

DONALD W. SNYDER
MAJORITY WHIP



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

Survey response - thank
you letter

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HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2020
PHONE: (717) 787-4145
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Date

name
address

Dear

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the public opinion survey included in my most recent newsletter. Your input on these important issues is essential to my job as your representative in the House of Representatives. Additionally, your personal comments about what you think the legislature's top priorities should be in the next two years are very helpful to me.

I thought you might be interested in the status of some of the key issues which you were asked about on the survey. As you may be aware, the General Assembly passed legislation in April providing for a 3 ½ cent per gallon increase in the gas tax as well as a 50% increase in vehicle registration fees. This transportation revenue is desperately needed to build and maintain our sprawling highway and bridge system in the Commonwealth. You may be interested to learn that 58% of survey respondents supported this increase in the gas tax for this designated purpose.

Another important issue discussed on the survey, the establishment on public charter schools, was approved by the General Assembly in June. Significantly, these schools will provide forums for innovation and freedom from cumbersome mandates that overburden our public schools. Due to the marginal support for this legislation, only 37% respondents supported the idea, I worked with my colleagues to improve the bill so that many of your concerns were addressed. For instance, this legislation requires that 75% of the teachers in charter schools be state certified. In addition, while many of the mandates are optional, standards relating to health and safety will continue to be enforced.

Regarding the important issue of local tax reform, the General Assembly has passed an amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution which would give local taxing authorities the right to reduce the assessed value of all properties used as a citizen's primary place of residence by a set percentage of the property's value. As this measure has passed two sessions of the legislature, it will be up to you, the voter, to decide on the November ballot if you will support this amendment to the Constitution. The adoption of this measure would allow the legislature to enact legislation which would reform our local taxing system. The survey indicated that 65% of respondents support local tax reform.

In response to the other questions on the survey, 73% of respondents support a penalty for striking teachers. Sixty-one percent of respondents support privatizing the retail sale of liquor in the Commonwealth. On the issue of legalizing certain new forms of gambling in the state, 66% of respondents are opposed to the proposals. Sixty-nine percent of respondents support the granting of state tax credits to businesses providing on-site day care facilities for the children of employees. Finally, an overwhelming 84% of respondents support the creation of growth zones to help limit new development and protect undeveloped areas.

Again, I greatly appreciate your time and effort in participating in this survey. I truly value the input which I gain from these surveys because it helps me to better represent your interests and concerns in Harrisburg. Please feel free to contact my office regarding any issues of concern to you in the future or if I can be of any assistance in a state-related matter.

Sincerely,

Donald W. Snyder
134th Legislative District

DWS/jag

Inter-active video conferences, access to a variety of services, such as movies, shopping and news from your home, researching homework by tapping into libraries miles away, and getting medical checkups by dialing your phone are just a few of the options which will be available through advanced telecommunications technology in the near future. If one compares the conventional telephone cable as a country road, a fiber-optic cable is the communications equivalent of building a super turnpike large enough to handle 500 cars side by side. To assure that all Pennsylvanians will have access to the same level of services, Bell Telephone and 39 other phone companies will construct a universal fiber optic telecommunications network throughout the entire state by the year 2015 under legislation enacted during the last week of June.

In exchange for the acceleration of the investment of billions of dollars of capital for the network, the telephone companies may petition the Public Utility Commission (PUC) for deregulation of certain competitive services, such as the Yellow Pages or answering services. New profits generated by the change in regulation would be dedicated to building the information system. No economic risks associated with the provision of a competitive service shall be borne by the customers who do not purchase those services. All new services or changes to existing noncompetitive services must be reviewed by the PUC to ensure their safety, adequacy, reliability and privacy of telecommunications services prior to their being offered to the public.

The most controversial aspect of the proposed legislation providing for an automatic rate increase in basic services was

removed prior to final passage. The bill protects ratepayers by requiring PUC approval of all rate and plan changes. Furthermore, the price a telephone company charges its customers for competitive services cannot be less than the rate paid by competitors for access to the network in order to maintain a level playing field for all users of the system. The fibre-optic network must be constructed in such a manner as to assure balance among rural, suburban and urban areas.

The PUC predicts that this Fall is the earliest any rate or deregulation proposals will be submitted for consideration. The regulatory agency has up to nine months to act on the request or it will be automatically approved.

The 1993-94 fiscal year budget for the Commonwealth was passed more than a month before the July 1st deadline under pressure from the Senate to enact a favorable spending plan while the Democrats still controlled both chambers of the legislature. Only a few days later, Democratic Senator Frank Lynch of Philadelphia, who left his hospital bed to cast the deciding vote, passed away, leaving the Senate in a gridlocking tie of 24 Democrats and 24 Republicans.

The \$15 billion spending plan was approved on a mostly party-line vote. No Republicans in the House or Senate voted for the package. In summarizing the proposal, it can be said that "Philadelphia wins, we lose." For example, while none of the school districts in the 134th legislative district received a funding increase for the second straight year, the Philadelphia School District will be receiving \$11.5 million in new funding. While the rest of the counties will be funded at \$70,000 for each Common Pleas Court judge, Philadelphia will receive \$108,000 for each of its 90 judges. With both the Senate and House Appropriations Chairmen from Philadelphia, there were many special projects funded that benefited only Philadelphia institutions and activities, such as \$1 million for a party at the opening of the city's covention center.

The new state budget increases state spending at a rate nearly twice the 3.24 percent inflation rate anticipated for the fiscal year. Even worse, the Teachers' Pension Fund was raided to the tune of \$75 million in reduced employer contributions to help pay for this spending. At the same time, Republican initiatives for welfare reform that were approved by the House in Spring which could save \$200 million

and tax relief to spur economic development and job growth were ignored.

Other highlights of the budget include:

--- increasing funding for corrections by \$104 million or almost 21%;

---freezing subsidies for basic education at \$2.96 billion, but appropriating an additional \$130 million "equity supplement" for over 300 selected less affluent school districts;

---freezing spending for instruction at the four state-related universities (Penn State, Pitt, Temple and Lincoln) and at the 14 institutions of the State System of Higher Education;

---boosting funding for the Department of Public Welfare by almost five percent, including a sizeable increase for Children and Youth county programs;

---providing almost \$56 million for private institutions of higher education;

---increasing the funding for the Ben Franklin Partnership by \$4.75 million; and

---boosting the appropriation for the Department of Agriculture by \$2 million, including a \$1 million increase for food banks.

The budget is partially funded by the Governor's anticipated effort to shift approximately \$520 million in state welfare costs to the federal government. The final spending plan did not, however, contain the 13.6 percent increase in the tax on electric companies which the Governor had requested.

A detailed analysis of the budget is available from my

Update on Outcomes of Education

During recent months, there has been continuing effort by the House of Representatives to delay the regulations adopted by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education to enact new public school curriculum regulations and required student learning outcomes. The following is an update on the status of the regulations

On March 31, 1993, the Governor announced that he had reached an agreement with three of the four Chairman of the House and Senate Education Committees to revise the learning outcomes. The State Board of Education adopted the Governor's revisions on April 14, 1993. On April 27, the Senate Education Committee voted 9-4 to recommend approval of the regulations. The following day, the House Education Committee failed to recommend either or disapproval; thus, the committee did not take an official position on the regulations, thereby preventing the House to address many of the concerns that had been raised.

On May 5, the Independent Regulatory Review Commission voted 5-0 to approve the revised regulations. After a review by the Attorney General, the learning outcomes were published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on July 24th. Unless the General Assembly acts legislatively to overturn them, the public schools are now required to implement the new educational requirements. The dates by which each of the districts in our area must submit strategic to the Department of Education for approval are as follows: East Penn- September 30, 1996; Parkland- September 30, 1995; Salisbury Area- September 30, 1996; and S Lehigh- September 30, 1995.

On two occasions, the House of Representatives has voted to oppose outcome based education regulations. First, an amendment offered by Representative Ronald Gamble to House Bill 129 was approved (139-61) overturning the student learning outcomes adopted by the Board in January. The amendment also prevented the State Board from promulgating any goals or outcomes relating to nonacademic instruction. A second amendment was adopted which prevents school districts from grading, testing or collecting data on students pertaining to attitudes, values and beliefs.

In June, Representative Gamble offered a second amendment, this time to House Bill 1706. The amendment established local district option for participation in the outcome based curriculum regulations. The amendment was adopted (132-67). The amendment also eliminated the authority of the Department of Education to approve or disapprove required school district strategic plans, makes PDE recommendations for the plans purely advisory and prohibits PDE from penalizing nonparticipating districts.

Although the House approved House Bill 129 and House Bill 1706 with Representative Gamble; amendments; Senator Fattah,

Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, refuses to consider the bills. It is thus unclear whether additional legislative action will be considered in the Fall.

If you would like to have additional information on the new regulations or questions about the approval process, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

A recent study by the Fire Service Presidents Review Committee found that Pennsylvania is leading the nation in firefighter fatalities. Pennsylvania, which has the highest number of fire departments in the nation, 2545, with a complement of 81,000 firefighters, most of whom are volunteers, is one of the few states with no minimum training or leadership standards. It was determined that the vast majority of the 38 fatalities between January 1990 and March 1993 were the victims of poor physical conditioning, inadequate training and leadership and unsafe apparatus.

The study's recommendations included: fire companies should adopt a national health and safety standard; fire companies should require members to complete the state Fire Academy's Introduction to Safety and Training System; fire companies should promote physical fitness; fire companies should work with local government relief associations and insurance companies to establish a medical screening program for all new and current fire fighters; each company should appoint a qualified safety officer responsible for training and supervision of safety equipment; and the legislature should adopt a statewide building and fire prevention code.

During the last session, the Local Government Committee conducted public hearings throughout the state to determine how to maintain the viability of the volunteer fire companies and developed over thirty recommendations for legislative action. From those recommendations, the House has already approved legislation this year to authorize fire companies to appropriate relief association funds to maintain comprehensive

health, physical fitness and physical monitoring programs approved by the nearest authorized state licensed health care facility and to purchase physical fitness equipment not to exceed \$2,000 annually. The committee has sent to the House a bill that would increase the death benefits for firefighters killed while on duty from \$45,000 to \$60,000 with a cost of living adjustment and expands the eligibility for benefits to death related to stress and strain. Legislation to establish a statewide building and fire prevention code have been introduced but no action has been taken to date. The findings of the national survey provides further evidence of the need to develop a comprehensive program to address the needs of volunteer firefighters in our community.

Senior citizens or persons permanently disabled receiving Medicare benefits may qualify for additional financial assistance with medical bills. Healthy Horizons is a two-tiered program which combines Medicaid and Medicare benefits to assist those with low incomes meet their insurance payments and deductibles. The two-tiers consist of the Blue Card and Orange card programs. Either card will pay for the eligible participant's monthly \$36.60 Medicare premium, thereby increasing the individual's Social Security check by this amount. In addition, the Blue Card program eliminates the \$652 Medicare Part-A hospital deductible and the Medicare Part-B \$100 physician deductible and 20% copayment.

The income eligibility for both tiers is the same. The income criteria for either the Blue Card or the Orange Card is \$600 per month (\$7200 annually) for one person or \$805 per month (\$9600 annually) for a couple. The criteria for a participant's assets, however, determines the qualifications for which program the individual may qualify.

To be eligible for the Blue Card, a single person's assets must be below \$2,000 and below \$3,000 for a couple's assets. Assets include cash in the bank, stocks, bonds or certificates that can be converted to cash and insurance policies that have a cash value. Note that a house, car and household belongings do not count as assets. A single person whose assets are below \$4,000 or below \$6,000 for a couple are eligible for the Orange Card.

To find out more information about the Healthy Horizons program, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 820-3034 for an application. Counselors at the agency can assist in the completion and submission of the necessary paperwork. You may also contact the county office of the Department of Public Welfare (the department's toll free number is 1-800-842-2020). The program is funded under the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

A program which offers medical eye care for disadvantaged elderly residents of the state is offered by the Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology under the National Eye Care Project. The project provides brochures on many common eye diseases of the elderly and, for those who are eligible, a referral to a volunteer local ophthalmologist. These participating physicians provide comprehensive medical eye examination and care for any condition at no out-of-pocket expense to the eligible individuals.

To obtain information, call the toll-free Helpline at 1-800-222-EYES. The criteria used for determining eligibility are: age 65 or older, citizenship or legal residency status, do not have access to an ophthalmologist or have not been seen by one during the past three years, and cannot afford the needed medical care. Counselors will direct eligible individuals to one of the volunteer physicians in the Allentown area for consultation and care. The goal of the academy is to make all aspects of medical eye care both accessible and affordable to ensure that every elderly citizen has access to the highest quality eye care.

During the amendment process on legislation authorizing the new emission inspection program, the House passed legislation which would have required the Department of Transportation to decentralize its licensing and vehicle registration program by providing such services in PennDOT's district offices in the various counties. Due to PennDOT's opposition, the provision was removed in the Senate before final passage of the bill. The House action did, however, prompt PennDOT to begin testing a new computer terminal in ^{its} ~~its~~ Harrisburg office that would make it easier for drivers to renew their vehicle registration. Owners enter their information on a screen and within minutes the forms are available at a nearby counter. Driver's license renewals will also be tested with the computers. If successful, the program will be expanded across the state.

As a member of the House Republican Computer Committee, I have been actively encouraging and supporting efforts to utilize the availability of new technology for improving public access to government services. In January, the committee displayed a computer kiosk in the Capitol that provides numerous government forms and services, such as renewal of PACE applications, update and renewing driver's licenses and vehicle registrations, job applications, applying for social service and health programs, and other valuable information. Kiosks may also enable people to use credit cards to obtain birth certificates or simply to learn more about a region's services and points of attraction. The Lehigh Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, for example, is currently studying the placement of such a kiosk at the I-78 Welcome Center and other facilities frequented by tourists.

The goal is to encourage the executive agencies of state government to develop "city halls in the malls" in order to make government service faster and more accessible. The use of technology will enable the offering of many new services to the public in a more effective and efficient manner.

One of the concerns raised during the debate on the regulations requiring school districts to adopt Outcomes Based Education in their curricula was parental rights to information about school testing and assessment of their children and the need for prior parental consent before certain tests are administered. Legislation has also recently been introduced which would prohibit anyone except a licensed professional psychologist or a certified school psychologist from practicing psychological methods in the public schools. HB 1893 would also require written informed parental consent before any psychological practice may be conducted on a student.

As a result of the increasing public focus on student testing and assessment programs, the Department of Education (DOE) issued a circular earlier this year which sets forth the guidelines which schools must follow. The fundamental principle is that no testing and assessment program may be conducted without prior informed consent of either the parents or the local board of school directors. All public schools must have adopted policies and procedures on these matters which are approved by DOE.

According to the DOE, local board approval is sufficient consent "in situations involving aptitude and achievement testing (whether standardized or informal) and reporting of skill and knowledge outcomes in ^{the} ~~the~~ subject matter areas now within the customary curricula of the public schools." Informed consent of each child and/or his parents is required for programs of personality testing and assessment although

the actual test or assessment itself should not be shown. Furthermore, "individual consent should be an absolute requirement before information, other than that required for pupil identification, concerning a pupil's family is obtained (for example, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, income and occupational data, husband-wife relations, and the like), or before any information not directly relevant for educational purposes is solicited from the pupil or his parents."

Parental consent must be specific and individual and in writing. Blanket consent forms do not suffice. Moreover, local school board consent for testing and assessment programs must be taken at a public meeting wherein the public has an opportunity to give input.

Parents of students involved in programs of testing and assessment approved by the school board must be informed of the following: (1) the methods by which the testing or assessment will be conducted; (2) the uses to which the results will be put; (3) the methods by which it will be recorded and maintained; (4) the time period for which it will be maintained; and (5) the persons to whom the information will be available and under what conditions.

Federal regulations also provide privacy rights of parents and students. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 guarantee parents access to any and all educational records on their children; the right to challenge information contained in their child's records; right to know to whom information is disclosed and a right to a copy of records which are released to other schools and agencies.

Pennsylvania's new Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) will provide for free or low-cost health insurance to uninsured children who reside in households which are not poor enough to qualify for medical assistance but do not earn enough to afford health insurance. The program will cover physician visits; preventive care; immunizations, up to 90 days of hospitalization; dental, vision and hearing care; and prescriptions with a \$5 co-payment.

Although it is estimated that as many as 300,000 children may be eligible for CHIP, the program, which is funded with a two-cent per pack cigarette tax that generates about \$21.5 million annually, can provide coverage to only about 32,000 children. Benefits will be provided on a first-come, first served basis. Parents and guardians of eligible children should make immediate application through the CHIP regional administrator, Capital Blue Cross, by calling 1-800-KIDS-101. Each application will take approximately two weeks to review before parents are notified.

Eligibility guidelines are as follows:

---children up to age six from families with annual incomes up to \$26,584 for a family of four (185% of federal poverty level) are eligible for free insurance;

---children up to age six whose family income is between \$26,548 and \$33,722 for a family of four will be eligible for a 50% insurance subsidy (co-pay could range from \$44 to \$51 per month);

---children between ages 9 and 12 whose family has income of no more than \$14,350 for a family of four would receive free coverage.

Each year the age for eligibility will increase by one

year until it reaches the maximum age of eighteen.

Len Gerlach
out

Dear Editor:

As a follow-up to recent articles regarding the State Senate Finance Committee's action in reporting out Senate Bill 182 dealing with tax reform at the "County" level, I wanted to write, as Chairman of the House Local Tax Reform Caucus, to apprise your readers of the status of the Caucus' efforts on this issue.

The Caucus is made up of 70 members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, both Democrats and Republicans, who believe that local tax reform is an issue that must be addressed in the current legislative session. We are heartened by the interest shown in local tax reform by Lieutenant Governor Mark Singel, Senators Michael Dawida and Robert Jubelirer, and many other legislators because it reflects the growing sentiment, at the grass-roots level, that our current local tax structure is not equitable and does not provide the fair and appropriate mechanisms for local units of government to raise revenues for local services.

While the Caucus applauds the Senate Finance Committee for moving a county tax reform proposal to the front burner of the legislative process, it is the consensus in the Caucus, however, that any effort to address local tax reform must start with reform of the school tax structure. It is school taxes that represent the heaviest burden for local taxpayers and is fraught with the greatest inequity in the payment of those taxes. Consequently, it is our feeling that, if local tax reform is going to be addressed at all in this legislative session, school taxes should be the first subject of review and consideration. We are working on developing a school tax reform proposal that would significantly reduce reliance on real estate taxes by giving school districts the option to move away from such taxes in favor of an income tax. So as to not unfairly burden residential property owners with such a move from property taxes to an income tax, we also want to examine ways to allow for a proper distribution of revenue responsibility between residential taxpayers and business taxpayers. We also believe, if tax reform is going to be successful, that the legislative proposal must contain clear and strong provisions to protect taxpayers against an uncontrolled right to tax. It is our hope that such legislation could also contain provisions dealing with tax reform--related issues such as assessment reform and periodic review of tax-exempt property status.

As is the case with many legislative initiatives, the fuel that propels them forward in the legislative process are the calls and letters to legislators from constituents requesting action in the General Assembly. We, in the Caucus, believe that the current legislative session should not close without addressing school tax reform. If you believe that as well, you should contact your State Representative and State Senator to express your views on this important issue.

State Representative Jim Gerlach
155th Legislative District
Chairman, House Local Tax Reform Caucus



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

April 2, 1991

MEMO

SUBJECT: Committee Questions for Newsletters

TO: Rep. John E. Barley
Caucus Secretary

FROM: Bill Williams
Director of Public Information

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Williams".

Attached are questions suggested by members of the Research Department for use by members in upcoming newsletters. None were available from either the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee or the Professional Licensure Committee. Other committees submitted from one to eight questions apiece.

I caution that some of these questions are quite technical. Members should examine them closely before deciding which to use. Some may not be appropriate in certain districts.

cc: To all PIO writers

AGING AND YOUTH COMMITTEE

1) Do you favor increasing the income limits for the state's subsidized prescription drug program (PACE) to allow more senior citizens to participate in the program, even if it places a further financial burden on the state's Lottery program?

YES _____

NO _____

2) Would you support legislation to earmark a portion of the lottery fund for areas other than senior citizen programs, such as education?

YES _____

NO _____

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

1. Should the General Assembly require farmers to have nutrient management plans?

YES _____

NO _____

2. Are you generally concerned about the safety of the food you eat?

YES _____

NO _____

3. Organic food -- food raised and processed without using any pesticides, chemical fertilizers or additives -- may cost more at the store. Are you willing to pay more for organically grown food?

YES _____

NO _____

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

1. In recent years, the Casey Administration has funded millions of dollars in day-to-day government operation costs by selling state bonds which must be paid off at a later date with interest. Gov. Casey proposes \$300 million in bond sales to help fund the Commerce Department in 1991-92. Those opposed to borrowing in order to pay for government operations contend that it is a "mortgaging of the future" which will have a negative impact on government operations and taxpayers in the future.

Do you believe the General Assembly should take legislative action to prohibit the funding of day-to-day government operations by selling bonds?

YES _____ NO _____

2. Although the Casey Administration inherited a budget surplus in excess of \$347 million from the previous administration, it now must confront a record budget deficit in excess of \$1 billion. In response to the situation, Gov. Casey has proposed the single largest tax increase in the state's history. As a citizen and a taxpayer, how do you believe the present budget crisis should be addressed?

I would support: (check no more than one)

_____ Gov. Casey's \$1.86 billion tax increase plan which expands the sales tax, increases state park and facility user fees, increases the cigarette tax and calls for a 38 percent increase in business taxes.

_____ a smaller tax increase plan which minimizes the burden on any particular area by spreading the burden over business, personal and so-called "sin" taxes.

_____ a compromise to balance much smaller tax increases with extensive cuts in the state bureaucracy.

_____ the stance by the House Republican Caucus to oppose any increase in taxes before the governor re-examines government expenses, the necessity of various programs and the magnitude of his tax proposals.

3. Given the fact that throughout 1990 Gov. Casey continually denied assertions by legislative budget experts that his administration was hiding a budget deficit, and that such action would lead to a severe fiscal crisis of at least \$1 billion in 1991, many observers contend that Gov. Casey has lost credibility with the Legislature and the people of Pennsylvania. How would you rate Gov. Casey's level of credibility as governor of this Commonwealth?

_____ extremely high

_____ high

_____ average

_____ low

_____ extremely low

3a. If your response to the above question fell in the "average, low or extremely low range", do you believe Gov. Casey has enough credibility to lead Pennsylvania out of the billion-dollar fiscal crisis it now faces?

YES _____ NO _____

4. Despite record Lottery sales, the cost of the co-pay prescription assistance program (PACE) is exceeding available revenue, thereby placing the Lottery's fiscal integrity in jeopardy. To ensure that the PACE program continues to assist eligible senior citizens with prescription costs, which of the below approaches might you support?

(Please respond to each possibility)

Yes No a one-year "fix" which would increase the PACE co-pay from \$4 to \$6 while increasing eligibility income limits from \$12,000 to \$13,000 for singles and from \$15,000 to \$16,200 for couples. This plan is considered a temporary solution to a continuing problem.

Yes No a long-term solution that would convert the co-pay to 25 percent of a prescription cost while also increasing eligibility income limits from \$12,000 to \$13,000 for singles and from \$15,000 to \$16,200 for couples.

Yes No a reform of PACE whereby each qualifying senior citizen would receive free prescriptions up to the average annual usage per enrollee. For example, the current annual PACE benefit averages approximately \$650 per enrollee. Thus, all eligible senior citizens would receive (with no co-pay charge) \$650 in annual prescription benefits, after which costs would have to be borne by another medical coverage. (This concept is suggested as a means of ensuring that PACE meets essential prescription needs for all enrollees while safeguarding the program from abuse).

Other: _____

4a. Are you a PACE card-holder?

YES _____ NO _____

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

1. From all accounts, the tax receipts of the Commonwealth are falling short of obligations and demand for programs is substantially greater than that envisioned by the governor when he provided spending estimates to the General Assembly during the Spring of 1990. Each of the following is a measure which can be undertaken to respond to this situation. Please indicate the degree (expressed in a percentage) to which you believe the measure should be used as a response mechanism. (Don't exceed 100 percent)

- _____ freeze state program growth
- _____ increase in general business taxes
- _____ state employee furloughs
- _____ increase in personal income taxes
- _____ no new state spending programs
- _____ increase in sales tax
- _____ freeze state assistance to municipalities

2. The General Assembly recently passed, but the governor vetoed, legislation designed to eliminate, over six years, the state tax on inheritances which pass to spouses or children. Do you believe the General Assembly should again attempt to pass such legislation?

YES _____ NO _____

3. Legislation limiting the liability of businesses for defective products passed the House of Representatives last session but the General Assembly was unable to agree on a final version. Do you believe the General Assembly should pass some version of liability reform?

YES _____ NO _____

4. Over the last two sessions the Democratic leadership of the House of Representatives and the governor have attempted to raise the minimum wage. Do you favor passage by the General Assembly of legislation which increases Pennsylvania's minimum wage?

YES _____ NO _____

5. During 1990, the governor made legislation requiring businesses to grant leave to employees for family illnesses or childbirth his top legislative priority. This legislation did not pass the General Assembly. Do you believe such legislation should be enacted during the 1991-92 legislative session?

YES _____ NO _____

6. A bill requiring Pennsylvania employers to provide 60 days notice of impending plant closures, relocations or substantial reductions was passed by the House of Representatives but failed to become law. Do you favor the passage of such legislation?

YES _____

NO _____

7. Legislation has been proposed to extend the coverage of the Prevailing Wage law beyond its current scope to include non-public projects. Do you favor this concept?

YES _____

NO _____

8. Over the last several sessions, large amounts of legislation have been introduced to aid small business. Of the following general categories, please indicate the order of assistance you believe these offer (1 - being of highest importance, 5 - being of lowest importance).

_____ permit streamlining

_____ export incentives

_____ direct financial assistance

_____ technical assistance

_____ tax incentives

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

1. Would you support legislation to protect Pennsylvania's wetlands, even if the law would prevent landowners from developing or farming the land?

YES _____

NO _____

2. Would you support the state or federal government locating a nuclear waste site in Pennsylvania?

YES _____

NO _____

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

1. Do you believe that cable TV rates should be regulated by:

Yes No state government?

Yes No federal government?

Yes No local government?

2. Are you satisfied with your public utility services (i.e. gas, electricity, water, telephone)?

YES _____

NO _____

2a. If not, why not? _____

3. As a consumer, what issues are important to you? _____

4. Do you believe that the state should regulate companies which:

Yes No conduct telephone solicitations?

Yes No offer "900" numbers?

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. Do you favor legislation which would allow parents to choose the public schools their children attend?

YES _____

NO _____

2. Do you believe that legislation should be passed to limit teachers' right to strike?

YES _____

NO _____

3. The state's share of basic education costs has dropped to 39.7 percent, a historically low level. Since local support for education is highly reliant on real estate tax revenues, do you believe that the state should attempt to increase its share of the costs?

YES _____

NO _____

FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Do you favor President Bush's proposal to turn over the administration of \$20 billion in federal programs to the state?

YES _____

NO _____

FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. Do you believe legalized gambling should be expanded in Pennsylvania?

YES _____ NO _____

1a. If yes, which specific types:

_____ riverboat gambling?

_____ video poker?

_____ other? _____

2. Given that the state must raise money to balance the budget, how should this money be raised?

_____ specific taxes, such as the governor has proposed on cigarettes, liquor-by-the-drink, cable television, business, etc.

_____ increasing broad-based levies such as the income tax or sales tax.

_____ other _____

3. Should selling retail liquor stores be considered as a way to balance the budget.

YES _____ NO _____

GAMES AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE

1. Do you favor the registration of non-powered boats?

YES _____ NO _____

2. Do you favor a power boat registration fee increase?

YES _____ NO _____

3. Do you favor the elimination of rifles for turkey hunting?

YES _____ NO _____

HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

1. Do you believe the General Assembly should enact "Living Will" legislation to allow persons to determine the extent of medical treatment and procedures to be performed on them should they become unconscious or otherwise mentally incapacitated?

YES _____ NO _____

2. Do you believe that able-bodied persons receiving welfare cash grants should be required to seek employment and accept minimum wage job offers?

YES _____ NO _____

3. Should state government become involved in ways to ensure that unemployed individuals and their dependents (if any) have access to affordable health insurance?

YES _____ NO _____

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

1. Do you think reforming Pennsylvania's health care benefit system should be a top priority for state government?

YES _____

NO _____

2. Last year the Legislature passed Automobile Insurance Reform. Are you satisfied with these changes in auto insurance?

YES _____

NO _____

3. Do you think the insurance industry needs increased regulation by the government?

YES _____

NO _____

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

1. Do you believe that Pennsylvania should select its judges and justices through a process based on merit selection or by statewide election.

YES _____

NO _____

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. It has been estimated that prevailing wage requirements increase the total cost of public construction projects by 3-9%. Given the severe budget problems of both state and local government, should Pennsylvania's Prevailing Wage Law be repealed in order to allow for competitive bidding?

Yes No local government only

Yes No both state and local government

2. Many women (and men) want, or need to stay home to care for young children and family, but must have an income. Pennsylvania's Industrial Homework Law essentially prohibits working at home as an employee. Should the Industrial Homework Law be repealed, and be replaced by a Work Flexibility Act that allows individuals to work at home, with proper regulation for health and safety, and environmental protection?

YES _____ NO _____

3. Do you believe that a law should be enacted that gives individuals the right to work without having to become a member of a labor union?

YES _____ NO _____

4. The public sector unionization law has given teachers and other important public employees the right to strike, disrupting important government services. Negotiated wage increases for the public sector are also a major factor in driving up the cost of government.

Should public employees be prohibited from striking?

YES _____ NO _____

Should Act 195, the Public Employee Relations Act, be repealed entirely?

YES _____ NO _____

LIQUOR CONTROL COMMITTEE

1. Do you favor the dismantling of the state's liquor sales system and the state stores in favor of a private enterprise liquor sales system?

YES _____ NO _____

2. Do you favor allowing the sale of beer and/or wine in grocery stores and other similar retail outlets?

YES _____ NO _____

3. Would you support a reduction in the state's 18 percent emergency tax levied on the sale of liquor in order to make Pennsylvania's liquor prices more competitive with surrounding states? (The tax was instituted in 1936 as a "temporary" tax to aid victims of the Johnstown flood.)

YES _____ NO _____

4. Would you favor legislation that would lower the blood alcohol content level used to determine if a person was driving under the influence of alcohol from its present 0.10 to 0.004?

YES _____ NO _____

5. Do you favor passage of legislation that would allow video poker games to be played on the premises of retail establishments holding liquor licenses in Pennsylvania?

YES _____ NO _____

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1. Would you support legislation that would require citizen approval of a referendum question before off-track betting parlors could be located in a municipality?

YES _____

NO _____

2. Do you feel the question of fluoridating water should be subject to voter approval in all municipalities within the service area?

YES _____

NO _____

3. Would you favor an expanded role for counties in regulating residential and commercial growth? If yes, explain.

YES _____

NO _____

EXPLANATION: _____

STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1a. Should the state be allowed to distribute voter registration forms to each student upon graduation from high school?

YES _____ NO _____

1b. At the time of application for a driver's license?

YES _____ NO _____

2. Would you support the creation of a state Department of Drug Abuse Prevention to address the problem of illegal drug use in Pennsylvania?

YES _____ NO _____

3. Would you support an amendment to the state Constitution which would extend terms for state representatives from two to four years?

YES _____ NO _____

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

1. Do you favor the use of state Motor License Trust Fund monies to assist in financing mass transit bus/train operations? (Presently, these funds are constitutionally dedicated to highway construction and maintenance.)

YES _____ NO _____

2. Would you support an increase in the gasoline tax if the increased revenues were restricted to certain types of projects, instead of being placed in the Motor License Fund, which is used for highway maintenance?

YES _____ NO _____

3a. Do you support Gov. Casey's proposal to transfer the Shared Ride Program for Senior Citizens from the Transportation Department to the Department of Aging?

YES _____ NO _____

3b. Presently there is no income eligibility limit placed upon senior citizens who utilize the Shared Ride Program. Should an income limit for eligibility be imposed?

YES _____ NO _____

URBAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

1. Would you favor a plan that calls for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to issue \$100 million in bonds to fund affordable housing programs?

YES _____

NO _____

2. Do you believe Pennsylvania cities should have the option of levying a municipal service charge on non-residents who work in the city and utilize municipal roads and services?

YES _____

NO _____

3. Do you believe Pennsylvania cities should have the option of imposing a local sales tax of up to one percent as a means of raising additional revenue to pay for municipal services?

YES _____

NO _____




HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

MEMO

May 5, 1992

SUBJECT: New Publications

TO: House Republican Members

FROM: Geoff MacLaughlin, Publications Editor 
House Republican Public Information Department

Two new related publications are now available. The first is an updated senior citizen newsletter. It has been done in the traditional four-page form and there is space (presently on the back page) for a member to add a local photo, a local senior expo, or some other item of local interest. In addition, presently not included is a chart showing local benefits to each county from the lottery fund, if a member wishes to use that information to fill the page. A printed sample of the newsletter is attached, page one being a sample masthead for a self mailer. The chart mentioned above is page 6. Contact your writer with instructions as to what information you wish included, or send this copy with name and district info. in appropriate spaces with further printing instructions to G-59, South Office for typesetting.

The second, related publication is a brochure (attached) specifically on the new living will and guardianship law. It is generic and was done at the direction of leadership in this form. The only changes are member's name and district on the back panel. Send your copy with ordering instructions to G-59, South Office for typesetting. Please note that a new disclaimer is included for members' protection.

If members wish to use the brochure as an insert with a senior citizen newsletter, they may re-design the newsletter to eliminate the info. on living wills and guardianship and perhaps make the newsletter a one-page, back to back newsletter instead of a four-pager. Another alternative is to go to short paper, add local photos, go to bigger print, etc. The print now used is a point or two bigger than usual - at the request of a couple of members.

I am also designing an alternative form of the newsletter, at the request of Rep. Perzel (it has also been used by at least one other member - Rep. Uliana - in the past). It is basically a two-sided 11 x 17 sheet with two folds and a self-mailer. Since it is a self-mailer and does not fit in an envelope, the new brochure cannot be inserted with it. This will be available shortly.

APR 14 1993



*News letter
file*

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: Here is a summary of important events of the past month.

A REVIEW OF MARCH 1993

A major legislative program dealing with a broad range of issues from the economy to government reform to family care was outlined by the House minority caucus in March as a way to boost Pennsylvania into a national leadership role.

"The plans being presented today constitute a major course correction in the way this commonwealth treats its citizens in terms of employment opportunities, fundamental government changes and the care of those most vulnerable among us," House Minority Leader Matthew J. Ryan said in announcing the program at a Capitol press conference.

The program is not in final form and three task forces will be named to study ideas from the public, Ryan cautioned, adding: "Our intent here today is to outline a legislative program and to reveal to all Pennsylvanians a suggested track designed to bring prosperity tomorrow from the promises of today."

He said that reaching the goals of the program, dubbed "A Partnership for Progress" would require the cooperation of the House and Senate as well as the public.

"Last November, a sizable portion of Pennsylvanians and other Americans demanded changes in government, in the social fabric of this country and in the personal pursuits of those who have the greatest effect on their lives," Ryan said. "We sat up and took notice of that all-powerful collective shout, in many ways. One of those was in the development of this three-part legislative program."

He said the first part is aimed at giving business the climate to create more jobs and giving schools the means to educate and train the workforce. Second is a move toward "a better state government by making it a smaller state government -- honed to its essential functions -- primed for efficiency -- and trimmed to economic reality," he said.

The third part will recognize the concerns of families for health and safety and the special needs of children, women and senior citizens. Ryan said he feels the program is so important that he will "keep hammering away" on the need for its approval.

"You will hear a lot from me on this subject over the coming months," he promised. "This is not hype; this is hope. It's not the spinning of wheels; it's a forward movement. And it's not a dream; it's our destiny as a people."

Expanding on details of the program, Ryan said that "the key to our future begins with a move toward full and effective employment through investment in and expansion of industry, large and small businesses, tourism and agriculture. To provide work for our people we must be worker-friendly and business-friendly. One cannot exist without the other. Simultaneously, we must give our schools the tools to make our students proficient in life and productive in work."

He said the Legislature must press for reforms to downsize state government by weeding out waste, allowing the private sector (rather than government) to provide some services, and "to make right and reasonable the efforts and finances in one of our largest public programs -- welfare."

Ryan added that he's happy Gov. Casey has embraced some suggestions made to make welfare "a great program for those truly in need."

"Finally, our package looks to those who, for whatever reason, cannot defend themselves from the ravages of life or the injustices which have infiltrated our way of life," he said. Ryan listed children, women carrying heavy responsibility and the elderly among those who might require special help.

More specifically, he said the proposals would include an examination of business tax reductions as an incentive to create jobs, a move to recover overdue taxes in fairness to those who pay on time and a continuing effort to enact the best possible workers' compensation reform package.

The economic effort will also include a cost assessment of government regulations, plans to aid businesses, a review of the state's entire tax structure, a restructuring of the environmental protection process, the promotion of technical training, and the development of agricultural exports and tourism -- the state's two largest industries.

In the area of government reform, Ryan said the goals will be a welfare system free of fraud and abuse, the privatization of functions not well handled by bureaucrats, a review of state agencies which may not be needed, the sale of surplus state property and an ongoing evaluation of the need for new government agencies.

He said the move to help people would include health care, prevention of child abuse, allowing child-care tax deductions, enforcement of child-support payments and the use of professional staffs in day-care facilities. It would also cover help for senior citizens, repeal of the so-called widow's tax, prevention of abuse of the elderly, addressing the health needs of women and a crackdown on crime.

Ryan said that House Minority Policy Committee Chairman John E. Barley (Lancaster) would set up the task forces to further explore the three main parts of the program over the next several months.

"It is my hope that these task forces will report back to all of us later this year with a refined package and more fiscal data," Ryan said.

Barley has named Rep. Patrick E. Fleagle of Franklin County to head the task force on the economy, Rep. Raymond Bunt Jr. of Montgomery County to chair the study of government reform and Rep. Elaine F. Farmer of Allegheny County to lead the probe of family needs.

After more than 18 months of debate, which included a special legislative session, the House once again tackled the issue of workers' compensation in March by rolling back rates businesses pay and capping medical fees. Senate Bill 1, known as the Madigan-Mellow compromise and originally passed by the Senate in February, was amended by House Democrats and finally approved by a 111-91 vote.

The legislation would cap medical costs at 117 percent of the Medicare fee schedule and 120 percent for care by specialists. The bill would roll back the 24 percent increase granted to insurers last year and ties future increases to statewide average weekly wage increases. The proposal also offers businesses a one-time five percent discount on their premiums if they maintain workplace safety committees.

The bill also provides injured workers with a cost-of-living increase and extends the time a worker can claim a work-related disease after they have left a job from 300 weeks, or about six years, to 500 weeks, or almost ten years.

The House version of SB 1 is opposed by the state's business community and is not expected to be adopted by the Senate.

Also in March, the House approved a supplemental appropriations bill to help the state meet its financial obligations for the remainder of the current fiscal year which ends June 30. House Bill 815, approved by a 119-80 vote, would add an additional \$127 million in state and \$547 million in federal funds to the 1992-93 budget.

The bill allocates funds for various state agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and State Police, restores funding for county courts and sets aside \$500,000 for the Attorney General's investigation of the state Supreme Court.

A long list of amendments were offered to the bill, but all but one were defeated along mostly party lines. One amendment would have increased county court reimbursements to \$70,000 per judge and saved the program \$1 million overall by eliminating a loophole that allows Philadelphia to receive excess funds. The amendment was defeated 97-101 on a reconsideration motion, after it had originally passed by one vote.

There was also an unsuccessful effort to restore funding for the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. An amendment was proposed which would have appropriated over \$11 million for the school while cutting an equal amount of surplus funding for welfare. The amendment was defeated 96-102.

An effort to cut \$3.7 million from the funds available for general government operations in the departments of insurance, revenue and labor and industry to fund deferred maintenance projects at the 14 state-owned universities of the State System of Higher Education (SSHE) was also defeated.

Supporters of the amendment pointed out that the governor has used his line-item veto power to eliminate the deferred maintenance appropriation from the past two state budgets. Nevertheless, the amendment was defeated by a 99-102 vote.

The only amendment which was adopted would prohibit Supreme Court justices from using public funds to retain legal counsel for representation in criminal investigations and proceedings.

In March the House also considered a legislative package to change the state budget process. The legislation is similar to a package of bills which was approved by the House last year, but was never considered by the Senate.

The House approved House Bill 588, which would establish a strict timetable for introduction and passage of the budget, and House Bill 589, which would create an independent revenue forecasting board.

But debate on House Bill 587, a proposed constitutional amendment allowing either the House or Senate to introduce revenue bills, was suspended after an amendment was offered which would have capped property taxes for senior citizens over age 65. Under the amendment, the state would be responsible for reimbursing school districts for lost revenue. Debate and a vote on the bill was suspended until an assessment of the financial impact of the amendment can be prepared.

Members of the House Appropriations and Education committees heard suggestions from parents, taxpayers, school officials and others during two public hearings in March to discuss public school funding in Pennsylvania.

The minority chairman of the House Education Committee said the purpose of the hearings is "to come up with a more workable, taxpayer-friendly education funding plan."

The panel received a number of suggestions on how to improve public school equity, effectiveness and efficiency. Several educators and school officials testifying suggested that many districts would forgo state assistance in exchange for more local autonomy.

School officials said state mandates such as transportation of non-public school students, special education regulations, the state's prevailing wage law and Act 195 -- the state law dealing with the labor-management arrangement between teachers and districts -- cost districts a tremendous amount of money.

Taxpayers called on legislators to enact spending caps at both the state and local levels and provide more accountability to see how Pennsylvania schools are achieving.

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND YOUTH
EDUCATION
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CHAIRMAN, SUB-COMMITTEE
ON BOROUGHES
TOURISM & RECREATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Memo 2

TO: House Members
FROM: Representative Lawrence H. Curry
SUBJECT: Proposed Legislation

Earlier in the session, I informed you of a bill that I planned to introduce, which would regulate psychological testing in our public schools. Since then, I have drafted a more stringent version, which would place tighter controls on psychological practices, including testing, in public schools. My bill will prohibit anyone except a licensed professional psychologist or a certified school psychologist from practicing psychological methods in the public schools. It also requires written informed parental consent before any psychological practice may be conducted on a student. Furthermore, the bill would encourage compliance with these provisions by withholding a portion of an offending school district's school subsidy as already provided for in other sections of the Public School Code.

If you wish to cosponsor this bill, please call my office at 3-1079.