



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

April 27, 2011

Senator Don Harmon, Co-Chairperson  
Senator Pamela Althoff, Co-Chairperson  
IL State Senate Committee on Procurement

Dear Senators Harmon and Althoff:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity of providing a legislative forum in which to express our serious concerns arising from our first year experience with PA96-795.

However well intentioned, the additional bureaucratic layers of state procurement administration initiated by the legislation is not only costing taxpayers tens of millions of dollars in unnecessary and duplicative costs each year, but also increasing the costs of purchasing by diminishing competition through a bizarre regulatory web of rules and procedures that only the most sophisticated business entity could navigate.

In dealing with a critically important and long overdue construction of a new science building on our Edwardsville campus, I have seen firsthand the delays and additional costs that have accrued as a result of this new scheme, despite written and verbal assurances from the chief procurement officer to the contrary.

At a time when we are trying to put our people back to work, bureaucrats in Springfield are delaying construction projects to seemingly justify their new found existence, substituting their judgment over those of career professionals employed by our own state.

As a former legislator, I simply cannot believe that this is what was envisioned by the legislature when this law was passed.

I am also deeply concerned about the unintended consequences of this new procurement framework on the ability of our public universities' boards of trustees to enter into timely contracts for the purchases of goods and services from all over the world in order to successfully compete for faculty and students.

For a very good reason, the legislature established independent public university boards of trustees and provided these boards the statutory authority to enter into contracts in accordance with the Illinois Procurement Code. However, under the protocol established by the new procurement bureaucracy, each and every contract now entered into by our board is subject to review and approval by a state agency which has no fiduciary responsibility to protect or advance the interests of the university.

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Public universities in Illinois are some of the most regulated institutions of higher learning in the country. Yet our competitors in the private sector face none of these byzantine rules. Last year, the University of Phoenix took in over a billion dollars in taxpayer funds, but their procurement practices are not subject to the set of obstacles that our own state legislature has placed in front of its public universities.

Excuse my frustration, but I implore the Senate to finally move forward on the list of issues outlined by President Hogan. Legislative inaction on this subject has already hurt our competitive standing and the many Illinois companies that desire to do business with their public universities.

Sincerely,

A black and white image of a handwritten signature, which appears to be "Glenn Poshard", written in cursive on a dark background.

Glenn Poshard  
President  
Southern Illinois University