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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives
FROM: Representative Thomas A. Tangretti
DATE: April 4, 2005
SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship Memo – Science and Mathematics Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation establishing a Science and Mathematics Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program. This legislation will provide a financial incentive to encourage teachers with a science or math degree earned from a Pennsylvania institution of higher education, to pursue their teaching career in the Commonwealth.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), it is expected there will be a national teacher shortage throughout the country in future years. Increasing public school enrollment and a push for smaller class sizes are just two factors cited by NCES as the basis for their forecast. To further compound this problem, it is predicted there will continue to be a scarcity of teachers qualified to teach certain academic disciplines. At this time, NCES estimates that 37% of high school math teachers and 31% of high school science teachers lack a major or certification in their field. According to their study, this situation is not likely to improve in the near future.

Couple the forecasted teacher shortage with an existing lack of qualified teachers in certain academic areas and it is obvious we must do something to improve our educational system. Accordingly, my legislation proposes to create an incrementally increasing loan forgiveness program for science and math teachers. Eligible applicants must be a Pennsylvania resident and attend a Pennsylvania institution of higher education. Participants are entitled to loan forgiveness in the amount of \$1000 for their first year of teaching, \$2000 for the second, \$4000 for the third and \$8000 for the fourth year. This incremental increase provides more of an incentive for teachers to remain in Pennsylvania for a full four years, than a flat yearly loan forgiveness amount.

If you are in agreement that we must act now to ensure our children are learning the necessary skills to compete in our global economy, please consider co-sponsoring this legislation. If you are interested in adding your name as a co-sponsor, please contact Cynthia Clory in my office at 783-5963 or cclory@pahouse.com.



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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

April 12, 2006

THE GOVERNOR

Representative Thomas Tangretti
House of Representatives
328 Irvis Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative Tangretti:

As you continue your deliberations on the budget, I wanted to be certain that you had a copy of the attached issue of Time. This issue, published only a week after my budget address, raises serious questions about the ability of our nation to remain competitive. We all know that our nation's future rides, in large part, on retaining our status as the world's leader in research, inventions, and patents. In many respects the articles in this issue of Time recite statistics that indicate our nation's current path of dwindling investment in research and science-oriented education is diminishing America's place in the world.

Let me share some of the key findings in this article.

For nearly a half-century, the strategy of putting money into science guaranteed that the U.S. would lead the world by just about every measure of scientific and technical prowess. ... The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) halved its funding of academic information-technology research from 2001 to 2004. ... Nonmilitary research grants meanwhile have been essentially flat for the past 15 years.

It's not that U.S. students' math and science scores are plummeting, but other places like England, Hong Kong, and New Zealand are improving faster and some like Singapore and Japan are miles ahead. Even eighth graders in much poorer countries like Estonia and Hungary outperformed their U.S. peers.

I urge you to take the time to read the entire portion of this issue of Time devoted to explaining what is causing the U.S. to fall behind in the most critical sector of our economy. The compelling information presented by Time echoes the reasons I have included four critical new investments in this year's budget.

First, the Science: It's Elementary grant program is intended to replicate a proven program that ensures world-class standards of science education for students in grades K-6. Likewise, I propose investments that, over three years, will put technology at the fingertips of students and teachers, in class, so that our high schools become open laboratories of learning and research.

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The intent is to use proven strategies to ensure our graduates are technologically proficient, research-oriented adults who can demonstrate the critical thinking and conceptual design skills necessary to get a good job in the years ahead. Further, the Jonas Salk Fund will help our state grow one of our most promising sectors, medical research. To retain our position in this sector we must invest in the critical infrastructure that will attract the best faculty and researchers to come here and conduct more cutting-edge research to cure diseases and save lives. Finally, World Trade PA is intended to help more Pennsylvania firms enter the global marketplace. In fact, many of our manufacturing, small research, and professional firms have the potential to grow if we help them connect to key international markets.

America's opportunity to increase its prosperity rests on the actions of forward thinking business and government leaders who make the smart moves necessary to succeed in this Flat World. This Time issue and the great work of Thomas Friedman urge us to pay attention to the trends and shift our investments so that we are optimally positioned in this new world. I believe that these four critical investments will ensure that Pennsylvania charges ahead and secures its leadership position in the global economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward G. Rendell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Edward G. Rendell
Governor