

## MY VIEW one reader's opinion

KENNETH E. BRANDT



The writer represents part of Lancaster County in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

# PACs deserve to be heard

**DURING THE RECENT** general election campaign, and in prior campaigns, the public may have gotten a slanted view of political action committees (PACs).

Political action committees to me are "people" action committees, because PACs are people. Too often PACs are portrayed as special interest groups attempting to defy the public interest for special advantage. This impression is fostered in many cases by those people who do not believe in market solutions but government mandates to solve the problems of the day. They now want government to mandate taxpayer-financed elections as well in the electoral process.

As a state Representative who stands for election every two years and who seeks and accepts political action committee endorsements, I see PACs as voluntary associations joined by my neighbors and constituents to make their views heard in the political process.

My neighbor up the road is an insurance agent who contributes to his insurance PAC and my neighbor down the road works at Three Mile Island and contributes to a utility PAC. They are involved private citizens voluntarily joining political action committees to support the democratic process under the First Amendment rights of speech and petitioning the government.

**AFTER ALL,** PACs evolved as a result of government intervention in the economy, particularly when government began to set the rules and regulations for the marketplace. The modern PAC grew out of the struggle of organized labor to elect officials who would support labor in government's decision-making process.

Behind any successful PAC are people, be they laborers, business people or professionals. The PAC serves to educate, to increase interest in candidates and issues by raising money and to stimulate individual involvement in the political process. PACs are schoolteachers licking envelopes for their endorsed candidates; they are sportsmen circulating flyers on candidates' positions viewed as favorable to them, they are real estate agents setting up a phone bank to help get out the vote for their favored candidate.

Yes, PACs do contribute money, but does money actually determine the final outcome of an election? If that were the case the U.S. Senate would be forever

Republican. But PACs can determine the outcome, as one PAC may have done recently when its staff made 160 telephone calls to members in a House district the final weekend before an election. On election day their endorsed candidate won by just a few votes more than the number of telephone calls they made in that district. It was not money that may have swung the election but people talking to other people with similar views.

It is people who determine election outcomes and it is the PACs that can rally their members beyond just contributing money which can influence election outcomes. The teachers' COPE, the labor union PAC, and the many trade association PACs are known for such successful strategies.

Don't ever take PACs out of our political process because you will be taking people out as well. In this age of record-low voter turnouts we should be encouraging more — not fewer — people to participate in our political process.

**WHEN I SPEAK** before PACs I see people. It's the leaders of the PAC for health-care insurance or the small business people who contribute to the National Federation of Independent Businessmen's PAC. These people represent the backbone of the PACs and the backbone of our political process.

The more we get away from private voluntary PACs and individual contributions to our political campaign, the more we will go to the high-tech, non-people intense, media-magic campaigns that our publicly-financed and dollar-ceiling-limited presidential campaigns have become. Forget the neighborhood campaign headquarters — full steam ahead with the 30-second TV spots to slam the other guy. The end result: People are shut out; voter turnout is down; cynicism is up!

All effective PACs only follow the campaign plan of a Whig organizer from Illinois named Abraham Lincoln who in 1840 produced this campaign plan for people supporting Whig candidates: "To see each man of his section face to face and procure his pledge that he will for no considerations stay away from the polls ... in November and that he will record his vote ... with us as early on election day as possible."

The more things change the more they stay the same. In politics the bottom line is people. And political action committees play an important role in mobilizing people in our political process.

## A REPUBLICAN HOUSE MAJORITY

### "There Is A Difference..."

#### "Electing A Speaker...The Most Important Vote"

On the first Tuesday in January, the House convenes to elect a new speaker. The party with 102 members elects the Speaker and controls the legislative process for two years. It is a member's first and most important vote. The majority party sets the rules. The rules stipulate that the Speaker appoints the Committee Chairmen; that each committee has 14 majority party members and 10 minority party members; and most importantly the Appropriations Committee is stacked 20-12 in favor of the majority party. Amazingly, though we are currently only two votes short of the majority in the House, we are four short in committee and 8 votes short on the all important Appropriations Committee.

#### "The Pro-Jobs Caucus...It Can Only Be The House Republicans"

Over 90 percent of all new jobs are created by small business. Recent analyses by the voice of small business in Pennsylvania, the National Federal of Independent Business/Pennsylvania, rates the House Republican Caucus as more than twice as likely to vote in favor of small business as are the House Democrats. Pennsylvania's unemployment rate is below the national average, thanks in part to the policies of the House Republicans to create jobs for the future.

#### "Don't Say Those Big 'L' Words Around Us"

While the House Republicans are the party of small businesses and the entrepreneur taking risks in the marketplace to create jobs to build a better future for all of us, the House Democrats are captive of the LIBERALS and the LABOR union bosses who believe more government is the solution to all our problems. According to ratings by the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the average House Democrat was three times more likely to vote for the LIBERAL position on the issues as was the average House Republican. According to ratings by the AFL-CIO's political action committee (COPE), the average House Democrat was three and one-half times more likely to vote for LABOR as was the average House Republican. Remember, don't say those big "L" words around us.

#### "Abolish The CAT Fund...The House Republicans Vote Yes"

The much despised CAT Fund lives, thanks to the House Democrats who voted as a block against concurrence in Senate amendments to abolish it and to Governor Casey who said basically don't do anything until next year. The House Republicans voted to end the CAT Fund once and for all. The state run CAT Fund was designed to replace No-Fault insurance for medical expenses between \$100,000 and 1 million dollars. Originally it cost \$5, now \$8 and attempts to raise it to \$24 were postponed until after the election. Actuaries say it must be raised even higher. Unfunded liabilities are growing at an estimated \$300,000 a day as the state run fund drowns in a sea of red-ink. Get the state out of the auto insurance business before it breaks the back of the auto-driving taxpayer!

#### "The Taxpayers' Party: The House Republicans"

Thanks to sound management practices under eight years of the Thornburgh Administration in reducing the state-payroll by 15,000 people cutting \$6.1 billion worth of waste from state government and economic growth, the state has had two consecutive budget surpluses under Casey. The House Republicans wanted to give some of the surplus this year back to the taxpayers. The Democrats wanted to spend it all. Taxes were lowered only because of Republican insistence in the first year of Casey. The "tax and spend" Democrats said "no", unanimously against tax cuts in his second year. The Democrats need all the taxpayers money they can lay their hands on to pay for a lucrative state employees contract which Casey negotiated with AFSCME. Former Thornburgh budget director, Robert Bittenbender predicted it will cost the taxpayers at least \$797 million over three years. If Bittenbender is right, we're in store for a whooping tax increase.

The Democrats "tax and spend" policies are a dramatic reversal from the tax cut policies of the House Republicans. Along with Governor Thornburgh, Republicans in the General Assembly lowered the personal income tax to a flat 2.1 percent in 1986, the lowest rate in over eight years. The corporate income tax was lowered to the lowest rate in 18 years.

## "PACs Are People"

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As a State Representative who stands for election every two years who seeks and accepts political action committee endorsements, I see them as voluntary associations joined by my neighbors and constituents to make their views heard in the political process.

From my neighbor up the road who is an insurance agent and contributes to his insurance PAC, to my other neighbor down the other road who works at Three Mile Island who contributes to a utility PAC, they are involved private citizens voluntarily joining a political action committee to support the democratic process under the first amendment rights of speech and petitioning the government.

After all, PACs evolved as a result of government intervention in the economy. Particularly when government began to set the rules and regulations for the marketplace. The modern PAC grew out of the struggle of organized labor to influence election outcomes to favor elected officials who would support having government come down on the side of labor in the decision making process.

Behind any successful PAC are people; be they laborers, business people or professionals. The PAC serves to educate, increase interest in candidates and issues by raising money and to stimulate individual involvement in the political process. PACs are school teachers licking envelopes for their endorsed candidates; they are sportsmen circulating flyers on candidates' positions viewed as favorable to them or a real estate agent helping set up a phone bank to help get out the vote for his favored candidate.

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The PAC, which contacted its membership about which I spoke and all effective PACs, only follow the campaign plan of a Whig organizer from Illinois named Abraham Lincoln who in 1840 produced this campaign plan for people supporting Whig candidates. "To see each man of his section face to face and procure his pledge that he will for no considerations stay from the polls...in November and that he will record his vote...with us as early on election day as possible."

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## TALKING POINTS

1. Infantry of Democracy. A State Representative is on the front line of issues. We are the first place people come to on state problems -- a road needs fixed; a workers' compensation problem; help for the local government; you name it, we face it! We must be "people" persons. We are "we the legislature" because the legislature is the peoples' House.
2. We are expected to be all things to all people. That's why sometimes it is best we do nothing. The "people" want us to fix the roads, but don't raise my taxes; the "people" want more school subsidy money, but don't raise my taxes; they want to reenforce the L.C.B., but don't put beer and wine in grocery stores. Editorial writers criticize us for not going far enough on legislation, then in the same breath they accuse us of going to far in legislative action.
3. The House is a great training ground because the House is a peoples' place. Abraham Lincoln served in the Illinois House and Teddy Roosevelt served in the New York General Assembly. They came to understand people problems which later served them well as future Presidents.
4. Legislate results but legislate opportunities. As a Republican, I believe in individual responsibility, not where government legislates opportunity to allow the people the fullest chance to obtain whatever goals they seek in life. We are seeking a diverse state of action. The Federal and State Constitutions are flexible to reflect a diverse "people." We must legislate with that diversity in mind. Too many legislators believe that we can pass a bill and determine results, such as passing a bill to end poverty in our lives or great jobs, etc. That's wrong assumptions.

5. To bring about change it is up to "We the People." The General Assembly is only a reflection of the people we represent. We respond to the people. The First Amendment of the Constitution, guaranteeing freedom of speech, requires us to listen to the people. The right to petition and assembly allow the peoples' voices to be heard. A political action committee is just our means by which the voice of the "people" can be heard. We take our lead from the people. By joining together for a more powerful, is the way the "peoples" goal can be accomplished.

6. Change is a certainty -- the "people" must control it. We all know that change occurs "for better or worse." Most "people" preconceive that change always will bring a better future. After all, when anything -- a company, animal, person, plant or society -- stops changing, it is dying. "People" must control chance, control our own destiny. We "the people" can't turn changes over to government for safe keeping. Government might make changes that you don't approve of. Political action committees are designed to allow the people to have a say in what direction change in government policies will take.