

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Jan. 6 -- In the presence of family, friends and well-wishers, Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca has taken the oath of office to begin serving his eighth term as state representative of Erie's 2nd Legislative District.

Cappabianca, a Democrat, was sworn in by Fayette County Common Pleas Judge Gerald R. Solomon.

The events marked the opening of the 177th session of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the 269th session of the state House, a body which traces its history to the unicameral Colonial Assembly that was first convened by William Penn in 1682.

"I'm extremely proud the voters of the Second District have again conferred on me the honor to represent their interests at the state level," said Cappabianca.

"I intend to be actively involved from the outset in resolving the workmen's compensation problem, dealing with economic development issues and the many other priority matters that will occupy the early agenda of the new legislative session."

During the recently concluded session, Cappabianca served as chairman of the House Federal-State Relations Committee, a legislative panel that is involved with monitoring the impact of federal activities on state operations and serving as a liaison with the U.S. Congress.

In the past session he sponsored a new law permanently establishing the state's food program for homeless and destitute Pennsylvanians as well as a statute setting rules of the road for funeral processions in the interests of highway safety.

He also sponsored a variety of successful legislative initiatives affecting Erie municipal operations and employees as well as economic development projects and infrastructure improvements in the city of Erie.

###jb

R:swearin.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Jan. 7 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca says workers' compensation will be one of the first orders of business in the new legislative session, and he will support a compromise proposal to resolve the deadlocked issue.

"There's no question workers' compensation is the number one priority for early passage in the new session," said Cappabianca who took the oath of office for his eighth legislative term this week.

Cappabianca said, "It's vital that the legislature reach an early and equitable settlement of the workers' compensation issue and roll back the massive 24 percent insurance rate increase that's hanging over the heads of Pennsylvania's business community.

"Each day the impasse persists, there's a further erosion of confidence in Pennsylvania's business climate, and that's costing us jobs and income. I have the sense that a lot of decisions about locating businesses in Pennsylvania will be determined by the outcome of this issue."

Cappabianca says he will support a workers' compensation reform bill to be formally introduced when the legislature reconvenes later this month. It is substantially similar to the version which the state House of Representatives approved by a 110-81 vote on Nov. 25. The Senate did not vote on that proposal before the end of the legislative session Nov. 30.

The Erie lawmaker said the bill includes tentative compromises on a ceiling on payments to doctors and hospitals, incentives to improve workplace safety, a stepped-up effort to stop fraud, authorization of group self-insurance, and some benefit issues.

Under the bill, the Insurance Commissioner would have 60 days to issue a decision rolling back the rate increase to reflect the savings the bill would generate. The rollback would be retroactive to Dec. 1.

The major savings would come by limiting payments to doctors and hospitals for treating injured workers to 117 percent of what Medicare pays for primary care and to 120 percent of what Medicare pays for specialized care. Increases in the ceilings in future years would be limited to the percentage by which the statewide average weekly wage increases.

-more-

The bill also would establish a procedure for insurance companies and employers to challenge the appropriateness or necessity of any medical treatment through a utilization review process.

Insurance companies would be required to help employees identify and reduce dangerous working conditions. Employers also would receive a one-time 5 percent premium reduction as an incentive to establish a voluntary labor-management committee to improve workplace safety.

The bill would make clear that workers' compensation fraud by an employee, employer, insurer, health care provider or attorney constitutes criminal misconduct punishable by fines and imprisonment. The Insurance Department, employers and insurance companies would be required to provide records to, and cooperate with, law enforcement agencies.

Insurance companies also would be required to establish anti-fraud plans.

Employers in a similar line of work could self-insure on a group or "pooled" basis.

With limited exceptions, the insurance industry would not be allowed to raise workers' compensation rates without the prior approval of the state Insurance Commissioner. The governor would appoint a "consumer advocate" to present expert witnesses and cross-examine insurance industry witnesses in future workers' compensation rate cases.

To speed up decisions on workers' compensation claims and on petitions to terminate benefits, the bill would increase the number of referees from 76 to 120 and authorize the use of informal conferences to attempt to settle disputed cases.

For the first six weeks of disability, a part-time worker whose pre-injury wage was less than one-half of the statewide average wage for all part-time and full-time workers would receive 90 percent of his pre-injury wage. Under current law, such a worker is entitled to a benefit at least equal to one-third of the statewide average wage even when that benefit is more than he was making when he was injured.

A worker receiving both unemployment compensation and workers' compensation would have his unemployment compensation benefit reduced by the dollar amount of his workers' compensation benefit.

Also under the bill, an injured worker would not be entitled to workers' compensation benefits for any period of incarceration after a conviction or if injury resulted from illegal use of drugs or intoxication.

###jb

R:workcomp.002

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS: A summary of the bill is attached.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Rep. Ivan Itkin

Contact Diane McCormick, 787-1309

HARRISBURG, Jan. 28 -- Majority Leader Ivan Itkin released the following statement today:

Today, 11 House Democrats accused House leaders of retaliating against them for defying the leadership in Tuesday's rules voting.

But these members did not act in defiance of the House speaker and majority leader, as they claim. They acted in defiance of their colleagues.

The Democratic Caucus decided overwhelmingly -- better than 9:1 -- to support their leaders' plans, so we could appoint committees and move ahead with the legislative agenda. The rules have always allowed the majority party to more easily address its priorities, and the Democratic Caucus decided, in a democratic procedure, to make the temporary rules permanent.

But even knowing that I made a commitment to honor the spirit of the proposed rules changes, one bloc of Democrats selfishly chose to ignore their colleagues' wishes.

They call on the speaker to appoint committees when they know full well that appointments made under temporary rules today could be nullified under permanent rules tomorrow. New committees to address high technology and tourism are being considered. Other committees and subcommittees could be eliminated. If committees are in place when changes are made, chaos could result as members, and bills, are reassigned.

My hope had been to settle the rules issue as soon as possible, so we could move forward. The majority of the Democratic caucus was behind me, but again, a few people chose to thwart our united efforts. Naturally, not a single Republican voted to adopt the rules. Without the intransigence of some caucus members, this issue would have been resolved by now.

MORE

Itkin - 2

Finally, the letter's statement that "each of us have received notice today" is downright wrong. Four of the signers -- Reps. Cawley, Kaiser, Krebs and Tigue -- are not spending more than their regular district office allotment. The remaining seven, who express great concerns about economizing, are overspenders. They have exceeded their allotments by manipulating the system and grabbing excessive district office payrolls.

These overspenders have been asked to tell House leadership how their allotments can be reduced to acceptable levels. They can suggest, for example, that pay cuts be distributed evenly among their district staffers. As long as they let us know by Monday, we will accept those suggestions. Otherwise, the decisions must be made without their input.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Feb. 4 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca today was reappointed to the chairmanship of the House Committee on Federal and State Relations.

For a second consecutive term, Cappabianca again will head the 24-person House committee which serves as a liaison between the General Assembly and the U.S. Congress as well as other agencies of the federal government.

"I'm looking forward to a highly productive committee agenda over the next two years," Cappabianca said. "With a former state governor in charge of the federal government and with a unified political alignment extending from the White House to the state House in Harrisburg, the outlook for state and federal cooperation has brightened considerably."

Cappabianca said he is further encouraged by the fact that leadership of the state's Congressional delegation will pass to U.S. Rep. John Murtha, a former member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives who rose from that office directly to the U.S. Congress.

During the last legislative session, Cappabianca's committee held joint hearings with the state House Appropriations Committee to analyze the federal budget's impact on Pennsylvania.

The committee also held meetings with the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation in Washington and initiated a study of federal mandates to determine their effects on the Commonwealth.

The committee last year reviewed and approved a series of bills dealing with interstate compacts, state general hospitals and health insurance reform. The committee also approved a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution to prohibit Congressional legislators from voting on their own pay raises and receiving the higher salaries in the same term.

The Erie lawmaker also has been a leading proponent of proposals at the state level to reform the operations and procedures of the state House.

###jb

R:commit.002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Office of Democratic Legislative Information  
G-05, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Cameron Texter (717) 787-7895

HARRISBURG, Feb. 4 -- The state House Federal-State Relations Committee must learn how proposed federal mandates will effect state government and keep House members, the public and media informed, committee Chairman Italo Cappabianca said today.

The committee also must better focus its efforts to develop and influence legislation, especially those involving the federal government, Cappabianca, D-Erie, added.

In an effort to have the committee become a more active force, Cappabianca presided over a roundtable discussion today to identify possible committee goals and aims.

Participating in the discussion included four committee members, Cappabianca, Reps. Mike Sturla, D-Lancaster, Karen Ritter, D-Lehigh, and Frank Serafini, R-Lackawanna, committee minority chairman; former state Education Secretary John Pittenger; and the committee's staff. Pittenger was invited because he helped establish the committee.

"As a new chairman, I believed we needed the discussion to help direct the committee's agenda," Cappabianca said. "The committee, which was established in 1975, hasn't been as active as it could have been. In 16 years, there were 30 bills referred to the committee, of which eight were enacted.

"My thoughts on the committee were that it keep informed on federal legislation that could impact on state government and citizens, work to influence that legislation and let everyone know how they will be affected by it," Cappabianca added. "We also need to focus on federal money available to the state to ensure we get our fair share and know what strings the federal government attaches to ensure we will benefit from such dollars."

The group reached several conclusions for the committee, which Cappabianca and Serafini will share with all members.

-more-

Those conclusions include:

-- developing close relations with the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Association of Governors, and the Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations. Each group can act as a source of information on upcoming federal mandates and possible effects on the state.

-- lobbying the congressional delegation on bills that would adversely affect the state, and to oppose mandates that increase state governmental expenses, but provide no federal dollars.

-- keeping House leadership and members informed of all significant federal legislation and its impact on Pennsylvania.

"For example, the federal government recently passed a new Clean Air Act, new mandates affecting education for the handicapped, legislation for drug-free schools and for senior citizen programs and changes in Medicaid and Social Security funding," Cappabianca said. "Those laws will significantly impact state government and citizens. We must be an information resource so the House can act accordingly."

-- identifying legislation that the committee should consider.

"One example of legislation is reapportionment of congressional districts," Cappabianca said. "The participants in the discussion agreed that is one area where direct federal and state relations exist. Through reapportionment, we can directly influence and work with our federal lawmakers, which we haven't done in the past. We will look into that and other areas."

###ct

r:Capmeet.002



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Feb. 10 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca today voted for approval of a bill to disburse special education funds to local school systems even though the measure also carried an amendment to block a major education reform for Pennsylvania known as student learning outcomes.

"Local school districts and intermediate units urgently need their overdue state aid funds to educate children with special needs and disabilities," said Cappabianca, D-Erie.

"It's unfortunate that the same funding measure became the battleground for a virulent assault on outcome-based education."

The special education funding measure (H.B. 129) passed the House with the ban on outcome-based education and was forwarded to the Senate where it's believed the battle over the reform proposals will continue.

Cappabianca said he favored an approach to OBE similar to that requested by Gov. Robert P. Casey. The governor has asked the Education Department to drop portions of the plan dealing with values, morals or other affective learning outcomes.

"At this point the future of OBE seems hopelessly mired in controversy over issues which represent only a small portion of the proposed reform plan," he observed.

"Pennsylvania needs a better way to educate its children for a rapidly changing world, and OBE proposes to measure children's progress by what they know and not the hours they've spent in a classroom.

"That's a sound approach to education reform, and it would be a mistake to abandon that sensible concept because of objections over some of the plan's details. As the governor has pointed out, the objectionable portions of OBE could simply be dropped so that the academic content of the plan can proceed on schedule."

The compromise position supported by Cappabianca was proposed in an amendment offered by Rep. Mike Veon of Beaver County but was defeated by supporters of an outright prohibition against any form of learning outcomes.

###jb

R:outcomes.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, March 9 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca today called on a select House committee to follow up its current study of rules and procedures with a complete review of House operations -- including committee structure, staff levels, and legislative support services.

In a statement presented to the House Select Committee on Rules Review, Cappabianca urged the panel "to begin a process of meaningful, lasting improvement in the way the House conducts its business.

"That effort ought not terminate when the committee concludes its report later this month."

The rules review committee was created in response to requests from a group of legislators seeking changes in House floor procedures and in House rules governing legislative expenses.

The committee is scheduled to conclude its rules study and present its findings to the House by March 15.

Cappabianca, D-Erie, asked the committee to include in its report a recommendation for an expanded study of House operations.

"Such a review would include an examination of the number, purpose and functions of the House standing committees, various legislative support agencies as well as the overall administrative and staff structure of the House," the lawmaker observed.

Cappabianca, who is chairman of the Federal-State Relations Committee, questioned the need for 24 standing committees and asked why it was necessary to add a Committee on Tourism and Recreation Development to the current list.

"We need to ask whether we can function as efficiently with fewer committees and effect a corresponding reduction in costs associated with their operation," he stated.

In a floor debate last month over the number of House committees, Cappabianca voted to abolish his own committee and merge it with the House Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs. The merger proposal was defeated.

Cappabianca also called for a study of the effectiveness of a variety of legislative support agencies and commissions whose combined staffs, he said, number more than 80 positions.

-more-

An objective study of House operations would require outside assistance from management professionals, Cappabianca stated, and he requested the House hire the services of a management consulting firm or engage the National Conference of State Legislatures to work on the study.

He said other state legislatures in recent years have been helped by private management consultants and the NCSL in finding ways to streamline their operations.

"The science of management is well advanced in this the last decade of the 20th Century," Cappabianca noted, "though there's little evidence of that in the way we run this institution. Let's take advantage of what modern management professionals can teach us.

"If the U.S. Congress can decide to change its ways, and they are taking steps in that direction, then I believe it's time we do likewise.

"We owe it to the people of the state, and we owe it to ourselves to be recognized as responsible stewards of our democratic institutions."

###jb

R:coycomm.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, May 3 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca is calling for a meeting of government leaders from Erie and nearby areas to assess the decision by Canadian steel firms Dofasco Inc. and Co-Steel Inc. to locate a \$400 million steel mill in Kentucky.

Until last week when the decision was announced, Erie had been in the running as a site for the mill backed by a combined state and local incentive package of more than \$26 million.

The Kentucky offer is estimated to exceed \$140 million and has been described as the largest per-job incentive ever offered by a state to lure a business operation.

"The Erie community needs to benefit from a serious, public assessment of the Dofasco experience," Cappabianca stated in a letter to more than 40 government officials of city, county, municipal, state and congressional rank as well as business and community leaders.

"We need to determine how future efforts to attract major employers can be enhanced by new local and state approaches."

Cappabianca is inviting the public to attend a meeting scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 13 at the Erie Insurance Group Auditorium, E. Sixth and French streets, Erie.

At the same time, Cappabianca and other members of the General Assembly's Erie County Legislative Delegation have asked for a meeting with state Commerce Secretary Andrew Greenberg to assess state economic development programs in light of the Canadian firms' decision.

Speaking on behalf of the county's delegation, Cappabianca requested the meeting with Greenberg to discuss possible legislative responses to what Cappabianca described as "a mutually assured destruction strategy some states are using to attract business."

Cappabianca said he would ask the secretary, "How far can we reasonably go? How far do we want to go in using tax-paid revenues to compete in this kind of environment? There's a big gap between \$26 million and \$140 million that Kentuckians will be paying off for a long time.

"Until recently, our main concern was losing jobs to places like Japan and Germany. Now, we have to figure out how to fight ruinous competition from other states."

###jb

R:Dofasco.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, May 4 -- A House committee has approved two bills proposed by Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca that would benefit Erie Port Authority operations.

The first bill (H.B. 76) would permit the port authority to appoint its own police officers with the same law enforcement powers as municipal police to patrol areas within the boundaries of property owned or leased by the authority. The port authority currently relies on Erie city police for law enforcement services.

The second measure (H.B. 77) would give the port authority the power to finance projects by making loans backed by the authority's assets. It could then enter into standard loan arrangements such as mortgages, security and loan agreements or any other finance arrangement currently available to government agencies as well as businesses and individual consumers.

"By having its own police personnel, the authority can better protect people and property within its jurisdiction and not have to rely on the resources and availability of city personnel," Cappabianca said.

"The authority also wants the same access to credit markets as a private operation of its size and financial strength would have as a matter of course.

"Authority officials asked me to sponsor these sensible proposals in the interest of improving port operations, and I was happy to comply with their request."

Both bills passed the House in the 1991-92 legislative session but stalled in the state Senate.

The measures were approved today by the House Urban Affairs Committee and placed in position for a vote by the full membership of the House.

###jb

R:port.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Anthony L. Ross (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, May 5 -- State Rep. Bud George, D-Clearfield, announced the reorganization of the Northwest Legislative Caucus.

The Caucus is comprised of legislators from Armstrong, Beaver, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Lycoming, Mercer, Mifflin, Venago and Warren counties.

George, who chairs the House Conservation Committee, also will serve as caucus chairman. He is joined on the leadership team by Rep. Ruth Rudy, D-Centre, vice chairwoman and Rep. Thomas Scrimenti, D-Erie, secretary. The remaining officers are Rep. Dan Surra, D-Clearfield Elk, treasurer, and legal counsel Rep. Michael Hanna, D-Clinton.

"I think we have an excellent team of capable legislators that will accomplish a great deal," George said.

The remaining members of the caucus are Reps. Linda Bebko-Jones, D-Erie, Italo Cappabianca, D-Erie, who serves as chairman of the House Federal-State Relations Committee, Thomas Fee, D-Lawrence, chairman of the House Game & Fisheries Committee, Frank LaGrotta D-Lawrence, Michael Gruitza, D-Mercer and David R. Wright, D-Clarion, who heads the Consumer Affairs Committee.

This session, the caucus intends to focus on economic development, school funding formulas, access to health care, improved transportation and tax reform.

"We believe that these are some of the most critical problems facing the northwestern region of the state," George said. "With the combined talents of our members, this caucus will be able to find solutions to these problems and improve the quality of life in Northwest Pennsylvania and across the state."

###alr

R:northwes.074

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, May 10 -- More than 60 leaders from the fields of business, labor, government, and education have been invited to participate in Thursday's meeting on the effects of Erie's loss of a \$400 million steel mill project, according to state Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca.

Organizations from throughout Northwest Pennsylvania have been invited to send representatives, including chambers of commerce and other interests as distant as Sharon, Mercer, Titusville, Meadville and Warren.

"Erie is the vital center of commerce and finance in Northwest Pennsylvania," said Cappabianca. "What happens here affects communities throughout the region, and what happened here should be a major concern to all of us."

Cappabianca is calling the meeting to review the effects of the decision by Canadian steelmakers Dofasco Inc., and Co-Steel Inc. to choose a site in Kentucky, rather than Erie, for its steel mill and the several hundred jobs that go with it.

Calling the meeting an "economic summit" for Northwest Pennsylvania, Cappabianca said "we need to learn the lessons this experience has to teach and also determine what more has to be done to compete for business with other states."

Cappabianca said members of the public are invited to attend the meeting to be held at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 13 at the Erie Insurance Group Auditorium, E. Sixth and French streets, Erie.

"The Kentucky development, backed by \$140 million of Kentucky tax revenue, is not the outcome we wanted or expected," said Cappabianca. "But it's the kind of development that can galvanize people and organizations into action."

"I'm hoping Thursday's discussions can be the stimulus for long-term improvement in the economic development strategies of the region and the state."

###jb

R:ecosumit.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, May 25 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca today said he and Commerce Secretary Andrew Greenberg agree the Commonwealth must continue to improve its business climate in traditional ways rather than engage in a costly bidding war to attract out-of-state business.

Cappabianca and members of Erie County's Democratic delegation met with Greenberg today to continue their assessment of the decision by Dofasco Inc. to bypass the county and locate a new steel mill in Kentucky. The Canadian steel company will receive one of largest aid packages ever offered to a business when it locates in the Blue Grass state -- as much as \$200 million, according to recent estimates.

"If \$200 million were available in the state's budget, it would more likely be used for an across-the-board cut in business taxes to create jobs," Cappabianca reported.

"The meeting should dampen any speculation that we will compete in a giveaway sweepstakes like Kentucky's. It would be unfair to existing businesses in Pennsylvania, and consumers, whose tax dollars would be used to attract and relocate out-of-state companies."

Cappabianca said the financial package assembled by Kentucky would be nearly equal to a 2 percent cut in Pennsylvania's corporate net income tax if funds were available.

"The sense of today's meeting was that it's better to work for permanent improvements in the state's tax and regulatory climate and its infrastructure needs than to attract companies by waving money at them.

"The improvements will still be here even after some of the new arrivals have moved on in a few years to take advantage of yet another state's largesse."

Cappabianca noted the Casey administration on May 14 proposed a \$28 million state Sunny Day Fund investment for 5,770 jobs in Pennsylvania. He contrasted the program to the estimated 400 jobs the Dofasco mill will generate at an amount seven times larger.

###JB/k

R:grenberg.002



[1993]

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, June 10 -- The House has approved two bills sponsored by Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca to assist the security and financial operations of the Erie Port Authority.

One of the measures (H.B. 76) was approved 196-1 and would permit the port authority to appoint its own police officers with the same law enforcement powers as municipal police to patrol areas within the authority's jurisdiction. The port authority currently relies on Erie city police personnel for law enforcement services.

The second measure (H.B. 77) would give the port authority the power to finance projects by making loans backed by the authority's assets. The bill would enable the authority to enter into standard loan arrangements such as mortgages, security and loan agreements or any other finance arrangement currently available to government agencies as well as businesses and individual consumers. The measure was approved unanimously, 198-0.

Both bills passed the House in the 1991-92 legislative session but ultimately stalled in the state Senate.

###jb

R:port.002

1993]

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, June 10 -- The state House has given its unanimous consent to a resolution calling for a regular schedule of meetings between Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation and its state legislators to discuss unfunded federal mandates. The first meeting would be held this coming fall.

"Congress's habit of directing the states to provide services without helping them meet the costs is driving state budgets out of sight," said Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca, who sponsored the resolution.

"The meetings will provide the means to bring that message directly to our federal legislators, begin a dialogue on the issue, and start to build the political momentum for change."

Cappabianca, D-Erie, is chairman of the House Federal-State Relations Committee. He and his committee have targeted the issue of unfunded federal mandates for legislative consideration following a report the committee received earlier this year on the impact Congress's directives are having on the operations and finances of Pennsylvania.

Conducted by Rutgers University law professor and former Pennsylvania legislator John Pittenger, the report warned that state governments are threatened by a federal government that is steadily encroaching on state autonomy while shifting its financial burdens onto state and local governments.

The resolution, which passed unanimously on Tuesday, still requires the Senate's approval. It would urge Pennsylvania Congressional members to meet with the legislature at least twice a year to establish an ongoing and open dialogue on federal mandates.

Cappabianca said the Alabama legislature recently adopted a similar proposal inviting Congress to discuss unfunded mandates. The plan is under active consideration in other states and is being advocated nationally by the American Legislative Exchange Council.

The Erie Democrat said the mandate issue has triggered "a long-overdue movement" among states to reassert the principle of federalism.

"Until the early part of the century, our U.S. senators were chosen by the state legislature," said Cappabianca. "Since that time, Congress has grown increasingly detached from the grassroots concerns of state legislatures. Regularly scheduled meetings of this kind can help to revive the meaning of federalism and provide opportunities for communication on issues of common interest."

###jb R:congress.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, June 25 -- An unprecedented series of meetings between the state's congressional delegation and the General Assembly will begin this fall with the signing of H.R. 106, sponsored by state Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca.

The resolution was unanimously passed by the General Assembly and is ready to be signed into law. The House approved the proposal 198-0 on Tuesday as the final step prior to its signing.

The meetings, to be held in Harrisburg, will focus on the problem of unfunded federal mandates, said Cappabianca, chairman of the House Federal-State Relations Committee.

"Congress's continuing imposition of mandates requiring the states to provide services and its failure to adequately fund the services is a dilemma that must be addressed," Cappabianca said.

"It's an enormous strain on the state budget and an intrusion, some would say an outright violation, of the state's sovereignty."

In fact, said the Erie legislator, the resolution was amended in the state Senate to reassert the Commonwealth's authority over intrastate commerce. Traditionally a local matter, trade within the state is being increasingly affected by mandates coming from Washington that are binding on all the states.

The resolution calls for meetings to be held twice a year, with the first session to be scheduled for this fall.

Cappabianca's Federal-State Relations Committee has targeted the issue of unfunded federal mandates for legislative consideration following a report the committee received earlier this year on the impact those directives are having on the operations and finances of Pennsylvania.

Conducted by Rutgers University law professor and former Pennsylvania legislator John Pittenger, the report warned that state governments are threatened by a federal government that is steadily encroaching on state authority while shifting its financial burdens onto state and local governments.

The issue of mandates involves important fiscal and constitutional questions, Cappabianca said, and are part of a concerted effort among the states to restore the principle of federalism and deter the growing centralization of government in Washington.

-more-

"There are a number of trends and movements abroad in the land to make Congress more sensitive to local concerns," said Cappabianca, D-Erie. "I think this is a time in our history when Congress is becoming more receptive to the interests expressed by their state legislatures and other local bodies."

###jb/k

R:congmeet.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, June 30 -- The principle of federalism -- the sharing of powers between the state and national governments -- receives strong support among those who responded to a recent mail survey conducted by Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca.

More than eight out of ten persons who responded to the survey (85.5 percent) said they believe "it is important for the states to preserve their existing powers" against further encroachment on state autonomy by the federal government. About one in ten respondents (11.1 percent) said they believe "it doesn't matter much whether government decisions are made by the state or the federal government," and the rest (only 2.4 percent) had no opinion.

Cappabianca, who is chairman of the House Federal-State Relations Committee, said he is pleased with the responses because they support his agenda for the committee in the current legislative session.

The Erie legislator said the committee will be examining the effects of Congressional mandates on the Commonwealth's budget and operations, and it will conduct hearings on the North American Fair Trade Agreement and the proposed balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

"All of these are areas where Congressional action will have a profound effect on the operations of state government and the states' economies," Cappabianca observed.

"As we attempt to invigorate the committee and make it a true force for Pennsylvania's interests, it's good to know the people back home are in strong agreement with what we're attempting to do."

The opening round of Cappabianca's focus on federalism was the passage last week of a joint legislative resolution to establish a series of meetings between the General Assembly and the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation.

The first meeting is scheduled for the fall to discuss the growth of unfunded federal mandates the Congress has imposed on the states, straining their budgets and threatening their political autonomy.

On NAFTA, more than half of those who answered the survey (51.2 percent) said they believe the proposed trade agreement should be adopted "but with strong laws to protect workers and the environment." Almost one in five (18.8 percent) said they don't have enough information on the NAFTA plan to state an opinion, and nearly equal

percentages said it should be scrapped entirely (15.2 percent), and adopted as is (13.2 percent).

The survey also reflected strong public opposition to a legislative proposal that would impose fines on individuals for smoking in their personal vehicles while they are transporting small children.

More than two thirds (67.1 percent) opposed the bill, saying it was "a bad idea." Another 28.3 percent thought the bill was "a good idea."

The survey also turned up a high rate of uncertainty about Outcome Based Education, an issue the legislature has debated intensely over the past six months. The largest percentage of respondents (38.2 percent) said they don't have enough information to base a decision in support or opposition to OBE; 31.9 percent said it should be adopted only for academic subjects not values or other "affective" outcomes; 17.4 percent said it was "a bad plan" and should be dropped entirely, and 10.1 percent felt it was "a good plan" and should be adopted without change.

Respondents were about evenly divided on whether Pennsylvania should proceed with its own health care program or wait for the federal government to develop a national plan. Almost 45 percent said the state should move to adopt its own program; 42.5 percent said "wait for the federal government to develop a nationwide plan," and the rest (4.3 percent) had no opinion.

###jb

R:survey.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, July 1 -- The House Federal-State Relations Committee will hold public hearings in Pittsburgh and Erie this month on the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement, committee Chairman Italo S. Cappabianca announced today.

The hearing in Pittsburgh is planned for Tuesday, July 20 at the University of Pittsburgh's William Penn Student Union Building. It is scheduled for 10:~~00~~ a.m. to 4 p.m. in Dining Room A.

The Erie hearings are scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, July 21-22, at City Council Chambers, City Hall, from 1:~~00~~-4 p.m. on Wednesday and 10 a.m. to noon on Thursday.

"The NAFTA agreement, which will be taken up by Congress this year, has the potential to greatly impact the state's economy," said Cappabianca.

"There are strong and controversial positions on both sides of the NAFTA issue. The hearings are intended to present those positions and provide Pennsylvania's policymakers with a view of NAFTA that is specific to our state -- one that will enable business, labor and government leaders to deal with the NAFTA question from an informed perspective."

Cappabianca said the hearings will involve presentations from large and small business, state and local labor officials, representatives of the financial services industry, agricultural interests and professional economists who specialize in foreign trade.

###jb

R:nafthear.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, July 23 -- The chairman of the House Federal-State Relations Committee says he plans to extend the committee's study of the North American Free Trade Agreement to include additional public hearings in Harrisburg and Philadelphia.

State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca announced the extension at the conclusion of the first round of hearings this week in Pittsburgh and Erie. Throughout three days of sessions in western Pennsylvania, the committee heard testimony from two dozen witnesses representing business, labor, agriculture and environmental interests and economic experts on NAFTA's potential impacts on Pennsylvania.

"The testimony was very informative and very well reasoned," said Cappabianca, "but the views of NAFTA's impact on the state's economy were so varied, and often contradictory, that they call for further investigation."

For example, Cappabianca said, the forecasts of NAFTA's effects on employment in Pennsylvania ranged from predictions of modest gains to forecasts of massive job losses to Mexico.

"Some of the expert witnesses presented a third perspective and said NAFTA hardly would make a difference in the state's job outlook. That's just one of the issues we want to get a clearer handle on."

The Erie legislator said the NAFTA agreement also raises important questions for wages and working conditions, the environment and for national, state and local sovereignty, which witnesses said could be overridden by NAFTA administrators.

"All of these issues require more intensive study and discussion by the state legislature and the people of Pennsylvania," said Cappabianca. "We can't afford to be silent observers to an action one witness described as possibly the most important decision ever to come before Congress."

Cappabianca said the date of the Harrisburg hearing has been tentatively set for Aug. 25 in the Capitol Building, and a Philadelphia hearing will follow in September.

Cappabianca's 24-member House committee has the responsibility for monitoring the actions of Congress and the federal government to determine their effects on the state.

###jb/k

R:herings2.002



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Sept. 16 -- A resolution commending the newly signed Mideast peace accords is being readied for adoption when the state House of Representatives returns to session later this month. It will be sponsored by state Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca.

"The agreement by Israel and the PLO is one of the truly historic events of our lifetime," said Cappabianca, D-Erie. "It is an act of extraordinary statesmanship that can serve as an example for government officials everywhere that no political problems are insurmountable when leaders have the will and the courage to overcome their differences."

The agreement, signed in Washington on Monday, proposes to reverse generations of enmity between the state of Israel and its Palestinian inhabitants by granting limited self-rule to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and in Jericho on Israel's West Bank.

The resolution observes that "this event has brought to millions of Israelis and Palestinians a new opportunity for peace and for the rest of the world a new sense of hope."

It urges the parties "to continue to work together while refraining from violence against each other" and implores other nations to reach agreements with Israel.

"The United States will be a major player in determining whether the peace accord fulfills its promise to bring peace and stability to a highly volatile region of the world where U.S. vital interests are at stake," said Cappabianca.

"That's why I believe it's important to marshal support for the difficult process that lies ahead in implementing this historic agreement."

###jb/y

R:mideast.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**ADVANCE FOR RELEASE: Sept. 20**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Sept. 20 -- A joint legislative hearing will be held in Philadelphia on Wednesday to examine the impact of the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement on Pennsylvania's economy.

The Pennsylvania House Committee on Federal-State Relations and the Committee on Labor Relations will conduct the hearing at City Council Chambers, City Hall, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Thomas Foley, state secretary of Labor and Industry, will be among the leading witnesses who will offer an assessment of NAFTA's effects on jobs and business in the Commonwealth.

Other scheduled witnesses include Ira Shapiro, counsel for the Office of U.S. Trade Representative in Washington. The office, headed by Mickey Kantor, is one of the leading players in the Clinton administration's efforts to develop support for NAFTA.

According to Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca, D-Erie, chairman of the Federal-State Relations Committee, Shapiro will be questioned extensively about NAFTA's impact on state sovereignty in areas such as public health and safety, environmental protection, licensing requirements, and other areas where state interests may conflict with NAFTA's goals.

Another witness, Robert Stumberg, legal counsel for the Center for Policy Analysis, also will discuss sovereignty issues.

The hearing also will deal with the concerns of key industries in Pennsylvania, including apparel manufacturing and trucking. These issues will be covered by Dr. Martin Morand, director of the Pennsylvania Center for the study of Labor Relations at Indiana University of Pennsylvania as well as by Herman Starobin and Joseph Fisher, officials of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

Cappabianca's committee has held a series of public hearings this summer on the NAFTA agreement, including sessions in Pittsburgh, Erie and Harrisburg. The Labor Relations Committee is chaired by Rep. Robert Belfanti of Northumberland County, one of the state's leading apparel manufacturing areas.

Later this month, when the hearings are concluded, the House of Representatives is expected to be presented with a resolution on NAFTA containing recommendations to the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation based on the committee's findings.

###jb/y

r:Naftphil.002

**NOTE TO PHILADELPHIA AREA MEDIA: Coverage of the hearing is invited.**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Sept.29 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca today introduced two bills in the state legislature to improve the delivery of health care services in the Commonwealth.

The leading measure would promote cooperative arrangements among hospitals and exempt them from antitrust prosecution for creating joint ventures, mergers and other arrangements "that enhance quality of care, improve access and achieve cost efficiency in the provision of care."

According to Cappabianca, the bill would enable hospitals, by mutual agreement, to avoid costly duplication of services, consolidate some of their operations, agree on areas of specialization, or establish mergers without fear of violating federal antitrust laws.

The Erie legislator said the Clinton Administration's health reform plan calls for increased cooperation among hospitals along the line his legislation proposes. His bill would establish a procedure for state Health Department review and approval of cooperative arrangements worked out among local hospitals.

"There's no question that cost is the biggest obstacle to universal health care," said Cappabianca. "And one of the major contributors to the high cost of health care is the inefficiency and excess capacity that results from duplication of equipment and services among hospitals serving the same community or region.

"The hospitals recognize these problems and are in the best position to solve them in the interests of their communities and patients. But they are restrained by fears of being charged with violating the antitrust laws."

The state Health Department would review the proposed agreements worked out by local hospitals and issue certificates of approval for those that meet a five-point test of whether the agreement enhances care to citizens of the Commonwealth, preserves services in or near the communities traditionally served by the hospitals, improves cost efficiency, expands the use of hospital resources and equipment, and avoids duplication of services.

The second bill would broaden the state's "Good Samaritan" law to provide malpractice immunity for health care practitioners who volunteer their services at free health care clinics and agencies.

###jb/b

R:health.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Oct. 5 -- With state Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca as a sponsor, legislation was introduced in the state House today to begin work on a rapid rail passenger line that would span the state from east to west with the firm prospect of expanding the line to Erie.

The bill would recreate the Pennsylvania High Speed Rail Commission to plan, construct and operate the line initially from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia and develop later connections to places like Erie, Scranton, State College, York and other cities and regions of the state.

Cappabianca said the commission would function as a separate, single-purpose agency to coordinate the project and push it to a successful conclusion.

"Just as we led the nation in highway travel with the creation of turnpike travel half a century ago, Pennsylvania can lead the nation to the next level of long distance surface transportation with the establishment of a statewide high speed rail network," said Cappabianca.

Eventually, according to the bill's sponsors, the state high-speed rail system would become part of a seven-state intercity network stretching from the Northeast Corridor to as far west as Missouri.

"It would not only be a tremendous improvement in travel," said Cappabianca, "the proposed rail system would be an economic boon to the communities the system would serve, both in its construction and its operation."

The Erie legislator said the rail plan has received expressions of support and praise from mayors and officials of cities along the intended route and from newspaper editorials in many of their communities.

Support has even come from outside the state through member states of the Intercity Rail Passenger Network Compact and transportation experts such as Joseph Vranich, author of highly acclaimed works on high-speed trains as the solution to America's intercity transportation needs.

Cappabianca said 113 legislators of both parties from all parts of the state have co-sponsored the legislation, enough to ensure its passage in the state House.

-more-

The bill's sponsors are attracted by the large economic development potential in building the line and the future revenues millions of travelers would generate each year in the local communities served by the system, he said.

The former Pennsylvania High Speed Rail Commission estimated a potential market of 6 to 9 million passengers a year for a rail network such as the one the bill proposes. The commission was disbanded in 1986 after completing its report on the feasibility of advanced high-speed passenger rail service in Pennsylvania.

Since that time, there have been several major developments that make it even more attractive now to embark on a state rapid rail project, Cappabianca said.

He observed that the Clinton Administration is firmly committed to passenger rail transportation and has launched an unprecedented program to promote passenger service with substantial grants for state planning of high speed intercity rail systems.

In addition, he said, recent changes to Congressional limits on tax-exempt bonds will make it easier for states to raise the funds needed for high-speed rail projects. A new law removes bonds for high-speed transportation systems from a federally imposed cap on tax-exempt bond issues by states.

###jb/b

R:railbill.002

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS: The proposal would authorize the Pennsylvania High Speed Rail Commission to develop a passenger line connecting "the communities of Pittsburgh, Greensburg, Johnstown, Altoona, Lewistown, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Paoli and Philadelphia in the system. The commission shall also study the feasibility of adding connecting service to Erie, Beaver Falls, New Castle, Sharon, and Meadville; as well as to Reading, Allentown, Jim Thorpe, Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, York and State College" as well as other points as determined by the commission.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Oct. 7 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca, D-Erie, is urging local voters to support a referendum on the November election ballot allowing the state to issue bonds to help rehabilitate state parks, preserve historical sites and buildings and develop community education and recreation facilities.

"Erie and its surrounding region is blessed with one of the finest state parks in Pennsylvania and in the nation at Presque Isle. This bond issue will help provide for its upkeep and maintenance along with the many other fine parks in the Commonwealth that provide enjoyment to millions of state residents," said Cappabianca.

The \$50 million bond issue is part of a new law Cappabianca cosponsored to help eliminate a maintenance backlog at state parks, state-owned historical sites and museums and provide them and other entities, such as public libraries and community recreation areas, with an assured source of funding.

If the referendum is approved, revenues from the bond issue would supplement about \$30 million to be derived annually from 15 percent of the state's share of the realty transfer tax. This dedicated tax element of the funding formula already has been approved through enactment of Act 50.

"The proceeds from the bond issue and the realty transfer tax will be used to provide long-needed improvements not only at recreation areas, as well as cultural and historical sites, but also at the campuses of our state-owned universities," Cappabianca said. "And the best part is it will be done without putting any additional costs on state taxpayers."

-more-

Many facilities in the Erie metropolitan area would stand to benefit from the program, known as Key '93, the legislator said.

If voters approve the bond issue, proceeds will be available as the bonds are sold over the next five years.

The percentage of the realty transfer taxes will be transferred to a newly created Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund beginning next year and will be available for improvements starting in 1995.

The state Department of Environmental Resources will receive \$17 million from the bond issue and 30 percent of the tax revenues (\$9 million annually) for improving state parks and forests, acquiring recreation and natural areas, developing rails-to-trails and protecting rivers.

The Department of Community Affairs will get \$19.5 million from the bond issue and 35 percent of the tax revenues (\$10.5 million) for grant programs to improve local recreation and park facilities, acquire natural area lands and develop zoos.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission will receive \$8 million from the bond issue and 13 percent of the available tax revenues (\$3.9 million) for improvements to state historic sites and museums and grants to nonprofit and public agencies for the acquisition and improvement of historic sites.

The Education Department will receive \$2.5 million from the bond issue and 4 percent of the tax revenues (\$1.2 million) for grants to develop and improve public libraries.

The Fish and Boat Commission and the Game Commission will receive \$1.5 million each from the bond issue for improvements to recreation and natural areas and technical assistance.

The State System of Higher Education will receive 18 percent of the tax revenue (\$5.4 million annually) for deferred maintenance.

###jb/k R:key93.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Oct. 12 -- Joined by legislative co-sponsors and other opponents of the proposed trade agreement, Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca today announced the introduction of a state House resolution urging Congressional defeat of NAFTA.

The resolution caps a series of public hearings Cappabianca's Federal-State Relations Committee held over the summer on the proposed trade agreement and its potential impacts on Pennsylvania.

The Erie legislator said the committee paid particular attention to NAFTA's impacts on Pennsylvania jobs, wages and working conditions, business, agriculture, the environment and state sovereignty.

"The verdict is that NAFTA is defective on all those counts and more, and should be rejected," he declared. "And while it may benefit large multi-national corporations it will not help and will most likely hurt small retail businesses and other small businesses that have no stake in export markets."

His resolution urges Congress and the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation to oppose NAFTA while calling on the U.S. government to develop alternative trade arrangements that respond to the criticisms surrounding NAFTA.

Accompanied by leaders of the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO at a Capitol news conference, Cappabianca said jobs are the dominant issue in the minds of most NAFTA opponents.

He said the committee heard varying projections of the agreement's impact on Pennsylvania jobs ranging from a modest net gain in state employment to massive job losses numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

"What's clear is that there will be job losses with NAFTA, especially in those industries making products with a high labor content. NAFTA's short-term pain to the Commonwealth is a given, and even the agreement's most ardent supporters concede that point," he observed.

"What's not clear, and what is doubtful to many of us, is whether enough jobs would be created to offset those losses.

"Thus, NAFTA presents a high-stakes gamble with the Commonwealth's future and one that is acknowledged to inflict economic pain on our work force with no assurance of a corresponding long-term gain."



Cappabianca strongly criticized NAFTA for its potential to weaken state sovereignty "in exchange for the doubtful trade benefits its supporters claim."

He cited the findings of U.S. District Court Judge Charles Ritchey in a June 30 ruling on an action brought against NAFTA by the consumer watchdog organization Public Citizen.

Commenting on the agreement's impact on state laws, Ritchey found that "NAFTA will create binding obligations on state and federal agencies to conform with its terms...(and) by virtue of the Supremacy clause, a state law that conflicts with NAFTA is preempted by NAFTA."

He said the Washington-based Center for Policy alternatives has listed close to 40 existing state statutes that would be endangered by NAFTA and called the agreement "a hunting license" to challenge state laws, including health, safety and environmental laws, that supposedly inhibit trade objectives.

Other speakers and legislators at the news conference expressed criticisms of NAFTA for its potential effects on wages and working conditions, environmental standards, minority job opportunities and for the lack of public input that went into NAFTA's development.

The Federal-State Relations Committee earlier in the year held seven public hearings on NAFTA in Pittsburgh, Erie, Harrisburg and Philadelphia. It is expected to issue a report soon on those hearings.

Cappabianca said he would introduce his resolution today and make it available throughout tomorrow for legislators to sign on as co-sponsors. The measure currently has more than 70 co-sponsors in the state House.

###jb

R:Naftint.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Nov. 10 -- Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca, chairman of the House Federal-State Relations Committee, today issued the following statement on the NAFTA debate between Vice President Al Gore and H. Ross Perot:

"Last night's debate was an informative and valuable contribution to the discussions on NAFTA and, I hope, helped raise public awareness of NAFTA's importance.

"Naturally, in a 90-minute nationally televised debate, the participants spoke in very broad-brush terms of NAFTA's impacts on Mexico and the United States in general.

"The Federal-State Relations Committee's study focused specifically on the agreement's impacts on Pennsylvania. I remain convinced that the NAFTA agreement will not be a net benefit to the Commonwealth.

"NAFTA will cause significant shifts of jobs and investment to Mexico and to some extent to regions of the United States nearest to Mexico -- specifically the sun belt states of the Southwest and the Gulf region where there are transportation advantages and other advantages of proximity to Mexican markets and resources.

"Those shifts will occur to the disadvantage of Pennsylvania and other states of the North and Northeast United States and will further weaken their economies.

"If it occurs as scheduled next week, the NAFTA vote in the U.S. House will reflect those conditions, and the major share of NAFTA support will come from the sun belt and Gulf states.

-more-

"Pennsylvania's representatives in Congress, with some notable exceptions, will vote overwhelmingly against NAFTA and rightly so."

Cappabianca, D-Erie, chaired a series of statewide hearings by the Federal-State Relations Committee on the North American Free Trade Agreement. As a result of the hearings, he introduced a resolution in the Pennsylvania House urging the state's congressional delegation to vote in opposition to NAFTA and seek development of alternative trade arrangements with Mexico and Canada. The resolution has more than 60 co-sponsors.

Cappabianca said he would shortly release a report on the committee's findings, including Pennsylvania's projected job loss attributable to NAFTA. He will present the report to the state's congressional representatives next Tuesday at a meeting in the nation's capital.

###jb/b

R:debate.002

## REP. ITALO S. CAPPABIANCA

CRIME PREVENTION  
AND  
CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION  
AGENDA

February 8, 1994

Crime is a national, state and local epidemic that is undermining the safety and security of every person, family, and community in America.

Each day brings new evidence of the rising tide of crime in Erie and Northwest Pennsylvania.

Jobs, education, training, housing, health care, family values, and moral development are surely the long term responses to the causes of crime.

It is imperative that more immediate actions be taken now to reduce crime and to protect ourselves and our communities from the ravages of crime.

An Action Oriented Agenda to prevent crime and to protect our citizens and communities from crime should include the following:

1. Adoption of the proposed federal program to provide financial support for 100,000 additional police officers that would increase local law enforcement personnel in Erie and Northwest Pennsylvania by 200 officers.
2. Increase educational activities that teach children, parents, senior citizens, workers, property owners, business persons and other citizens how to avoid circumstances that make them vulnerable to criminal activity.
3. Extend neighborhood crime watch, community policing, and other programs that have demonstrated their effectiveness in reducing crime in our neighborhoods and communities.
4. Protect citizens and communities from violent criminals by reforming plea bargaining processes and criminal appeal procedures, and by limiting authority to reduce the length of prison sentences.
5. Adopt a policy of life imprisonment of persons who have been convicted of three felonies involving violent crimes.
6. Reduce the length of imprisonment of persons convicted of non violent crimes through the adoption of appropriate punishment alternatives for non violent offenders who do not pose a threat to the physical safety of other persons.
7. Adopt intensive surveillance, counseling, rehabilitation and training programs for persons convicted of crime for whom incarceration is not necessary to the protection of the public safety.

8. Establish specialized federal and state Drug Courts in Erie and Northwest Pennsylvania similar to Drug Courts which have in other communities demonstrated their capacity to deal more effectively with drug related crime.
9. Expand in-service education and training programs for police and correctional personnel to enhance their ability to combat crime and to reduce the rate of crime among persons previously convicted of crime.
10. Encourage voluntary reductions in violent and pornographic content in television programs and movies.
11. Protect constitutional rights of persons to own and use weapons for self protection, recreation and sports.
12. Encourage voluntary return of weapons by citizens.
13. Restrict private ownership of assault and automatic weapons that have no legitimate use in personal self protection, recreation and sports.
14. Prohibit sale to, and possession of weapons by children, persons convicted of serious crimes, and persons with illnesses that do not permit them to possess weapons responsibly.
15. Adopt enforcement measures in support of bans on weapons in public and private premises imposed by those responsible for such premises.

ITALO S. CAPPABIANCA, MEMBER  
1216 WEST 26TH STREET  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16508-1520  
PHONE: (814) 453-7639  
FAX: (814) 871-4713

ROOM 30, EAST WING  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-0026  
PHONE: (717) 787-4358  
FAX: (717) 772-2284



COMMITTEES  
FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS, CHAIRMAN

**House of Representatives**  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

**ERIEITES SAY "YES" TO SEMI-AUTO WEAPONS BAN  
AND THREE-STRIKES-YOU'RE OUT IN QUESTIONNAIRE**

Erie residents overwhelmingly support a ban of semi-automatic assault weapons and a "three strikes, you're out" policy for violent felons, according to the outcome of a questionnaire released by Rep. Italo Cappabianca (D-Erie). These results represent the opinions of Erie residents who responded to Cappabianca's query in his recent newsletter. He believes that a rising concern about crime can be clearly seen in these results.

In response to the question "Should ownership of semi-automatic assault weapons be prohibited," 79.5% responded "yes"; 17.3% said "no"; 3.2% said "not sure." As for the "three strikes" proposal, 78.9% checked "yes"; 13.9% checked "no"; 7.1% were not sure. Over 280 people responded to the survey.

The results of the questionnaire have prompted Cappabianca to release a "Crime Prevention and Citizen Community Protection Agenda" for consideration by the Crime in Our Commonwealth Task Force, which meets in Erie on Thursday, February 10, 1994.

"I believe this is the most comprehensive crime reduction program to be recommended from Erie and Northwestern Pennsylvania," says Cappabianca. "It is imperative that more immediate actions be taken now to reduce crime and to protect our communities from the ravages of crime."

more

**Cappabianca's Crime Plan - pg. 2**

The plan follows President Clinton's lead in calling for more police officers, a "three strikes and you're out" policy for felons, and increasing crime prevention education for the public. It also addresses plea bargains, weapons, and neighborhood crime watch programs. Cappabianca wants his 15-point "Action Oriented Agenda" included in any plan created by the Crime in Our Commonwealth Task Force.

Cappabianca's "Crime Prevention and Citizen and Community Protection Agenda" is as follows:

- 1/Adoption of the proposed federal program to provide financial support for 100,000 additional police officers that would increase local law enforcement personnel in Erie and Northwestern Pennsylvania by 200 officers.
- 2/Increase educational activities that teach children, parents, senior citizens, workers, property owners, business persons and other citizens how to avoid circumstances that make them vulnerable to criminal activity.
- 3/Extend neighborhood crime watch, community policing, and other programs that have demonstrated their effectiveness in reducing crime in our neighborhoods and communities.
- 4/Protect citizens and communities from violent criminals by reforming plea bargaining processes and criminal appeal procedures, and by limiting authority to reduce the length of prison sentences.
- 5/Adopt a policy of life imprisonment of persons convicted of three felonies involving violent crimes.
- 6/Reduce the length of imprisonment of persons convicted of non-violent crimes through the adoption of appropriate punishment alternatives for non-violent offenders who do not pose a threat to the physical safety of other persons.
- 7/Adopt intensive surveillance, counseling, rehabilitation and training programs for persons convicted of crime for who incarceration is not necessary to the protection of the public safety.

more

**Cappabianca's Crime Plan - pg. 3**

8/Establish specialized federal and state Drug Courts in Erie and Northwestern Pennsylvania similar to the Drug Courts in other communities, which have demonstrated their capacity to deal more effectively with drug-related crime.

9/Expand in-service education and training programs for police and correctional personnel to enhance their ability to combat crime and to reduce the rate of crime among persons previously convicted of crime.

10/Encourage voluntary reductions in violent and pornographic content in television programs and movies.

11/Protect constitutional rights of persons to own and use weapons for self-protection, recreation and sports.

12/Encourage voluntary return of weapons by citizens.

13/Restrict private ownership of assault and automatic weapons that have no legitimate use in personal self-protection, recreation and sports.

14/Prohibit sale to, and possession of weapons by children, persons convicted of serious crimes, and persons with illnesses that do not permit them to possess weapons responsibly.

15/Adopt enforcement measures in support of bans on weapons in public and private premises imposed by those responsible for such premises.

The Crime in Our Commonwealth Task Force will receive copies of Cappabianca's plan on Thursday. He has assured the task force of his cooperation in pursuing not only his recommendations but any ideas formulated as a result of the February 10th hearing.

Contact: Brian Sheridan (814) 453-7639

END



[1994]

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, March 8 -- In an effort to gather public input on health care reform, state Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca is conducting a mail survey among approximately 18,000 households in his legislative district.

The Erie legislator is hoping to obtain maximum participation in the survey and is asking each recipient of the questionnaire to complete the form and return it to his district office.

"The health care delivery system that emerges from Congress in the next year or so will have as big an impact on people's lives as the Social Security system and the unemployment compensation program has had in our lifetimes," Cappabianca said. "State government also will be significantly involved in this program.

"With a program of this scale and importance, it's essential that the public make its views known to elected representatives. It's not only in the interest of each individual to do so, it's in the interests of their children and of generations to come."

The extensive survey consists of 27 questions covering major aspects of the existing health care system as well as alternative systems for the delivery of medical services.

Cappabianca, who chairs the House Federal-State Relations Committee, said the survey findings will assist him in state legislative deliberations on health issues. He said he will share the survey results with his colleagues in the Pennsylvania House and with the state's senators and representatives in Congress.

"The public's views are extremely important to policymakers, but individuals often can't find the time to write a letter or otherwise communicate with their elected officials in Harrisburg and Washington," Cappabianca said.

"It's my hope that this questionnaire will serve as a convenient way to bridge that gap on an issue that may well be the most important public policy decision of our times."

Cappabianca said copies of the questionnaire can be obtained from his district office by anyone who wishes to participate in the survey. The office is located at 1216 West 26th St., Erie, PA 16508.

###jb/b R:survey.002

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS: A copy of the Erie Health Care Survey is enclosed.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, March 11 -- The Pennsylvania House Committee on Federal-State Relations will hold a public hearing in Sharon next Thursday (March 17) on employment and job training issues, according to an announcement today by Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca, committee chairman.

The hearing will be held in Sharon City Council Chambers, City Hall, beginning at 1 p.m. Cappabianca said Sharon was selected as the hearing site because the city and surrounding communities have had direct experience in developing recovery efforts following the loss of major employers.

"With our hearing in Sharon," Cappabianca said, "we hope to learn how the area has dealt with losing its top two employers, what difficulties the region faces and how it has prepared the local work force and the general population to recover and move forward."

One of the witnesses scheduled to testify before the committee is Jeffrey Swogger of nearby Sharpsville Quality Products, Inc. Swogger, who helped organize an employee buyout of the Sharpsville company, will also be seen on the ABC Network's World News Tonight program next Tuesday (March 15) discussing the successful campaign to save the company through employee ownership.

Others who will share their experiences with the committee are the Mayors of Sharon and Farrell, Hon. Robert Price and Hon. Eugene Pasci; Larry Reichard, executive director, Penn-Northwest Development Corp.; and Gene Pianco and Ralph Wallers of the United Steelworkers of America.

Cappabianca said the hearing is open to the public and urged interested residents from the area to attend.

###jb

R:sharon.002

NOTE TO SHARON AREA CORRESPONDENTS: Your coverage of the hearing is invited.

- DRAFT -

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, April 19 -- The House has approved legislation sponsored by Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca allowing cities and other municipalities to require a "super majority" to overturn decisions by their local zoning boards.

According to Cappabianca, the bill was requested by the City of Erie in response to a court ruling involving the city zoning board.

"If enacted, this bill will reduce the number of zoning appeals that reach city councils and other municipal governing bodies," said Cappabianca.

The bill would require a vote of one more than a simple majority of the governing board to override a zoning board's decision.

"Fewer people are going to routinely appeal a zoning decision they don't like if they have to convince a super majority of the elected municipal officials to support their position," Cappabianca said.

"We're running into situations all over Pennsylvania where elected governing bodies are operating as a second, redundant zoning body because people think they can do an end run around the zoning board.

"The numerous zoning appeals that reach local governing bodies take time, effort and resources away from the many other concerns a city council or municipal governing board must deal with, like public health and safety.

"My bill would help promote efficiency in local government operations and allow governing boards to get a better focus on municipal priorities."

The measure (H.B. 1772) passed the House by a vote of 127-70 and will be forwarded to the Senate for further consideration.

###jb

R:zoning.002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028  
**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

HARRISBURG, June 8 -- State Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca, D-Erie, today sent the following letter to House Speaker H. William DeWeese, D-Greene, Majority Leader Ivan Itkin, D-Allegheny, and Appropriations Chairman Dwight Evans, D-Phila.:

Gentlemen:

This year's timely passage of a state budget, the earliest in more than a decade, is an achievement the legislature and its leaders can be proud of.

It also offers a rare opportunity for the General Assembly to take the initiative on a vital economic development issue: business tax relief.

Let's use the opportunity the budget's early passage has presented to us this month in a determined effort to improve the climate for business growth in Pennsylvania and the jobs that will inevitably accompany it.

To their credit, Senators Mellow and Lincoln have wisely moved ahead with the timely introduction of bills to reduce the corporate net income tax and reinstate the loss carryforward provision for business tax purposes.

Reasonable and moderate in their impacts on state finances, these proposals would help to stimulate business investment and remove the stigma of Pennsylvania's having the highest CNI tax in the nation.

With the passing of Senator Lynch, the possibility for Senate passage of the Mellow-Lincoln proposals at this time is uncertain. In the interests of advancing the process of tax reduction I am asking the House Democratic Caucus leadership to initiate identical legislation for consideration by the House prior to the summer recess. I will be happy to co-sponsor the legislation.

Should it appear in the near term that the Senate is unprepared to act, and rather than lose the opportunity time has afforded us, I request the House proceed with the proposed alternative.

Sincerely yours,

Italo S. Cappabianca

###JB R:bustax2.002

(Note to Correspondents: The state budget was passed on May 28. On that date, Democratic Senate Leaders Robert Mellow and William Lincoln introduced the bills described in the letter, including a .85 percent cut in the CNI. Subsequently, Sen. Frank Lynch died, leaving the parties' votes in the Senate evenly divided at 24-24.)

[1994]

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Office of Democratic Legislative Information**  
G-01, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jim Barnes (717) 787-7895**

HARRISBURG, Oct. 6 -- The House has approved a resolution calling on its Tourism and Recreational Development Committee to study current plans to construct a fresh-water aquarium and research center on a lakefront site in Erie. The resolution was sponsored by Rep. Italo S. Cappabianca.

The resolution (H.R. 361) directs the committee to review the proposed aquarium and its potential economic impact for tourism in Pennsylvania and report its findings to the House by Nov. 21. The resolution calls for the committee to visit and inspect the proposed site.

Last November, Cappabianca arranged a meeting in Harrisburg where local groups promoting the aquarium made a presentation to state officials outlining their economic, educational and environmental goals for the facility.

Cappabianca at that time pledged to take a leading role as a legislative advocate and spokesman for the project. He said the committee's study is a further step in the process of acquainting state decision-makers with the project and its economic potential.

"Facilities such as the proposed aquarium and research center on Lake Erie have been valuable business and educational resources for a number of states and cities such as Baltimore and Camden, New Jersey, and have helped their areas' revitalization.

"It's well worth the committee's time and effort to help determine the suitability of such an undertaking for Pennsylvania and seeing for themselves what it would mean for the state and the region."

###jb/k

R:aquares.002