



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
411 LEGISLATIVE AVENUE
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901**

COMMITTEES
Administration, Chair
Ethics, Chair
House Rules, Chair
Legislative Council
Manufactured Housing

**House Administration Committee Meeting Minutes
06.15.22**

This committee meeting has been recorded and may be accessed via legis.delaware.gov

Chair Longhurst called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m. Members included Speaker Schwartzkopf and Reps. Dukes, D. Short, and Mitchell.

Chair Longhurst introduced **HB 465, AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 30 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE DELAWARE ENTERTAINMENT JOB ACT.**

Chair Longhurst, sponsor of the bill, explained that the bill allows for a 30% transferrable tax credit of the costs of a qualified agency for film, television, esports or video game production, and can be an aggregate of multiple productions. Qualified expenditures include preproduction, production, and postproduction. The bill also requires that the initiative, carried out by the Delaware Film, Television, and Digital Entertainment Office and the Department of Finance, report to the Governor and Legislature every 2 years regarding information about the film tax credit's allocation and economic impacts. The bill's fiscal note includes \$75,000 in one-time start-up costs and a maximum of \$25 million allocated in tax credits each year. There will be an amendment added to the bill that will make a technical correction.

Chair Longhurst noted that the well-known film *Dead Poets Society* was filmed in Delaware and brought in revenue for the state and that the state has plentiful natural resources that would allow for filming. There are 33 other states with production incentives in place, and it seems natural that Delaware should attempt to move into the industry and monitor progress, creating opportunities for economic development. The bill has bipartisan support.

Chair Longhurst opened the committee to questions from the committee.

Rep. D. Short mentioned his conversation with Christopher Lemole, producer of the films *The Peanut Butter Falcon* and *Mudbound*. He realized that the environment is present in Delaware to make similar projects possible.

Chair Longhurst opened the committee to public comment.

Rick Geisenberger, Delaware Secretary of Finance, mentioned that many states do offer similar tax credits for production, but that literature and reviews on these the effectiveness of these bills are quite mixed. He mentioned that the bill has a significant fiscal note. He and the governor did express concern that this is late in the budget cycle for a bill with such a significant fiscal note. His goal is to better understand how this money would flow through the Delaware economy and the tax base, especially because Delaware has no sales tax, unlike most other states. The Department of Finance also has questions regarding how tax credits would be allocated and other concerns, but they would be happy to spend time in the off-season to better assess the industry and this bill's economic impacts.

Chair Longhurst opened the committee to virtual public comment.

Christopher Lemole, film producer and co-founder of Armory Films, mentioned that he moved to Delaware from Los Angeles, California recently. His company makes independent films, including *Mud bound* and *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, which was the highest grossing independent film of 2019. He noted that it is extremely difficult to produce a film without tax incentives and it is built into his budgeting process. One of his movies currently being produced will be filmed in Pennsylvania, but he wishes he could produce it in Delaware, his home state, rather than Pennsylvania. He supports the bill and believes it will create jobs in the state, as well as attracting the production industry to Delaware.

Stephen Weizenecker, an attorney with Barnes and Thornburg, which has an office in Wilmington, Delaware, is an entertainment lawyer. Currently, in his office in Atlanta, Georgia, there are two television shows being filmed near him due to the tax credit incentives in Georgia. He supports this bill as it will allow for job growth if it is done in a fiscally prudent manner. Film tax credits have existed for over twenty years in the US and around the world. He believes that HB 465 allows Delaware to incorporate lessons previously learned from other governments.

Tara Ryans, Vice President of State Government Affairs at the Entertainment Software Association, thanked Chair Longhurst for her work on this bill. There is large potential in esports and gaming, which are the fastest growing form of entertainment around the world. This bill will incentivize Delawareans to work in video game design.

Angela Miele, Vice President of State Tax Policy at the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc., supports HB 465 as it will create an opportunity to expand Delaware's job base. There was a discussion about production jobs only being temporary, but it works akin to the construction industry, where, if there is a sustainable and predictable program, it creates an ecosystem of production work. There is a high demand for content and this bill allows for long-term capital investment. The state can employ people now, allowing for an immediate stimulus, will not have to pay until later. Last year, 18 US states increased or started a film tax credit.

Chair Longhurst thanked those who commented and mentioned the bipartisan support that the bill garnered.

A motion was made by Rep. D. Short and seconded by Speaker Schwartzkopf to release HB 465 from committee; the motion carried. Yes= 5 (Longhurst, Schwartzkopf, Mitchell, Dukes, D. Short): No= 0; Absent= 0. The bill was released from committee with a F=0, M=5, U=0 vote.

Chair Longhurst introduced **HB 405, AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 29 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.**

Rep. Kowalko, sponsor of the bill, thanked Sen. Sokola and Rep. Smith for their work on the bill. This bill establishes an independent and non-partisan Office of the Inspector General. This will protect government integrity by investigating the management of state agencies, including fraud, abuse, or other

malpractice. It will recommend corrective actions or statutory revisions, as well as referrals to law enforcement or the government, if necessary. The Inspector General will be selected by a panel that nominates three people, one of whom is selected by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The work of the Office of the Inspector General must begin by March 1, 2023. There are 60 organizations supporting the bill.

In March, he discussed that labor union workers made him aware of asbestos contamination that was not conforming to safety standards and could affect community health. He directed them to present the evidence to a state agency which performed inspections that were cursory at best. The state agency did not take quick action and levied a minimal fine that did not incentivize asbestos removal. Inaction is one of the key reasons why this bill is necessary. Currently, there is no specific state office to address mismanagement and there are gaps in the state government that can lead to neglect, lack of responsibility, and lack of oversight. Under this bill, the Inspector General can investigate and act.

He believes that the fiscal note is minimal and believes the office would actually lead to savings in other areas. He mentioned that the US has a long history of Inspector Generals. Many states have Inspector Generals, the first of which was established in Massachusetts 41 years ago and has saved the state over \$500 million. The Federal Accountability Office wrote a report and found that for every \$1 invested in an Inspector General, states saved \$7 in taxpayer money.

Rep. Smith mentioned that he and Rep. Kowalko had competing Inspector General bills and were both focused on the same problem and it has bipartisan support. This bill will allow for public trust and transparency. He advocated for the bill to have a vote on the House floor.

Rep. Dukes thanked Rep. Kowalko and Rep. Smith for their work.

Speaker Schwartzkopf said there are parts of the bill he appreciates, but offices such as the Attorney General already have investigative responsibility. He asked if the Attorney General takes over jurisdiction if prosecution occurs.

Rep. Kowalko stated that this bill does not create redundancy, as all state agencies will be under the oversight of the Inspector General's Office.

Speaker Schwartzkopf asked if authority should be taken away from other agencies.

Rep. Kowalko said that in the case of mismanagement of funds, the Inspector General's Office may not have the resources to investigate fully and may make referrals to the Attorney General's Office or the Auditor General's Office.

Speaker Schwartzkopf was concerned that there already several agencies with investigative authority and the addition of an Inspector General could create competition between them for jurisdiction. He believed that other agencies should therefore be under the Inspector General's Office so that there is no competition.

Rep. Kowalko said that the other state agencies, in effect, would be under the Inspector General's Office.

Speaker Schwartzkopf said that it seems like they can collaborate but this bill doesn't make it clear that other state agencies are under the Inspector General's Office in terms of oversight.

Rep. Kowalko said that if something in a state agency is wrong, the Inspector General can investigate it regardless of if the state agency chooses to investigate it.

Speaker Schwartzkopf said he thinks there will be jurisdictional problems if jurisdictional boundaries are not clarified in the bill.

Nick Wasileski, Director of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government, stated that the history of the Inspector General's Office promotes independence and nonpartisanship. There is an element of cooperation between the Inspector General's Office and the Attorney General's Office. However, the Inspector General's Office has whistleblower protection and people can come to the Inspector General with a complaint that may require an investigation, which is at the discretion of the Inspector General. If they investigate and there is criminal action involved, they may turn it over to the Attorney General. If there are financial issues, it may be referred to the Auditor of Accounts. They can also work together. Additionally, in some state agencies, there is no oversight beyond the head of the agency, which may disincentivize people from going to them with legitimate concerns. The Inspector General's Office can accept these complaints instead.

Speaker Schwartzkopf said that this bill requires an amendment to protect the Inspector General from agency heads that may believe they have jurisdiction.

Chair Longhurst asked Rep. Kowalko to reach out to the Attorney General to determine how overlapping jurisdiction would work.

Rep. Kowalko affirmed that he would reach out to the Attorney General's Office for clarify. Chair Longhurst said language in the bill regarding this jurisdictional issue would be helpful.

Rep. Smith stated that the Inspector General's Office acts as a mechanism to funnel issues to different agencies depending on the problem, but the Inspector General's Office can conduct their own independent investigation.

Speaker Schwartzkopf stated that the bill needs language so that the agencies are required to cooperate with the Inspector General's Office, as other agencies may be protective of their jurisdiction.

Rep. Smith believes that this problem can be easily clarified.

Rep. Kowalko affirmed that he would speak to the Attorney General. He said he understood that the bill would send suspected criminal activity to the Attorney General.

Speaker Schwartzkopf mentioned the need for this clarification for other agencies.

Rep. Kowalko said that this bill would allow for transparency, and will not compromise the rights of the Auditor General or Attorney General. He stated that he will seek clarifying language for the bill.

Rep. Smith affirmed that they would create a concise jurisdictional amendment to the bill. He mentioned the example of police agency overlap.

Speaker Schwartzkopf said that if a problem is predicable, it should be prevented.

Chair Longhurst opened the committee to public comment.

Nick Wasileski, Director of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government, recognized organizations that support this bill, including the Delaware Coalition for Open Government, Delaware League of Women Voters, Delaware Labor's Local 199, Civic League for New Castle County, Delaware Audobon Society, Campaign to End Debtor's Prisons, Delaware Press Association, Network Delaware, Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League, Building People Power, American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware, Sussex Health and Environmental Network, American Promise Delaware, Lead Free Delaware, Common Cause Delaware and Friendship House. These 16 organizations reached out to the Delaware Coalition for Open Government in support of the bill and there is broad community support.

Keith Steck, President of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government, stated there is a budget rounding error in the bill's fiscal note and that money is available for this office due to state surplus revenue in 2022 and further predicted surplus revenue in 2023. He believes that this office will more than pay for itself and will identify fraud and recover funds that might otherwise be misused. Many Delaware organizations and citizens have lost confidence in state government agencies, including reports of DNREC citing environmental violations against an organization but not imposing fines. He also stated that inaction from the DHSS has resulted in fraud and harm. The Inspector General's Office is essential for accountability and faith in government.

Katherine Ward from the Advisory Board of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government, stated that this bill ensures that state agencies act in the public interest and with honesty and integrity. It will save the state taxpayer money and reduce waste, as well as deter questionable practices and mismanagement. It will allow for whistleblowers, will make recommendations to help solve systemic problems, and will act as an alternative resource for employees. It has broad support from Delawareans.

Albert Jackson, Vice President of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government, mentioned that recent events demonstrate the need for an Inspector General's Office. The bill will allow the Inspector General's Office to investigate issues that are detrimental to Delawareans and will act as a resource.

Claire Snyder-Hall, Executive Director of Common Cause Delaware, stated that Delaware's \$5 billion annual budget should be well spent and that laws should be followed. An Inspector General would focus on waste, fraud, and other corruption, which is broader than the work of the Attorney General. Establishing this office would cost 0.02% of state budget. It would allow people to trust the state government and recognized its bipartisan support.

Jack Young, member of the Delaware League of Women Voters, stated that this bill will create a mechanism for investigating fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and corruption and will ensure that the government operates for the needs of Delawareans.

Chair Longhurst opened the committee to virtual public comment.

John Kowalko III, member of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government, stated that the Inspector General's Office differs in function from financial auditing and criminal prosecution. The language in the bill is similar to that of other states, where there is not jurisdictional overlap. He stated that his bill was shown to the Attorney General's Office and that they had no objections to the bill as written.

D. Marque Hall, member of the Delaware Poor People's Campaign, mentioned the vast list of organizations in support of the bill, and asked the Delaware and National Poor People's Campaign to be added. There is a need for an independent office to promote accountability for state agencies in Delaware.

Rep. Kowalko stated that he will meet with the Attorney General, who can help determine if clarifications are needed to the bill.

Chair Longhurst appreciated him pledging to meet with the Attorney General.

Rep. Smith stated that the Inspector General's Office needs to be a truly independent body.

A motion was made by Rep. D. Short and seconded by Chair Longhurst to release HB 405 from committee; the motion carried. Yes= 4 (Longhurst, Schwartzkopf, Mitchell, D. Short): No= 0. The bill was released from committee with a F=0, M=4, U=0 vote.

Rep. Kowalko thanked the committee for their questions and concerns.

Chair Longhurst introduced **HB 220, AN ACT PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE I OF THE DELAWARE CONSTITUTION RELATING TO PROTECTING DELAWARE'S NATURAL RESOURCES.**

Rep. Wilson-Anton, sponsor of the bill, stated that the right to clean air, water, and environment are as important as the right to freedom of speech and religion. She discussed that some Delawareans currently have water that is unsafe to drink. HB 220 would add protecting Delaware's natural resources to the Delaware State Constitution. Part of her oath of office is to share the historic and natural heritage of Delaware, which is what the bill seeks to accomplish. It is the first leg of a constitutional amendment seeking to preserve and maintain a healthy environment. It would create an inalienable right for Delawareans to a clean and healthy environment. It would declare the state as a trustee of the states' natural resources. She then addressed some concerns and questions about this bill. She stated that citizens of Delaware would be able to invoke this against the government for action or inaction. The intent of this bill is not to allow private citizens to sue each other, made clear in lines 18 and 20 which clarify that the right to a clean and healthy environment is a "state responsibility." She also addressed concerns that the language of the amendment is too broad, responding that broad language is appropriate for constitutional

amendments, such as the Bill of Rights in the US Constitution. When rights are outlined in a constitution, the courts help solidify the scope of those rights. The third concern she heard is regarding the bill causing frivolous lawsuits, including the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and the Department of Agriculture. This year, Delaware has the highest percentage of impaired waterways in the United States, with 97% of waterways and 100% of estuaries impaired with contaminants including fecal bacteria, nitrogen, phosphorus, pesticides, PCBs, and dioxins. Other states have similar provisions and have not seen an increase in lawsuits. As the youngest member of the General Assembly, protecting the state's natural resources is very important to her and she welcomed questions.

Chair Longhurst congratulated Rep. Wilson-Anton on her work. Chair Longhurst worked on the Equal Rights Amendment, which took her six years to pass because it requires a supermajority as it is a Constitutional Amendment. The amendment failed multiple times and she had to work across the aisle to get the amendment passed. HB 200, the Clean Water Act, also took several years to pass into law. She commended Rep. Wilson-Anton but noted that challenges to gain a supermajority for constitutional amendments. She is comfortable with the amendment, but has heard concerns that it is too broad and may require compromise to gain consensus. She asked Rep. Wilson-Anton to consider the discussions heard today and to be open to possibly amending language.

Chair Longhurst opened the committee to public comment.

Shawn Garvin, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, thanked Rep. Wilson-Anton, who he has had several conversations with. He recognized the intent behind the bill but has concerns with the broadness and details, especially regarding inactions and inactions of the state. He is concerned that disagreements will cause challenges to the state on a constitutional basis if enacted. He has shared these concerns with Rep. Wilson-Anton. Currently, this bill goes beyond its intent and he cannot support it as drafted, although he is willing to have further conversations.

Rep. D. Short asked Shawn Garvin for an example of frivolous litigation based on this bill's language

Secretary Garvin said his concern is that he does not know how far the scope of litigation could be. He feels that DNREC's efforts could be challenged based on people's discrepancies with their actions.

Chair Longhurst asked Sec. Garvin to clarify his concerns regarding implementation of the bill.

Sec. Garvin stated that other states with a similar amendment now have 9-12 constitutional challenges a year, which causes him concern.

Speaker Schwartzkopf asked if this bill would make a constitutional right to sue a private business even though DNREC has the oversight, such as water regulation.

Sec. Garvin stated that people would have the right to sue DNREC for anything they may or may not have done.

Rep. Dukes asked if a third party could sue DNREC in that case. Sec. Garvin believed it was possible.

Chair Longhurst asked if DNREC has regulations in place with oversight for issues like that.

Sec. Garvin Garvin said that DNREC does have oversight regulations in place and does not understand what issue this amendment is attempting to solve, though he would be willing to address current DNREC regulations. He does not feel that a constitutional amendment is what's needed to address these concerns.

Rep. Wilson-Anton said that this bill reflects a mission and vision of Delaware. It does not address a specific problem, and thereby should be an amendment, not simply a bill. However, examples of use of this amendment include Delawareans not having clean water. This bill is not about offending people. It is about the right to not get sick from water contamination, and she is aware of communities in Delaware using bottled water because their water is unsafe to drink. She believes that this is a failure of the state and the oath of office that legislators took. This bill is not about hurting feelings and is not frivolous nor superficial. Addressing Sec. Garvin, she stated that DNREC should be proactive about addressing issues if there is such a strong concern about lawsuits if this amendment was passed, and the legislature should provide additional funding to executive agencies like DNREC if needed. However, HB 220 goes beyond regulatory issues and is about the importance of having the right to a clean environment.

Speaker Schwartzkopf agrees with the intent of the bill but stated that the language would now remove culpability from private businesses and would pass culpability onto the state instead. He believes an amendment is needed. In the House Manufactured Housing Committee, they have been working to improve water access for Delawareans. However, under this bill, every person who has poor water quality due to a private entity could then make the state responsible for it.

Rep. Wilson-Anton called on Maya K. van Rossum, an expert on constitutional environmental rights and founder of Green Amendments for the Generations. She said the amendment would work similarly to the way free speech amendments work, which does not fault the government for every interaction. This amendment would only be evoked in the case of a legitimate constitutional violation. She gave an example of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, where the state failed to address toxic contamination for 30 years, violating state law and harming the environment and health. The state had an obligation to act and chose not to act and the constitutional amendment would help inform the situation. A permit issued by the state that creates high air pollution level would violate the constitution, that permit would be challenged on constitutional grounds and would force responsible parties to remedy the situation. There are many examples in states with this amendment.

Chair Longhurst asked Secretary Garvin about the progress of the Clean Water Act. She asked what would happen under this amendment if DNREC failed to enforce the Clean Water Act.

Secretary Garvin stated those examples do not require constitutional amendments in order to enforce environmental laws. The report about Delaware's impaired waterways also noted that it cannot accurately compare states, and that Delaware is conducting water monitoring and testing. All the issues raised today could be regulated under current statutes.

Chair Longhurst asked about updates on the Clean Water Act and if people have clean drinking water in Delaware.

Secretary Garvin said that there is currently a clean water initiative for underserved communities in place, which came after thirty years of discussion. Communities have contaminated well water and the state is determining ways to help those communities and their wastewater systems. DNREC been taking steps over the last year, including partnering with utilities, counties, and municipalities, to make infrastructure investments in those areas while avoiding having people pay for water. He also said DNREC is addressing PFAs contamination and larger water system issues.

Chair Longhurst asked when the legislature will receive the report with updates.

Sec. Garvin believed it was September 15. DNREC is looking to schedule meetings in the time before the report.

Chair Longhurst mentioned that while she wishes clean water initiatives were moving faster, the state did secure \$50 million for clean water, which was matched with \$50 of federal money.

Sec. Garvin confirmed that and said there is additional funding coming.

Chair Longhurst said she wanted to make sure that this amendment would not affect the work of the Clean Water Act.

Maya K. van Rossum said that it is untrue that all environmental issues in the state can be solved under existing law. Issuing permits, in compliance with legislation, can compound and cause harmful contaminant levels, such as in the water waste levels in Delaware. While the law is not being broken in that case, cumulative impacts would advise that more permits should not be issued. These issues can cause harmful health impacts. Gaps in the law often do not account for emerging technology or contaminants, such as PFAs, which had no government regulations even as the problem emerged. This amendment would push government agencies to more quickly advance meaningful action to prevent proliferation of PFAs or other contaminants, for example. There are many contexts in which constitutional guidance would be helpful as it fills in gaps in existing law.

Chair Longhurst opened the committee to public comment.

William Donald Clifton, Executive Director of the Delaware Farm Bureau, spoke in opposition to HB 220, as it has vague language and conflicting interpretations. This amendment could be counterproductive to environmental improvement and is more conflicting than in other states due to the last sentence of the bill, which contains “self-executed.” Other state ERAs increase potential for abusive litigation, this bill practically guarantees that will occur.

Phillip Dukas stated that the bill is two bills forced together, as it is partially a property rights bill. He believes that property rights aspect is disservice to the rest of the bill. He spoke to 80 property owners and

many have opposition, and he believes it should be remedied and not released in this form. He said the bill's overly broad nature needs to be restricted.

Molly Keogh, member Opportunity Knocks for Delaware, had a statement read in support of HB 220. She stated that air pollution causes cancer deaths and there are few unaffected by the spike in cancer. While some people have the money for air purification systems, many cannot afford them, including her household.

Krista Bacchieri, a Wilmington resident, spoke in support of HB 220. She discussed the effects of cancer on her family and that inaction will create higher cancer rates. While she does not want to leave Delaware, she worries about where to raise her future children.

Reji Gregoire, a Frederica resident speaking on behalf of working families and students, spoke in support of HB 220. She stated that she has Lupus that her doctor said is exacerbated by Delaware's poor air quality. She heard support from people including a VP of a Fortune 500 company, a vegetable farmer, a livestock farmer, realtors, professors and scholars, board members of a hospital, nurses, a construction company, and the NAACP.

Joe Fitzgerald, on behalf of the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce, spoke in opposition to HB 220 as he is worried about unintended consequences. He has submitted more comments in writing. He believes in empirically derived policies to address environmental issues.

Dr. Gerry Bell, who holds a doctorate in meteorology, stated that non-permitted spraying by the Island Bay Waste Water Plant in Delaware has poisoned well water in the nearby areas. Longer-term weather patterns and other factors can compromise spray fields and cause non-permitted spraying. He believes that HB 220 will hold the county and state accountable for their operations that are harming residents.

As the allotted time for the meeting was nearing its end, Chair Longhurst stated that the remaining public comments would be moved to the next day's House Administration Committee meeting. She felt that action could not be made without hearing all public comments and apologized for time constraints.

Additionally, Chair Longhurst announced that **HB 458, AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 29 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION BY THE CITY OF WILMINGTON**, would be moved to a future meeting.

Rep. Wilson Anton voiced concerns that said people attending to make a public comment may not be able to attend the next day and that these personal stories are important. She stated that she understood concerns that the language is too broad but feels it is important. She pledged to work on the property aspect of the amendment if the committee wants to release the bill today.

Chair Longhurst stated that public comment is needed before decisions can be made and the topic is important to hear additional commentary. She pledged to add it to the next day's 12:00pm meeting.

Rep. Wilson-Anton said her expert cannot attend tomorrow as she is out of town.

Maya K. van Rossum responded to some concerns, stating that provisions in other states with Green Amendments are similarly self-executing and would be the same in Delaware. Additionally, there are zero frivolous lawsuits in other states. Environmental rights do not override property rights, but they are placed on par and will allow for ability to protect both via a Green Amendment.

Chair Longhurst adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Hannah Rigoglioso

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Speaker's List

Krista Bacchieri, Wilmington resident

Dr. Gerry Bell

William Donald Clifton, Executive Director of the Delaware Farm Bureau

Phillip Dukas

Joe Fitzgerald, New Castle County Chamber of Commerce

Shawn Garvin, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

Rick Geisenberger, Delaware Secretary of Finance

Reji Gregoire, Frederica resident

D. Marque Hall, Delaware Poor People's Campaign

Albert Jackson, Vice President of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government

Molly Keogh, Opportunity Knocks for Delaware

Christopher Lemole, film producer

Angela Miele, Vice President of State Tax Policy at the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.

Tara Ryans, Vice President of State Government Affairs at the Entertainment Software Association

Claire Snyder-Hall, Executive Director of Common Cause Delaware

Keith Steck, President of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government

Maya K. van Rossum, an expert on constitutional environmental rights and founder of Green

Amendments for the Generations

Katherine Ward from the Advisory Board of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government

Nick Wasileski, Director of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government

Stephen Weizenecker, attorney with Barnes and Thornburg

Jack Young, Delaware League of Women Voters

COMMON CAUSE DELAWARE TESTIMONY

House Administration Committee
Claire Snyder-Hall, Executive Director
June 15, 2022

Our state budget is now running about \$5 billion a year – and Delawareans deserve to have confidence that all those tax dollars are being well-spent. We need to know that our state’s procurement laws are being followed; and we should be able to trust that our government officials are not misusing public money to enrich themselves, their families or their cronies.

That’s why Common Cause Delaware strongly supports the creation of an Inspector General’s office for the First State. For about two-one-hundredths of one percent (0.02%) of the state budget, Delawareans can have an Inspector General’s office to ensure all those billions are being spent the way they are supposed to be. We can have an office dedicated to searching out waste, fraud, abuse, corruption, and other conduct that is harmful to the public interest – and to helping recover misspent or inappropriately paid funds.

Eleven other states have a state Inspector General to combat waste, fraud and abuse, in addition to a state auditor that supervises the accounting and financial functions of the state. Delaware should join that list. We urge you to vote HB 405 out of committee.

Right now, too many people don’t trust the government and state agencies to do the right thing most of the time. An Inspector General would help restore trust because it would serve as a watchdog, empowered to investigate state agencies if illegal activities or mismanagement are suspected.

Bad behavior by public officials hurts all of us – and it goes further than the financial cost of wasted tax dollars. Waste, fraud and abuse undermines morale and the effectiveness of public agencies, and it limits the ability of government offices to provide services Delawareans need. The Inspector General would work with the Delaware attorney general to stop agency mismanagement and abuse of office – deterrence that will promote ethical and legal behavior over the long run.

Common Cause Delaware, as a non-partisan organization, particularly appreciates that the Inspector General would be independent, non-partisan, and appointed for a set term. Because the position is appointed, rather than elected, the Inspector General will not be a politician, but rather someone who has the qualifications and independence to do the job. Not beholden to either political party, the Inspector General will be able to serve as an impartial watchdog on the public’s behalf.

We are delighted that this bill has bipartisan support. We believe that demonstrates widespread recognition that the creation of an Office of the Inspector General would greatly benefit *everyone* in Delaware.

We urge all members of the General Assembly to consider this bill through the lens of taxpayers and voters – and vote the bill out of committee. Thank you.

Sarah D'Alonzo supports

Sarah Dalonzo <sacied444@comcast.net>

Tue 6/14/2022 1:17 PM

To:

- HouseCommitteeComment (Mailbox Resources) <HouseCommitteeComment@delaware.gov>

HB220 and HB405

I'm a Delaware resident: address:

704 Princeton Road Wilmington, DE
19807

Any further info needed ,please use

My email address above. Sarah

D'Alonzo

Sent from my iPhone

Bill 220 and 450

susan nolan <suenolan2004@yahoo.com>

Tue 6/14/2022 12:57 PM

To:

- HouseCommitteeComment (Mailbox Resources) <HouseCommitteeComment@delaware.gov>

Please vote to protect Delaware's natural resources and provide an Inspector general to oversee. I will be watching your votes and remember when it's time to vote you in or out

Thank you Susan Nolan

Sent from my iPhone

Save Delaware and Sussex Cty before its too late.

Jerry <jerrybegood@gmail.com>

Tue 6/14/2022 11:29 AM

To:

- HouseCommitteeComment (Mailbox Resources) <HouseCommitteeComment@delaware.gov>

Please support HB 220 and HB 405 and vote to approve these bills and move them forward for a full House vote this month - before the end of the session!

Jerry LaForgia Lewes De.

(No subject)

Christine LaForgia <laforgiaruns@gmail.com>

Tue 6/14/2022 11:51 AM

To:

- HouseCommitteeComment (Mailbox Resources) <HouseCommitteeComment@delaware.gov>

Please support HB 220 and HB 405 and vote to approve these bills and move them forward for a full House vote this month - before the end of the session!