

2005-2006 LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS ON TOURISM ISSUES

The goal of the PTLA lobbying efforts is to provide a favorable legislative and regulatory environment in which the State's tourism industry can prosper and grow.

In the past two years, PTLA successfully lobbied in support of favorable legislation and against harmful legislation to its members.

The 2005-2006 legislative session began in January 2005 and expired on November 30, 2006. The Legislature was a continuing body during this period. Bills introduced the first year of the session may have been acted on during the second year. Bills that were not approved by both the House and Senate automatically died at the end of the session.

The following is a summary of legislative victories during the 2005-2006 legislative session:

UC Hearings: PTLA supported Senate Bill 464 providing a legislative remedy to the February 3, 2005 Commonwealth Court ruling that only attorneys were allowed to defend a UC claim at the hearing level. The bill was signed into law as Act 15 on June 15, 2005.

Room Tax: PTLA supported House Bill 157 clarifying the use of hotel room tax revenue for tourism purposes only. The bill was signed into law as Act 12 of 2005 on July 5, 2005.

Liquor Wholesale Discount: PTLA supported Senate Bill 462 increasing the wholesale discount provided to licensees on their purchase of wine and spirits by 3% from 7% to 10%. The bill was signed into law as Act 39 on July 6, 2005.

Tourism Funding: PTLA supported House Bill 815 increasing funding for tourism marketing and development in the State Budget for fiscal year 2005-2006. The bill was signed into law as Act 1A on July 6, 2005.

Tourism Funding: PTLA supported House Bill 2499 increasing funding for tourism marketing and development in the State Budget for fiscal year 2006-2007. The bill was signed into law as Act 1A on July 6, 2006.

Minimum Wage: PTLA successfully lobbied to protect the law's current cash payment requirements to "tipped" employees. Senate 1090 was signed into law as Act 112 on July 12, 2006.

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Internet Hotel Reservation Services: PTLA opposed House Bill 2282 allowing online intermediaries to avoid paying hotel room taxes resulting in a decline of room tax revenue for tourism promotion. Governor Rendell vetoed the bill on November 9, 2006.

WC Reform: PTLA supported House Bill 2738 reducing workers' compensation litigation costs and streamlining the process to benefit employees and employers. The bill was signed into law as Act 147 on November 9, 2006.

Post Labor Day School Opening: PTLA supported House Bill 1968 requiring public schools to begin classes after Labor Day. the bill was reported from the House Tourism & Recreational Development Committee, but was tabled on November 30, 2006.

Criminal Background Checks: PTLA opposed House Bill 331 requiring innkeepers to conduct background checks on employees who have access to guest room keys. The bill died in the Senate Professional Licensure Committee.

Sales Tax Expansion: PTLA opposed Senate Bill 854 expanding the 6% sales tax to 18 new items and services, 13 of which would have affected the tourism industry. The bill died in the Senate.

Dietary Information: PTLA opposed House Bill 375 requiring restaurants to provide dietary information for all food and drink items. The bill died in the House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee.