

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. House Bill 616

PRINTER NO. 1683

AMOUNT

\$2,126,000

FUND

General Fund Restricted Revenue Account

DATE INTRODUCED

May 2, 2023

PRIME SPONSOR

Representative Harris

DESCRIPTION

House Bill 616 appropriates \$2,126,000 from the restricted revenue account within the General Fund to the Office of Small Business Advocate (OSBA) in the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

The OSBA is administratively included within the Department of Community and Economic Development. However, the Small Business Advocate Act specifically provides that the Secretary of DCED is not in any way responsible for the policies, procedures or other substantive matters developed by the OSBA to carry out its duties under the act.

The OSBA is charged with representing the interests of small business consumers of utility services in proceedings before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) and the comparable federal regulatory agencies and in court. The OSBA is funded by assessments levied by the PUC on the public utilities subject to its jurisdiction. No General Fund revenues are used to support the OSBA's operations.

In 1993, the OSBA was assigned additional responsibilities involving the administration of Pennsylvania's workers' compensation system. The costs incurred by the OSBA in discharging those duties are paid from assessments made by the Insurance Department against the insurance companies that write workers' compensation insurance policies in Pennsylvania.

This act shall take effect July 1, 2023, or immediately, whichever is later.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 616 will cost the restricted revenue account within the General Fund \$2,126,000 in Fiscal Year 2023-24. That funding amount is a \$301,000 increase above last year's enacted budget and is equal to the Governor's proposed level.