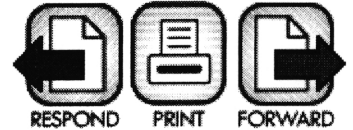


## NEWS RELEASE

State Rep. Tom Tangretti  
D-Westmoreland  
[www.pahouse.com/Tangretti](http://www.pahouse.com/Tangretti)

**CONTACT: Michael J. Herzing**  
**House Democratic Communications Office**  
**Phone: 717-787-7895**  
**Fax: 717-772-9930**  
**Email: [mherzing@pahouse.net](mailto:mherzing@pahouse.net)**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **House to vote on bills to help National Guard members, families**

**HARRISBURG, May 2** – The state House of Representatives is poised to vote this week on a series of bills based on a legislative package introduced by House Democrats in March designed to provide assistance and support to active-duty Pennsylvania National Guard members and their families, said state Rep. Tom Tangretti, who introduced one of the bills in the House Democrats' package.

On Saturday, Gov. Ed Rendell endorsed the National Guard initiative, including Tangretti's bill (H.B. 1068), which would use state funds to pay the premium on \$250,000 worth of life insurance coverage for all active-duty Pennsylvania Guard members.

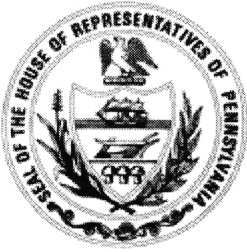
"Without this coverage, the families of Guard troops receive a death benefit of only \$12,000 should their family member be killed while serving his or her country," Tangretti said. "For less than \$1 million a year, Pennsylvania can ensure that every single one of its residents fighting to defend our freedom and protect our liberty overseas has the peace of mind knowing that their death will not cost their family their financial security."

Tangretti's bill would require the state to pay the \$16.25 monthly premium for all active-duty Guard soldiers to have \$250,000 worth of Serviceman's Group Life Insurance. While a majority of Pennsylvania Guard members already purchase this insurance, some do not because they cannot afford it.

In addition to his bill, House Democrats have also introduced measures to provide a number of other financial, legal and educational benefits to Guard members and their families. The bills scheduled for a vote this week include many of those initiatives he said.

"As for legislation that is not voted on this week, including my bill, House Democrats and the governor will continue working hard to have these measures considered and passed soon so that we can provide our National Guard members and their families with the relief and assistance they need and deserve.

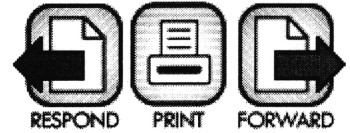
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## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Tangretti, House Democrats offer bills to help Pa. Guard families**

**HARRISBURG, March 17** – State Rep. Tom Tangretti, D-Westmoreland, today introduced legislation that would provide all active-duty National Guard soldiers and airmen in Pennsylvania with life insurance coverage worth \$250,000.

The measure was introduced as part of a package of bills introduced by House Democrats that would provide Guard members and their families with a number of financial, educational, health-care and other benefits when they are called to active duty.

“Thousands of Pennsylvania National Guard troops are defending our freedom and protecting our homeland,” Tangretti said. “In many cases, this means tremendous sacrifices for them and their families. The least the state of Pennsylvania can do in return is make sure these Guard members and families are taken care of.”

Tangretti said his bill would require the state to pay the \$16.25 monthly premium for all active-duty Guard soldiers to have \$250,000 worth of Serviceman’s Group Life Insurance. While a majority of Pennsylvania Guard members already purchase this insurance, some do not because they cannot afford it. Without the coverage, a Guard soldier’s death benefit is only \$12,000.

Tangretti said about 5,000 Pennsylvania Guard members are on active duty at any given time, meaning paying the premium on life insurance for these soldiers would cost the state less than \$1 million a year. The premiums would be paid out of the state’s General Fund budget.

The package of bills also contains proposals to:

- ensure health coverage for the families of active-duty Guard troops by continuing coverage for state employees who are called to active duty and adding non-public employees who are called to active duty to the state’s health insurance plan.
- give state employees called to active duty 15 additional days of paid military leave.

-more-

- provide state tax credits to telecommunications companies that agree to offer free calling, e-mail and other telecommunications services to active duty Guard troops who are stationed overseas or recovering in military hospitals.
- provide tuition refund grants to Guard members who are forced to leave school when they are called to active duty.
- give priority job-training status to the spouses of active-duty Guard members and Guard members returning from active-duty service.
- give the families of active-duty Guard members priority for state-sponsored child-care assistance when a spouse has to go to work to boost family income.
- provide free college tuition at state-owned or state-related universities for the spouses of Guard members who are killed on active duty or who die of wounds suffered while on active duty.
- provide no-interest PHEAA student loan deferments for time spent on active duty.
- offer free hunting and fishing licenses to Guard members for one year after their return from active duty.
- release active-duty Guard members from various lease and other contract requirements; limit the interest rate on debt owed by active-duty Guard troops; and offer other legal protections to active-duty troops and their families.

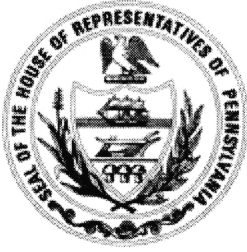
“As our Guard and Reserve soldiers are asked to do more to protect our nation, I think we have an obligation to do more to and assist them and their families,” Tangretti said. “We cannot put a price on their service to our Commonwealth and our nation, and surely, and modest cost to Pennsylvanians that these proposals involve are well worth the service, sacrifice, protection and freedom our residents are getting in return.”

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**Attention Radio News Directors: an actuality from Rep. Tangretti is available by calling 1-800-452-3001. Enter PA57 (7-2-57) and the pound sign (#) at the menu prompt to get today's sound. You can also download the sound in .mp3 format by visiting [www.pahouse.com/Tangretti](http://www.pahouse.com/Tangretti).**

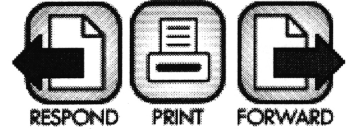
**Attention TV Assignment Desks: A satellite feed with comments from legislators sponsoring the bills and b-roll will be provided this afternoon at 3:00-3:15 p.m. (15:00-15:15). The coordinates are SATELLITE: SBS-6 (KU Band), TRANSPONDER: 5, CHANNEL: 5, DOWNLINK POL.: Horizontal, DOWNLINK FREQ.: 11823 MHz, AUDIO: 6.2 / 6.8, TROUBLE: 717-772-4282.**



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Tangretti proposes state-funded life insurance coverage, other benefits for active-duty Guard soldiers and airmen**

**HARRISBURG, Jan. 13** – State Rep. Tom Tangretti, D-Westmoreland, will sponsor parts of a legislative package that would provide all National Guard soldiers and airmen in Pennsylvania on active duty with life insurance coverage worth \$250,000, as well as other state benefits to help them and their families pay for health care and education.

Details of the proposal were unveiled this week during a Capitol news conference held by House Democratic Whip Mike Veon, D-Beaver, who is also sponsoring a number of bills in the legislative package.

“These soldiers are defending our freedom, defending our homeland, and sacrificing a lot to do it,” Tangretti said. “I believe the least the state can do is make sure that if something does happen to one of them, his or her family is taken care of.”

Tangretti said the main provision of the legislation would have the state pay the \$16.25 monthly premium for active-duty Guard soldiers who purchase \$250,000 worth of Serviceman’s Group Life Insurance. While a majority of Pennsylvania Guard members already purchase this insurance, some do not because they cannot afford it. Without the coverage, a guard soldier’s death benefit is only \$12,000.

Tangretti said about 5,000 Pennsylvania Guard members are on active duty at any given time, meaning paying the premium of life insurance for these soldiers would cost the state less than \$1 million a year. The premiums would be paid out of the state’s General Fund budget.

The package of bills also contains proposals to:

- provide health coverage for the families of active-duty Guard troops by continuing coverage for state employees and allowing non-public employees to have state insurance coverage.

-more-



- give state employees 15 days of additional paid leave for military duty
- provide tax credits to phone companies that offer free calls to active-duty Guard troops
- provide tuition refund grants to students who are called to active duty while in school
- provide state child-care assistance for the children of active-duty Guard members
- give returning active-duty Guard members priority job-training status
- provide free tuition at state-owned or state-related universities for the children of Guard members killed on active duty (the state current provides a 50 percent reimbursement)
- allow for no-interest student loan deferments during time spent on active duty
- allow Guard members to hunt and fish for free in Pennsylvania for one year after they return from active duty.

“Other states are already moving forward with similar proposals,” Tangretti said. “As our Guard and Reserve soldiers are asked to do more to protect our nation, I think we have an obligation to do more to and assist them and their families.”

In previous sessions, Tangretti has supported and voted for a number of other assistance proposals for Guard members and their families, including funding to help military families with financial crises; a state income tax check off to allow Pennsylvanians to donate to military families' assistance funds; limits on various state and local taxes for Guard members and their families; reductions in automobile insurance premiums when Guard members are away on active duty; an extension of employee benefits, such as health insurance, for Guard members on active duty; and giving returning active-duty Guard members the same veterans' preference status as other soldiers under state law.

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## General Greene Chapter

14 September 2005

Tom  
Dear ~~Representative~~ Tangretti,

Even though I did not distinguish myself, I had a great time at your golf outing on Monday.

Here is some information about **MOAA – General Greene Chapter** and about the “**OPERATION HOME TOWN HEROES**” presentation. Enclosed is a copy of our latest NEWSLETTER.

The presentation of \$1500 to the **14<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Detachment (WP), Family Readiness Group**, will be at **2:30 PM on Monday 19 September 2005** at 900 Armory Drive, Greensburg (next to Greensburg Central Catholic High School).

The “**OPERATION HOME TOWN HEROES**” money was raised from our membership, private individuals, local business that contributed products for auction and church groups around Westmoreland County. **Greensburg Fire Chief and US Marine Ed Hutchinson made the first donation.** The money will be used by **our local troops, deployed overseas in the War on Terror**, to purchase phone cards so they can keep in touch with their families. In this small way we are making their load a little lighter.

This is the **second phase** of the program. **The General Greene Chapter** has raised over \$2500 in the last six months for the troops. **The first \$1000** was sent, to buy phone cards, to **U.S. Service men and women**, recovering from their combat wounds in D.C. area military hospitals. **Phase three begins on Monday.**

As we discussed, I was very happy that you introduced legislation to have the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pay the SLGI (insurance) for the deployed PA Guard and Reserves. I was very disappointed that it failed. With the price tag estimated to be around 1 million dollars a year, I was amazed that it did not pass quickly. I think, in the current climate of pay raises for the Legislature and the ongoing slush fund controversy; a feel good piece of legislation, that **actually helps the less than 1% of Pennsylvanians who are fighting this War on Terror**, should sail through.

**Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)** is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization, operated exclusively to benefit members of the uniformed services — active duty, former and retired, National Guard and Reserve — and their families and survivors. MOAA is dedicated to preserving their earned entitlements and to maintaining a strong national defense. **Membership is open to active duty, retired, National Guard, Reserve, former commissioned officers and warrant**

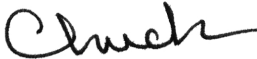
**officers** of the following uniformed services: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Auxiliary memberships also are available for surviving spouses of deceased officers. **Six out of 10 retired officers** belong to MOAA, as do more than 30,000 active duty officers.

We are the **General Greene Chapter** consisting of about 90 members and their spouses. We meet nine times a year. Six of the meetings are for **dinner** normally with a guest speaker. **You were kind enough to speak to our group in 2003.** The other meetings are a picnic at Twin Lakes, a dinner theater evening and a golf outing.

The activities of the **General Greene Chapter** include:

- Information to the membership on veteran's affairs.
- Supporting **local** military and charitable organizations
- Scholarships to local JROTC students
- Helping disadvantaged veterans through the Veterans Administration
- Visiting shut in veterans
- Volunteering at the Westmoreland Food Bank once a month.
- "Operation Home Town Heroes" - sends phone cards to local troops deployed overseas.
- Social activities for the membership and their families.

Sincerely,



Charles W. Anderson  
Colonel  
United States Marine Corps (Ret.)  
President, General Greene Chapter

Act 105  
\$ 150,000 Fed - State  
250,000 Premium  
costs

I. **HELLO'S/INTRODUCTIONS**

HB 1068

II. **TANGRETTI NAT'L GUARD INSURANCE BILL**

- A. Goes to Governor as part of SB 1043
- B. Provides Guard members with the maximum amount of life insurance available through the Service Members Group Life Insurance Plan = \$400,000.
- C. The bill also includes a provision that waives tuition at all state-owned and state-related universities, approved technical schools and community colleges in Pennsylvania for the children and spouses of Guard members killed while on active duty after other forms of financial aid are exhausted.

III. **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS SURROUNDING BUDGET PASSAGE**

- A. SS HB 39- 1<sup>st</sup> step in providing substantial property tax relief has been taken.

**VIDEO INSERT - SS HB 39 Bill Signing** - Through the tireless efforts of House Democrats, the promise to reduce the burden of property taxes has been kept. Gov. Rendell recently made it official with the signing of Special Session House Bill 39 – the property tax plan that will deliver \$1 billion of property tax relief, starting with those who need help the most. Stephany Dugan takes a look at this historic step and explains how it will benefit Pennsylvania homeowners. Bites: Gov. Rendell, Yudichak, DeWeese, Sturla, Santoni. **TRT 3:24, 2 sec pad, 3 sec tail, standard out, saved as SS HB 39 Bill Signing in VF, Dugan 7/6/06.**

- 1. Expansion on the property tax, rent rebate program.
- 2. Rebates up to \$650, and income eligibility expanded to \$35,000 from current \$15,000.
- 3. Take effect when you apply in 2007 for 2006 rebate.
- 4. An additional 420,000 are expect to be added to the PTARR
- 5. \*\*\*NOTE: Deadline extended to Dec. 31 to apply for rebate for this year.
- 6. How will projected gaming money have an influence?

15% of 16  
PTARR -  
\$300 more -

IV. **MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE PASSES!**

- A. SB 1090 increases Pennsylvania's minimum wage to \$6.25 an hour on Jan. 1, 2007, and to \$7.15 an hour on July 1, 2007.
- B. This is the first increase in PA in nine years....set by federal gov't.
- C. The last time PA General Assembly raised it was 1988.
- D. More than 420,000 will get a raise under the new law.
- E. 20 states (including PA), plus the District of Columbia, now have higher wage of \$5.15.

FAMILY  
5.15  
- 2.00  
-----  
10,000 +

*Without  
tax increases  
\$297 mil  
Bus Tax cuts -*

**2006-07 BUDGET**

I. Overview

- A. \$26.1 billion balanced budget
- B. 5.8% increase over last year, but keeps it well under the national avg.

II. Priorities

A. Education

- 1. Over \$700 million increase in education from pre-K to college.
- 2. 7.7% increase from current year.
- 3. BASIC ED: increase of \$267 million.
- 4. SPECIAL ED: increase by \$52 million, each school district at least 2% increase.
- 5. ACCOUNTABILITY BLOCK GRANTS: increase of \$50 million.

*tutoring  
preks  
all day  
kindergarten*

*\$250*

School District	Total increase
Greensburg Salem School District	\$542,142
Hempfield Area School District	\$708,571

- 6. The budget builds on the high school reform initiatives that started last year. Thousands more high school students will be able to take college courses thanks to a 60% increase in dual enrollment funding. Project 720, Pennsylvania's landmark high school reform initiative, will grow from \$4.7 million to \$8 million – allowing students in up to 30 more high schools to take challenging courses in a small-school environment that will prepare them for post-secondary success. And to make sure that students receive the guidance they need, \$3 million is being invested to help schools upgrade their middle and high school college and career counseling programs.
- 7. HIGHER ED: 5% increase for comm. colleges, 5% increase for SSHE schools.
  - i. Seton Hill College?
  - ii. University of Pittsburgh – Greensburg
  - iii. Westmoreland Community College
- 8. LIBRARIES: The commonwealth's libraries will receive \$75.5 million this year so that they can better serve their communities. Highest level ever.

PROJECTED FUNDING FOR 2006-07:

**-WESTMORELAND COUNTY Total: \$2,080,346**

B. Healthcare

- 1. Cover all Kids
  - i. Brand new program.
  - ii. Will expand the CHIP program: oldest of its kind in the U.S.
  - iii. State will cover \$4.4 million of the cost.
  - iv. Fed. will cover \$10.2....once they approve it
  - v. Premium payments on a sliding scale based on the families' income.

*Amendment  
to our  
CHIP plan -*

*WHS  
waiver*

*Problem  
with  
activeness -*

vi. Once the program is fully operational (Jan. 2007), 15,000 kids covered in first year.

2. CHIP Web Site

i. VIDEO INSERT

“The Children’s Health Insurance Program known as CHIP is introducing a new easy-to-use website; www.chipcoverspakids.com that will allow parents to easily determine if their children are eligible for coverage. Here now is Samantha Snyder with more...”

(Reps. featured: Mundy and Casorio. **TRT 1:35 saved in video files, Snyder 6/28/06**)

3. PACE Plus Medicare

i. Combines PACE with Medicare Part D.

ii. 120,000 more seniors now qualify

iii. While the federal program (Part D, in some cases) has higher co-pays, monthly premiums and gaps in federally funded coverage, PACE Plus takes care of those costs for Pennsylvania’s seniors who live on limited incomes.

iv. Closes infamous “donut-hole”

v. Total cost of PACE Plus is \$246 million.

vi. Because PACE Plus wraps around the federal program, it costs \$169 million less than the current PACE program

vii. Frees up more room for more seniors to sign up for PACE.

*2200  
5300  
ADMIT  
MEX*

**LEGISLATIVE REFORM – (recent news conference)**

I. Bipartisan effort pushing for reform in the way the General Assembly conducts the public’s business.

A. The bipartisan reform group’s proposals include:

B. VIDEO INSERT (remarks from PC, TRT = 2 min.)

- Subjecting all accounts funded with taxpayer dollars to open records statutes and audits.
- An end to conducting official business in the House between midnight and 8 a.m.
- All legislation, including amendments, would have to be on the legislative calendar for three days before a final vote.
- An end to using the Appropriations or Rules committees to insert massive, last-minute amendments that make major changes to bills.
- An end to calling committee meetings off the floor. Many committee meetings are held with virtually no advance notice to legislators or the public.
- Limiting substantive amendments to the second of three days when a bill is considered in the House, and allowing only technical amendments on the third consideration. This would include waiting until after the bill has been reprinted to hold the final vote on the third day.
- Requiring a two-thirds vote on any “motion to move the previous question,” which cuts off debate and questioning on a bill or amendment and forces an immediate vote. Currently, this silencing maneuver only takes a narrow majority.

*- 2nd hearing  
- Camp 2006  
- Open Records  
- Const Conv.  
Reapport.  
Reform  
2005*



- Allowing all members to speak on any motion or procedure of the House. Currently, only the majority and minority leaders have the authority to speak on the floor about these procedural issues, which can determine the fate of a bill or amendment.

IV. SENIOR FAIR RECAP

A. Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 1pm

B. At the Kirk S. Nevin Recreation Center @ Lynch Field

C. Route 119 North Greensburg

1. Features organizations that offer services to area seniors

2. FREE!

- Admission
- Exhibits
- Health screenings
- Refreshments
- Door prizes

V. LAST WORDS; END SHOW

TRT = 28:30-3:24-1:35-2:00

**On Set Time = (to be determined)**