighters on the dire need for Act 47 reform. I was joined on our witness panel by the PPFFA's Legislative Counsel, Rick Poulson, along with representatives from the Pennsylvania FOP, AFSCME and the AFL-CIO. Together, our panel provided the legislators on the Joint Committee with the employees' perspective on the widespread abuses of Act 47.

RUSSELL P. CERAMI

BARRY J. BUSKEY
President, Emeritus

During my testimony, I spoke on the negative impact that Act 47 has had on Firefighters wages, benefits and safety, and most importantly, our dignity. I told the legislators that Act 47 is the scam that we all know it is, that it virtually eliminates bargaining for our members, and, most importantly, that it hasn't worked for our communities. It is time for a much-needed change. [Click here for the full text of my testimony.]

NORMAN DAVIS

Recording Secretary, Emeritus

JOSEPH G. MATTA

Vice President, Emeritus

EDMUND HAHN

JOHN J. McCORMICK
BARRY A. HALPIN
WILLIAM MURTHA
Trustees, Emeritus

I was very encouraged by many questions and comments from legislators that indicated a willingness to insert some basic fairness into the Act 47 bargaining process. The PPFFA's legislative team will continue to work with supportive legislators to develop and pass legislation to secure that basic fairness and get us out from under the crushing weight of Act 47.

STEPHEN C. RICHMAN

General Counsel

One point of caution, it became very clear during the Act 47 hearings that the anti-labor coalition including the League of Cities, the Mayors, the management consultants and law firms are attempting to use the Act 47 "reform" process to get to their *real* target -- Act 111. Management witness after management witness decried the current unfair Act 111 interest

arbitration system, which they say is what drives communities into distress in the first place - as opposed to the corruption, municipal mismanagement and flat-out stupidity that we know is the primary cause of distress.

During our presentation we attempted to dispel many of the half-truths about Act 111 that were spread by Mayors from Scranton, Reading, York and Lancaster, among other places. Our team did a great job, but let's be very clear -- our enemies are targeting our Act 111 rights, they have friends in the legislature, too (like anti-worker Senator Jane Earll), and they will stop at nothing until they have crippled our ability to bargain fair contracts under Act 111.

What can you do to stop them? Get involved and stay involved. Contact your state representative and state senator and demand that they protect Act 111 rights for firefighters and police officers. Coordinate with the PPFPA so that we can spread the same message and protect our rights.

If we work together as one UNION, I am confident that we can achieve both Act 47 reform and Act 111 protection, but it will take us all pulling together in the same direction.

I will continue to keep you informed as we continue our fight to protect and improve firefighter rights in the General Assembly. In the meantime, stay involved, stay united and stay SAFE.