



Representative Greg Vitali  
Fax: (717) 787-7647

Dear Representative Vitali,

I am writing on behalf of the Society to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB), a coalition formed in 1990 consisting of over 100 business, neighborhood groups and religious organizations. At SCRUB we believe that the way a city looks has tremendous impact on the way people feel about themselves and their neighborhoods. Cities that care for their historic beauty and natural environment attract residents, businesses and tourists.

Despite the 1991 passage of outdoor advertising controls in Philadelphia, little has changed. Philadelphians have become discouraged by the blatant lack of enforcement of this law. Despite strong community opposition, the Zoning Board continues to grant variances allowing billboards in prohibited areas.

For the past ten years SCRUB members have worked tirelessly to secure the enforcement of the sign control laws through the judicial appeal process. We have joined with community groups and taxpayers, secured pro bono attorneys, and have been successful in the Common Pleas Court, the Commonwealth Court, and even the Supreme Court reversing numerous Zoning Board variances.

Last fall, in reaction to SCRUB's success, several members of the Philadelphia City Council attempted to pass Bill 629, a bill that would have severely limited the rights of community organizations and taxpayers to appeal Philadelphia Zoning Board decisions.

In Philadelphia this bill was defeated thanks to the intense effort of hundreds of community associations, concerned individuals, and organizations such as SCRUB. The reincarnation of Bill 629 in the form of this eleventh hour amendment to SB 1100 makes a mockery of our democratic process.

Not only does this proposed amendment grant special protections to the billboard industry, by eliminating the legal standing of taxpaying citizens and community watchdog groups in any cases involving outdoor advertising, but it severely limits the rights of community organizations to appeal Zoning Board decisions in Philadelphia.

We strongly support the Vitali amendment that deletes sections A1 and B and which will protect the rights of taxpayers, community organizations, and citizens.

Thank you for your support,

Mary Tracy  
Executive Director

cc: Majority Leader John Perzel  
Fax: (717) 783-7225