

Good Morning, Chairman Smucker, Vice Chairman Greenleaf, Minority Chairman Blake, and Members of the Intergovernmental Operations Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on SB1080. My name is Guy Jensen. I am the Deputy Executive Director and Acting as Director of the Legislative Office for Research Liaison, or more commonly known as LORL. LORL was established by a grant from the National Science Foundation and a House appropriation in 1976, and served as a model research agency for other state legislatures.

Briefly, LORL is a nonpartisan research office created during the legislative *reform and modernization era* to help professionalize the work of the House and Senate by providing objective, nonpartisan information to its members and staff on an as-needed basis. Further, LORL also serves as the Legislature's formal liaison to the higher education community. LORL is able to supplement its small full-time professional staff with experts from the state's many public and more recently, private colleges and universities when conducting research

on narrow or specialized topics. LORL's Inquiry Service has completed over 25,000 legislative inquiries in its 35 years. Further, in reviewing legislation that was enacted in the 2007-08 Session, LORL estimates it provided information on approximately 25% of the bills sent to the Governor during that period.

LORL has five employees – four researchers and an administrator – with a combined legislative experience of over 127 years. The activities and LORL's budget are governed by the LORL Committee.

This Committee asked us to present comments on the proposed legislation. The LORL staff, including myself, as well as several LORL Faculty Associates believe this legislation does a fine job of capturing and maintaining LORL's mission.

**(ORAL TESTIMONY MOVES TO PAGE 6)**

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**(TESTIMONY BELOW FOR RECORD BUT NOT READ)**

In addition to the Inquiry Service, LORL:

- ✚ Helps locate faculty to testify at public hearings.
- ✚ Provides information to national organizations.
- ✚ Assists other state legislatures.
- ✚ Creates for each legislator a map of their district.
- ✚ Mentors legislative interns.
- ✚ Uses its spatial analysis capabilities to organize and present information of various types to the legislature (LORL's Legislative Atlas).

As the General Assembly's formal liaison between higher education and the Legislature, LORL has established a valuable and long standing relationship with the 103 colleges and universities in its network. Some of the highlights of LORL's linkage with higher education include:

- ✚ **49 Visiting Scholars** – PhDs from all academic disciplines interested in public policy and housed at LORL's office to assist the staff and members.

- ✚ **38 Faculty Associates** – PhDs that provide support services to staff on specific projects or when LORL needs to locate experts in the research community.
- ✚ **166 Undergraduate and Graduate Interns.**
- ✚ **11 full-scale University-based research reports** and programs requested by the legislature.
- ✚ **24 Conferences and Committee Informational Meetings** on legislatively designated topics hosted by various universities in the LORL Network (PSU, PITT, Temple, and PA State System of Higher Education and AICUP).
- ✚ **9 Speaker's Journals on public policy issues** of special interest to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Articles are written and edited by academics in the LORL Network without cost to the General Assembly.
- ✚ **8 Undergraduate Research Days** at the Capitol.
- ✚ **2 Legislative Atlases** using data from the decennial Census broken down by legislative district. Data and analyses compiled and presented by a university in LORL Network.

👉 **2 large scale district maps for each member** of the General Assembly utilizing university geographic information systems (GIS) and geospatial experts from academia in the LORL Network. The atlas and maps will be updated after the next reapportionment.

👉 **3 special volumes of the Commonwealth Journal**, published in conjunction with LORL by the Pennsylvania Political Science Association (PPSA) on pressing issues facing the state.

It should be noted: the universities and colleges in our network provide these tasks as in-kind services. In 2007, the Executive Director of LORL estimated the colleges and universities in LORL's network provided over 1 million dollars of in-kind service over a 3-year period (see attachment, Summary: Value of University Services Donated to the General Assembly through LORL)

**(ORAL TESTIMONY CONTINUED)**

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The Pennsylvania Office for Research and Public Policy (PORPP) as proposed in SB1080 outlines a research office that is charged with performing many of the services that LORL has been providing to the House and Senate since our creation in 1976.

LORL has researched many public policies and gathered information for the members, standing committees, and staff of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and the Pennsylvania Senate. This is consistent with the general authority of the proposed PORPP. (Page 52, line 30)

*"The office shall conduct any investigation or study and gather any information as may be deemed useful to the General Assembly and to the standing committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives."*

LORL has engaged in, or assisted fellow legislative service agencies with long-term studies. This is consistent with the general authority of the proposed PORPP. (Page 53, line 4)

*"A long-term study or investigation or a codification project which is likely to take more than 90 days to complete may only be initiated by a resolution of the Senate or the House of Representatives."*

In addition to the universities in the LORL network, LORL has established a network of visiting scholars and faculty associates who provide support and advice on special issues. This is consistent with the general authority of the proposed PORPP. (Page 53, line 12)

*"The office may designate persons, other than members of the General Assembly, to act in advisory capacities."*

LORL has handled nearly 25,000 inquiries from members and staff of the House of Representatives and the Senate since our inception. This also is consistent with the general authority of the proposed PORPP. (Page 53, line 25)

*"The office may accept requests for research assistance from individual members of the General Assembly and their staff."*

LORL has always conducted its inquiry service in a manner that maintains the confidentiality of the requestor. This is consistent with the general authority of the proposed PORPP. (Page 53, line 28)

*"Records which are created or obtained during study projects under this section shall be treated as confidential. Requests made of the office to inspect identifiable records pertaining to a project under this section shall be denied and the requesting party notified that the records are considered to be confidential and will not be made available for inspection.*

*"(ii) The work papers underlying the office's studies pursuant to this section shall be privileged from public disclosure, including through discovery in a judicial or administrative proceeding, because they show the deliberative process of the office in carrying out its role in the overall legislative method under Pennsylvania law in studying,*



*evaluating and recommending policy improvement to State government and law."*

Further, the legislation creating LORL forged a relationship between the General Assembly and the colleges and universities in the Commonwealth and is consistent with the general authority of the proposed PORPP. (Page 54, line 21)

*"The office shall develop relationships with colleges and universities in this Commonwealth so that faculty at those colleges and universities may provide in-kind expertise to the General Assembly to respond to research requests."*

Finally, the addition of this legislation (as noted on Page 63, line 29) *... is intended to preserve the nature and extent of the legislative services provided by ... the agencies testifying today. LORL, for one, will do our part for this initiative.*

I thank you on behalf of the LORL staff for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this legislation and am happy to answer any questions.