

HARRISBURG REPORT

ELIZABETHTOWN OFFICE:

25 East High Street
Elizabethtown, PA
Tel: 367-5525



COLUMBIA OFFICE:

430 Locust Street
Columbia, PA
Tel: 684-5525

from

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

KENNETH E. BRANDT

House Republican Policy Chairman
P.O. Box 89, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Friends,

The first few months of the 1987-88 Legislative Session were rather slow for members of the General Assembly as we waited for our new Governor to fill key cabinet posts and develop his priorities. Despite this slow start, we have picked up the pace considerably during the past two months and have begun to deal with many important issues.

I'm sending this newsletter in an effort to familiarize you with some of these major issues facing the legislature. Included with the newsletter is a questionnaire which will help me obtain your views on key issues. Please take a few minutes to complete and return the questionnaire to me.

As your State Representative, I am available to assist you with any state related problem. If you have questions, problems or concerns with state government, please contact either district office in Elizabethtown or Columbia.

Thank you for taking the time to review this report and best wishes for a pleasant summer.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Brandt

District Office Information . . . One-Stop State Help Centers

ELIZABETHTOWN

25 East High Street
367-5525
Aide: Bill Schoenberger

Hours:

Monday 10 - 4
Tuesday 10 - 4
Wednesday 10 - 4
Thursday 10 - 12, 6 - 9
Friday 10 - 4

COLUMBIA

430 Locust Street
684-5525
Aides: Ruth Thomas
Kathleen Wilson

Hours:

Monday 10 - 6
Tuesday 10 - 6
Wednesday 10 - 6
Thursday 10 - 6
Friday 10 - 7

SERVICES AVAILABLE:

- Assistance with Motor Vehicle Registration Problems
- Obtain Copies of Birth and Death Certificates
- Distribute Various State and Federal Applications
- Provide Various State Publications
- Obtain Copies of House and Senate Legislation
- Obtain Copies of State Laws and Regulations
- Arrange Tours of the Capitol Building
- Provide Information to Senior Citizens Regarding Their Benefits and Rights

Senior Citizen Bulletin

HOME SALES TAX BREAK

Pennsylvanians 55 and over who plan to sell their homes can take advantage of an important tax break beginning July 1. The new law permits a one-time exclusion from taxable income on the capital gains (profit) from the sale of a principle residence. The exclusion could be as high as \$100,000 (for a married couple, filing jointly).

To qualify, the residence must have been used by the taxpayer as his/her principle residence for at least three of the last five years prior to sale.

The exemption is similar to one contained in federal law, which allows a one-time exemption of up to \$125,000 in capital gains on a home sale.

SEEKS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"Infrastructure" Bill Proposed

A proposed infrastructure plan for Pennsylvania, which I cosponsored, has been labeled as "landmark legislation that could serve as a national model for all other states," by New York investment bankers.

The proposal — HB 823 and 844 — calls for establishment of a Commonwealth Infrastructure Development Bank and prioritizing projects through a county infrastructure planning process.

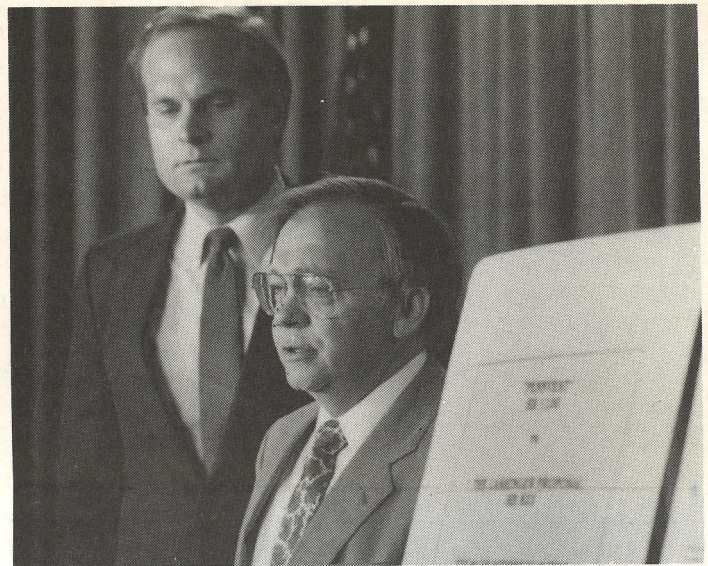
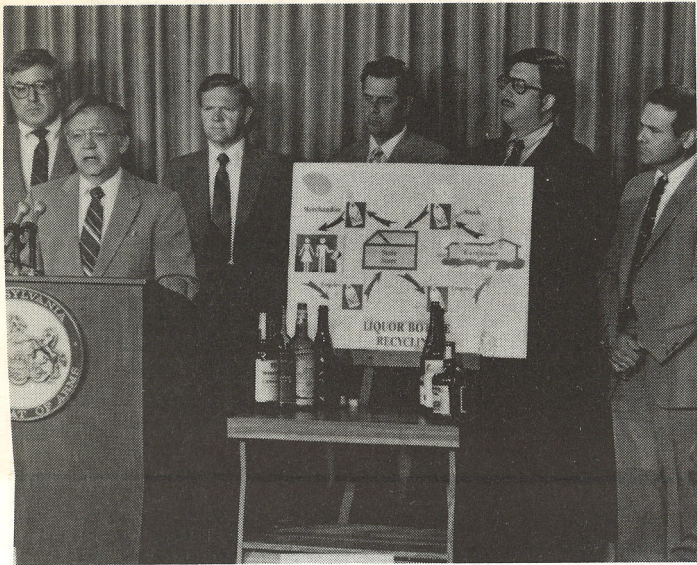
The bills have been labeled landmark legislation because they are designed to meet new requirements in federal tax laws, particularly in the areas of issuing of tax-exempt bonds and prioritization of projects. The federal government is telling us very clearly that we must be specific in detailing and prioritizing our infrastructure needs before going out into the market with a bond issue.

By way of explanation, the state's infrastructure system includes storm and sanitary sewer systems, water supply systems, solid waste disposal systems, highways, bridges, tunnels, mass transit and other transportation and communication systems.

HB 823 and 844 had broad bipartisan support in the House, but efforts to have them amended into similar infrastructure legislation failed by 98-97. The latter proposal, known as Pennvest (HB 1100), was passed by the House and is now in the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, where it must be considered before going to the full Senate for action. HB 1100 only includes funding for sewer and water projects. Efforts are now being made to have portions of HB 823 and 844 included in HB 1100 when it goes before the full Senate.

The infrastructure bills were the topic of hearings by the House Republican Policy Committee which I chair.

Billions of dollars in economic development and new jobs in Pennsylvania currently are being held up by inadequate infrastructure funding. HB 823 and 844 offer long-term positive effects for our state and the proposal will put Pennsylvania's people to work, especially in the construction and steel industries. It is a blend of job projects that will result in many new jobs.



Rep. Brandt outlines his legislative proposals at press conferences held at the Capitol.

STATE PILOT PROGRAM

Liquor Bottle Recycling Proposed

I have introduced legislation which would establish a bottle recycling program in Pennsylvania State Stores.

The measure would place a deposit on bottles sold at State Stores which would be refunded to customers when returned to the stores. The plan could become a model for future container recycling efforts. More than 100 million beverage containers, amounting to some 50,000 tons of recyclable glass could be kept out of landfills under the measure. That's enough glass to fill a convoy of trucks from Lancaster to Harrisburg.

The centralized nature of the State Store system would make the recycling proposal more practical than general "bottle bills" proposed in the legislature in recent years. The bottles could be returned to the stores and transported to central warehouses by the same trucks which deliver stock to the stores.

Under this proposal (House Bill 1414), the empty bottles would be sold to recycling businesses or organizations.

The Liquor Control Board would be required to file a report with the General Assembly after the first year of the program to allow for its evaluation.

House Bill 1414, which has 26 sponsors, was referred to the House Liquor Control Committee.

FOR 1988 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Measure Would Change Next Year's Primary

One of the first significant measures approved by the state House this session would help create a "Super Tuesday" primary election in Northeastern United States next year.

The legislation, which now goes to the state Senate, would change next year's Pennsylvania primary from the fourth Tuesday in April to the first Tuesday of the month.

That would make Pennsylvania's primary the same day as the New York primary. New Jersey legislators have also expressed an interest in moving their election to that date.

Sponsors of the measure say the move will give our region more influence on the candidates platforms and the eventual outcome of the election.

Up to 15 southern states from Maryland to Texas are expected to team up for a Super Tuesday on March 8, so the northeastern effort is that much more important.

In addition to Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Ohio, West Virginia, Delaware and Connecticut are also considering the move to April 5.

Upcoming Election . . . Register and Vote

On November 3, we will go to the polls to elect officials who will represent us at the county and local level. This election, like every election, is critical to ensure good government. Despite the importance of each election, many citizens do not exercise their right to vote.

The fact that many eligible citizens are not registered to vote, and that many who are registered choose not to vote is tragic. Many individuals refrain from voting because they feel that their single vote is meaningless.

This is simply not true, and history has shown the importance of a single vote time and time again.

Those who wish to register to vote can obtain a registration form at the county courthouse or by contacting either of my district offices in Columbia or Elizabethtown.

Registration is simple and can be accomplished entirely by mail. Below are some important dates to remember for the upcoming municipal election:

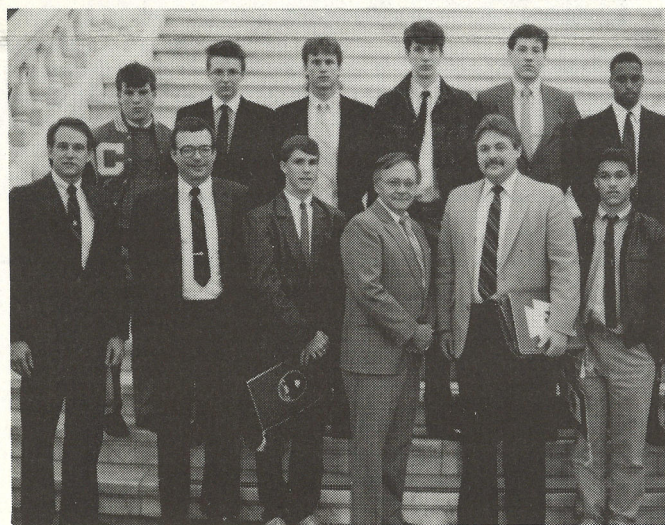
Last day to register for the November election	October 5
Last day to apply for absentee ballots	October 27
Completed absentee ballots must be received by the Election Office	October 30
Municipal election	November 3

Road/Bridge Projects . . . Improvements for Motorists

Over the past few years, the State Department of Transportation has placed a priority on improving travel conditions in the Commonwealth. Listed below are numerous road improvement projects which have been scheduled, are currently under construction or which have recently been completed in our area.

- Resurfacing of 3.9 miles of Route 23 in East and West Hempfield Townships
- Resurfacing of 5.3 miles of Route 72 in Rapho Township
- Resurfacing of 2.9 miles of Route 230 in Elizabethtown, Mount Joy and West Donegal Township
- Resurfacing of 2.3 miles of Route 230 in Mount Joy Borough and Mount Joy Township
- Resurfacing of 6.7 miles of Route 441 in Conoy and East Donegal Townships

- Resurfacing of 2 miles of Route 462 in Columbia and West Hempfield Township
- Replacement of the bridge over the railroad tracks in Rheems
- Replacement of the bridge over Little Chickies Creek, north of Mount Joy Borough
- Rehabilitation of the Columbia/Wrightsville bridge over the Susquehanna River
- Rehabilitation of Susquehanna River Bridge along Route 30
- Installation of traffic signals along Route 23 at the intersection of Marietta Pike and Stoney Battery Road



The Columbia High School Boys Basketball team and their coaches pose with Rep. Brandt and Sen. Gibson Armstrong. The team was recognized by the House of Representatives for winning the District 3, PIAA Double A State Championship.



Photo by: THE CHRONICLE

Rep. Brandt examines plans for the Rheems bridge which is in the process of being replaced as part of the state's Billion Dollar Bridge Program.

MODELED AFTER U.S. GRACE COMMISSION

Cost Cutting Commission Proposed

A measure introduced in the state House would reduce the cost of state government in Pennsylvania.

House Resolution 49 calls for a cost study commission similar to the Grace Commission formed by President Reagan to review federal spending. The commission, which would include leaders of government, business, colleges and labor groups, would be charged with finding ways to hold down the cost of government and ways to make state services more efficient and convenient to taxpayers.

A successful cost-saving study could help reduce the administrative cost of government from 11 cents of every tax dollar to as little as 5 cents per dollar.

Among possible targets for study are state telephone bills, car leasing practices and the handling of surplus property. Finding and implementing cost-cutting steps and improving the efficiency of state government could save state taxpayers millions.

Successful cost-reduction efforts, similar to this proposal, saved \$49 million annually in Ohio and \$108 million in New York in 1986.

The last eight years of responsible administration under former Gov. Dick Thornburgh helped to improve state government immeasurably. These improvements must continue. The adoption of HR 49 and establishment of a cost-cutting commission could help ensure they will.

FLEXIBILITY STRESSED

Tax Reform Bills Would Allow Local Options

Calls for reforms of Pennsylvania's local tax system, now at an all-time high, have resulted in various measures being introduced in the General Assembly.

As in previous years, many bills target nuisance taxes for elimination and attempt to reduce dependence on property taxes.

I have introduced legislation (House Bill 1331) which would increase local governments' flexibility in raising revenues. It would eliminate the one-percent cap on local wage taxes. It would also eliminate the requirement that revenue raised from such taxes be shared with local school districts.

Local government officials and school directors would be required to hold public hearings before attempting to increase wage taxes.

Local elected officials should be able to utilize more equitable taxes such as the wage tax, rather than be overly dependent upon nuisance taxes and property taxes which are inherently unfair.

I'm confident that the public hearing requirement and the electoral process itself will ensure that this new revenue source is only used when necessary.

Another approach, introduced this session by the House Republican Whip, would allow local communities to choose the type of tax reform most suitable for their own governments and school districts.

Rather than developing one state-wide reform plan, the measure offers flexibility to local voters to draft a plan which would meet the revenue needs of a government or school district and ensure an equitable approach to taxation in that area.

The bill (House Bill 625) would allow voters to establish, through referendum, local tax study commissions to hold hearings, study local taxation and (possibly) offer a reform proposal for approval by voters in a subsequent referendum.

The advantage of both of these measures is their flexibility and placement of the decision-making process into the hands of community-level officials.



Photo by: PRESS & JOURNAL

Gayle Lawrence of Bainbridge receives a House Citation from Rep. Brandt in recognition of her earning the highest score on the G.E.D. examination.



Photo by: COLUMBIA NEWS

Rep. Brandt presents a check from the State Department of Community Affairs to the Borough of Columbia. Pictured with Rep. Brandt are: Edna Clark, Mayor Ross Nicholas, and Councilman Sylvester Devine.

Rabies

In the waning days of the 1985-86 Legislative Session, the General Assembly passed legislation which requires dogs and household cats to be vaccinated against rabies. Under the law, which took effect on February 13, a pet owner can be fined up to \$300 per day for failing to have his/her dog or cat inoculated.

Because of complaints by pet owners and others that the rabies law was implemented too quickly and without proper notice and planning, the legislature has passed a measure to suspend enforcement of the law until September 1, 1987. Although the deadline has been extended, pet owners who have not had their animals vaccinated are advised to do so as soon as possible.

The original rabies law was prompted by the growing number of cases of rabies reported in the Commonwealth. Vaccination of household pets will not only protect these animals against this dreaded disease, but also their owners and the public.

In addition to suspending enforcement of the rabies law, the legislation recently passed by the General Assembly would permit operators of private and non-profit kennels to administer rabies shots. Currently, only licensed veterinarians and their assistants can give the vaccine. The measure also provides civil liability immunity for veterinarians and their assistants participating in rabies shot clinics.

Agency Shop

Once again, the controversial "agency shop" issue has found its way before the General Assembly. Agency shop legislation was approved during the last legislative session, but was vetoed by Governor Thornburgh. In an agency shop setting, employees who have chosen not to join the bargaining unit or union are required to pay a fee to the union as a condition of employment.

Under present law, public employees are not required to join a public employee union representing their bargaining unit. Pennsylvania courts have also ruled that public employees and public employee unions cannot enter into agency shop agreements. The two agency shop bills currently pending in the legislature would apply to state employees and public school teachers. The bills would not effect employees in the private sector.

Both agency shop bills were recently considered by the state House. Despite efforts by opponents to defeat these measures, the proposal aimed at public employees gained passage by a 122-74 vote. The second bill, which would provide agency shop for public school employees, became bogged down in the amendment process and a final vote was postponed.

Although it is impossible at this time to predict the fate of agency shop legislation, it is almost certain that union leaders will continue to push for enactment of these bills as the 1987-88 Session moves forward.