

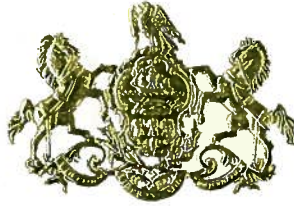
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Office of the Majority Whip



Senate of Pennsylvania

March 9, 2009

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ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Honorable Patrick J. Stapleton, III, Esquire
Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board
517 Northwest Office Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17124-001

Dear Chairman Stapleton:

Our correspondence today relates to the recent media coverage regarding the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board's ("PLCB") engagement of a Pittsburgh consulting firm to train employees in basic customer service skills. Based upon such reports, numerous constituents within my district have expressed grave concern with the spending and management practices of the PLCB. Under these circumstances, we too are troubled with this apparently imprudent expenditure and challenge you with respect to this questionable use of state dollars.

It is our understanding that PLCB recently retained a consulting firm, Solutions 21, through a \$173,000 contract to "coach" the managers and staff of your 620 wine and spirit stores statewide. More specifically, Solutions 21 was directed to teach these individuals tasks as rudimentary as properly greeting a store patron upon arrival and thanking and inviting customers back following a sales transaction. Such elementary skills of etiquette should be prerequisite for any candidate for a customer service position within your stores. Put simply, if your staff does not already possess fundamental competence in these areas upon hiring, logic dictates that you reevaluate your employment process rather than wastefully allocating funds for remedial training.

Being that our Commonwealth presently faces a projected budget deficit of historic magnitude, we must immediately examine all expenditures and eliminate any fiscally irresponsible costs such as this \$173,000 outlay for unnecessary "manners" education. As we have repeatedly stated, all levels of Pennsylvania state government must proactively trim their budgets and live within their means as all private businesses, individuals, and organizations are currently doing.

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Additionally, it has come to our attention that the owner of Solutions 21 may be related by marriage to a regional manager of the PLCB, who may be responsible for overseeing the same employees who are going to be trained. If this is a fact, then we are also requesting a review and explanation of how the contract was awarded, including how the PLCB handles situations of possible "conflict of interest" under the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act and possible conflicts with the State Adverse Interest Act.

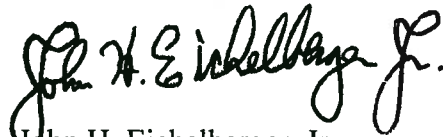
Consequently, we are respectfully calling on you to take immediate action to review the prudence of entering into this contract during the current financial uncertainty and respond with undue haste as to any possible violations of the Ethics Act and Adverse Interest Act.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention and redress of these concerns. Should you wish to discuss the matter, we remain available at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Jane C. Orié
Senator
40th District



John H. Eichelberger, Jr.
Senator
30th District

JCO/mas
cc: Joe Conti, Chief Executive Officer