

TOM TANGRETTI REMARKS

I U SUPERINTENDENTS

(USUAL GREETINGS, ETC..)

GOOD <sup>EVENING</sup> ~~DAY~~. I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR

THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK BEFORE YOU

<sup>this</sup> ~~TODAY~~ <sup>EVENING</sup>. IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE. IT

~~GIVES ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET ALL OF~~

~~YOU, AND IT GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO FIND~~

~~OUT A LITTLE MORE ABOUT ME.~~

I HAVE WITH ME, <sup>SOME</sup> ~~A~~ CONSIDERABLE

~~AMOUNT OF~~ INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT

STATUS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN

PENNSYLVANIA... SOME BUDGET STATISTICS...

AND SOME INFORMATION ON SOME OF THE

PROBLEMS FACING THE INTERMEDIATE UNITS,

THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO YOU.

ALSO, I WAS ASKED TO SHARE WITH YOU,  
A FEW OF THE IMPRESSIONS I'VE GATHERED AS  
A FRESHMAN MEMBER OF THE STATE  
LEGISLATURE. I'D LIKE TO BEGIN WITH  
THAT.

I WOULD HAVE TO SAY, MY FIRST FEW  
MONTHS IN HARRISBURG HAVE BEEN AN  
ENLIGHTENING EXPERIENCE. <sup>CERTAINLY</sup> IT'S NOT LIKE  
BEING A <sup>COUNTY CONTROLLER</sup> ~~LOCAL SUPERVISOR OR COUNCILMAN.~~

IT'S NOT JUST THE AMOUNT OF WORK OR  
THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT WORK. IT'S NOT  
THE SIZE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BODY, OR THE  
INTRICACIES OF DEALING WITH THE SENATE OR  
THE GOVERNOR.

I HAVE DISCOVERED THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO IT THAN THAT. WE ARE NOT JUST DEALING WITH OUR HOMETOWNS. WE ARE LOOKING OUT FOR THE WELL BEING OF PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS AND SITUATIONS... FROM INNER CITY PHILADELPHIA TO THE RURAL POOR OF THE ALLEGHENIES.

FROM THE ABANDONED COAL FIELDS AND STEEL MILLS HERE IN SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA... TO THE FAST GROWING RESORT AREAS OF THE POCONOS.

JOB, POLLUTION, HEALTH CARE, TOO MUCH GROWTH AND TOO LITTLE GROWTH. WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS.

AND TO MAKE THINGS JUST A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED, THERE ARE 203 OF US, ALL TRYING TO LOOK OUT FOR OUR OWN AREAS, AND OFTEN TIMES, THERE JUST ISN'T ENOUGH MONEY TO GO AROUND.

AND THAT'S WHERE THE WORD  
"COMPROMISE" COMES IN. ~~I'VE DISCOVERED~~  
IT'S NOT A DIRTY WORD. IT DOESN'T MEAN I  
HAVE TO COMPROMISE MY PRINCIPLES, WHICH I  
WON'T DO, AND IT DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE TO  
COMPROMISE THE WELL BEING OF MY DISTRICT,  
WHICH I ALSO WILL NOT DO.

IT MEANS... ~~I HELP OUT THE~~  
*WE ALL HAVE TO*  
*WORK TOGETHER TO GET THINGS*  
*LEGISLATORS FROM PHILADELPHIA... AND THEY*  
*DONE AND HOPEFULLY WE ALL BENEFIT*  
~~HELP ME OUT. WE WORK TOGETHER, AND WE~~  
ALL BENEFIT.

AS I SAID, IT'S NEW TO ME, BUT THEY  
TELL ME BY THE TIME I FINISH MY FIRST  
STATE BUDGET, I'LL FEEL LIKE AN OLD PRO.

I'M NOT SURE I LIKE THE SOUND OF  
THAT, BUT I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT NONE  
THE LESS.

I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF JUST HOW UPLIFTING, YET DIFFICULT, THIS JOB CAN BE.

IN MID FEBRUARY, WE BEGAN DEBATING A REDRAFT OF THE PROPOSED STATE ETHICS ACT. ~~AND BELIEVE ME, I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT HEATED DEBATE WAS.~~ WHAT I SAW WAS NEARLY TWO DAYS OF NONSTOP ACTION, AS MEMBERS ARGUED THE PROS AND CONS OF A VOLUMINOUS STACK OF AMENDMENTS... HOURS AND HOURS OF COMMENTARIES, QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, PROCEDURES, PROTOCOL, THE ART OF VERBAL TRUST AND PARRY, SOME HEATED MOMENTS AND SOME GENUINELY FUNNY MOMENTS.

TWO INSTANCES STICK IN MY MIND. FIRST, THE REPUBLICAN LEADER, MATT RYAN, TOOK THE MICROPHONE TO ARGUE AGAINST AN AMENDMENT SPONSORED BY ONE OF HIS REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUES.

*Admew*

IT WAS A RATHER COMPLICATED PIECE OF LEGISLATION, CALLING FOR ALL ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS TO PUT ANY INVESTMENT, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, INTO A BLIND TRUST WHEN THEY TAKE OFFICE.

THE MATTER WAS RIDICULOUS ON IT'S FACE, AND MR RYAN SAID SO. HE POINTED OUT HOW THE CURRENT LAW ALREADY REQUIRES THOSE OFFICIALS WHO HAVE OVER A FIVE PERCENT STAKE IN ANY PARTICULAR COMPANY, TO PUT IT IN A BLIND TRUST.

THEN HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE WASN'T ANYBODY IN THE CHAMBER THAT DAY WHO COULD CLAIM FIVE PERCENT OF ANYTHING, EXCEPT PERHAPS REPRESENTATIVE SAM MORRIS, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE, WHOM I UNDERSTAND HAS QUITE A HEALTHY PORTFOLIO.

OF COURSE IT WAS SAID IN JEST, AND MR. MORRIS, WHO IS 71 YEARS OLD, TOOK IT AS SUCH. HOWEVER, HE RESPONDED BY MAKING AN OBSCENE GESTURE TOWARD THE MINORITY LEADER. MR RYAN IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED... "OH, IT IS ONLY ONE PERCENT."

THE OTHER EVENT WAS OF A MUCH DIFFERENT NATURE. DURING DEBATE ON A PARTICULAR AMENDMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE LIMITED THE ACTIVITIES OF MOST FORMER EMPLOYEES OF THE LEGISLATURE, A YOUNG, VERY ARTICULATE LEGISLATOR FROM PHILADELPHIA STOOD UP AND PASSIONATELY AND ELOQUENTLY SPOKE ~~AGAINST~~ <sup>FOR</sup> THE MEASURE.

*CAN'T lobby  
EVEN for FREE  
for a year -*

WHEN HE FINISHED, HE RECEIVED A STANDING OVATION FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE WHICH, I MIGHT ADD, IS RARE.

HOWEVER, IT LEFT ME WITH A DILEMMA.  
ON ONE HAND, HIS ARGUMENT HAD POINTED OUT  
THE INSIGNIFICANCE OF THE <sup>HOW</sup> AMENDMENT, AND  
I KNEW HE WAS RIGHT IN WHAT HE SAID.

HOWEVER, HIS EFFORT FAILED, AND I  
WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO VOTED AGAINST HIM.  
IT WAS NOT EASY TO DO. BUT I HAD TO BEAR  
IN MIND THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH  
PERCEPTIONS WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ETHICS.  
AND WHILE HE MAY HAVE HAD A GOOD POINT,  
THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THE PEOPLE MUST  
PERCEIVE US TO BE HONEST. WE CAN NOT  
LEAVE ANY GREY AREAS, OR THE ENTIRE  
PURPOSE OF THE ETHICS ACT WILL BE FLAWED.



THERE WERE MANY OTHER AMENDMENTS OFFERED BEFORE AND AFTER THAT ONE, BUT THAT ONE IN PARTICULAR, STICKS IN MY MIND. IT DEMONSTRATED VERY CLEARLY, JUST WHAT IT MEANS TO MAKE THE HARD CHOICES, AND HOW IMPORTANT ~~MY~~ VOTE CAN BE.

NOW, IN THE COMING MONTHS, *the house* I WILL FACE MANY OTHER DIFFICULT DECISIONS... PARTICULARLY WHEN WE GET TO THE BUDGET. AND THAT BRINGS UP THE ISSUE OF EDUCATION, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION IN PARTICULAR.

I WOULD SUPPOSE YOUR MAIN CONCERN IS FUNDING. I WAS A LITTLE SHOCKED TO FIND OUT WE HAVE NOT INCREASED THE LINE ITEM FOR INTERMEDIATE UNIT OPERATING EXPENSES FOR FOUR YEARS. THIS YEAR'S PROPOSED BUDGET, ADDRESSES THAT LACK OF CONCERN, AND WE'LL TALK A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THAT IN A MINUTE.

I HAVE BEEN TOLD THIS SITUATION IS LIKE A CALDRON BOILING AWAY. AT THIS TIME, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS REVIEWING SPECIAL EDUCATION REGULATIONS. A DRAFT OF THEIR REVIEW WAS PRESENTED TO THE BOARD LAST WEEK.

NOW, THIS DRAFT IS PROBABLY FAR AWAY FROM THE FINAL VERSION, AND EVEN IF IT WERE TO BE UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED TOMORROW, THE REGULATORY REVIEW PROCESS WOULD EAT UP SEVERAL MORE MONTHS BEFORE ANYTHING CAN BE FINALIZED.

THE FINAL FORM OF THESE REGULATIONS WILL HAVE CRITICAL BEARING ON THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION'S PUSH FOR TOTAL INTEGRATION OF HANDICAPPED STUDENTS INTO REGULAR CLASSROOMS.

THE STANDARDS WHICH GENERALLY RESULT FROM THESE REGULATIONS HAVE CREATED SOME CONCERNS AMONG YOU. THE STANDARDS TEND TO SPECIFY CLASS SIZES, THE NUMBER OF TEACHERS AIDES THAT CAN BE UTILIZED, AND SO FORTH. THEY ALSO DEFINE THE EXCEPTIONALITIES INVOLVED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION... AND THIS COULD BE CRUCIAL WITH REGARD TO THE IQ LEVEL FOR RETARDED STUDENTS, AND WITH ESTABLISHING A BETTER DEFINITION OF LEARNING DISABLED.

WE IN THE LEGISLATURE ARE AWARE THAT LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS REPRESENT THE LARGEST CATEGORY OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION... AND THAT NUMBER IS GROWING.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE SEEM TO BE ON THE SIDELINES, ESPECIALLY WHERE PROPOSED NEW REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS ARE CONCERNED. AS THINGS STAND NOW, THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES IN BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE, MAY NOT GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE THESE REGULATORY PROPOSALS. <sup>BECAUSE OF</sup> ~~THERE IS ALSO~~ THE QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF THE INDEPENDENT REGULATORY REVIEW COMMISSION. IF THE LEGISLATURE CHOOSES NOT TO RENEW IT'S EXISTENCE UNDER SUNSET LEGISLATION, THE IRRRC WILL NOT BE IN BUSINESS WHEN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION REGULATIONS COME THROUGH.

NOW, IT IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED IN HARRISBURG, THAT WITHOUT INCREASED BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS FOR THE COMING FISCAL YEAR, THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT ~~PROGRAM~~ WILL SHOW A DEFICIT IN THE AREA OF \$90 MILLION DOLLARS BY JUNE 30TH, 1990.

THE GOVERNORS PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 89-90 TRIES TO ATTACK THIS PROBLEM IN THREE WAYS. FIRST, HE HAS PROPOSED A 6.8 % INCREASE IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION LINE ITEM IN THE BUDGET. THAT WOULD AMOUNT TO 22 MILLION DOLLARS, BRINGING THAT LINE ITEM UP TO 348.3 MILLION. ~~MOST, BUT NOT ALL OF THAT MONEY, WOULD GO TO THE INTERMEDIATE UNITS.~~

SECONDLY, THE GOVERNOR HAS PROPOSED A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF 25 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE CURRENT SCHOOL

YEAR. Monday's Budget Supplemental Appropriations Vote - INCREASED TO \$48 mil.

AND THIRDLY, HE HAS PROPOSED 5  
YEARLY PAYMENTS OF 12 MILLION DOLLARS  
EACH FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS.  
BASICALLY, THIS AMOUNTS TO PAYBACKS TO  
THE <sup>TU</sup> DISTRICTS TO MAKE UP FOR FUNDING  
SHORTAGES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

AS I SAID EARLIER, THE APPROPRIATION  
FOR INTERMEDIATE UNIT OPERATING COSTS HAS  
REMAINED AT 13.4 MILLION DOLLARS FOR  
NEARLY 4 YEARS. I AM TOLD THE STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HAS PROPOSED A 10  
% INCREASE FOR THE 1989-90 BUDGET, BUT  
THAT ADDITIONAL 1.3 MILLION DOLLARS HAS  
NOT SHOWN UP IN THE PROPOSED BUDGET.

AS WITH ANY EDUCATIONAL OPERATION,  
PERSONNEL COSTS ACCOUNT FOR THE LIONS  
SHARE OF THE BUDGET, AND WE ARE AWARE  
THAT WITHOUT SOME MOVEMENT IN THE  
APPROPRIATIONS LEVEL, THE INTERMEDIATE  
UNITS ARE GOING TO BE HARD PRESSED TO  
MEET PAYROLL DEMANDS.

WE ALSO ARE AWARE OF THE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION'S TENDENCY AS OF LATE TO  
RELY ON MANPOWER FROM <sup>LOCAL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS AND</sup> INTERMEDIATE UNIT <sup>PRINCIPALS AS WELL.</sup>  
PAYROLLS IN ORDER TO GET THEIR WORK DONE.  
THE PERSONNEL COMPLIMENT AT THE STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS SERIOUSLY  
DEPLETED, AND THEY SIMPLY LACK THE WARM  
BODIES NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THEIR  
PROGRAMS. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS TO BE A CASE  
OF ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL, AND IT IS  
SOMETHING WE WILL HAVE TO ADDRESS VERY  
SOON.

I ALSO AM AWARE THAT MANY INTERMEDIATE UNITS WOULD LIKE TO INITIATE MANY OF THE NEW, FEDERALLY FUNDED PROGRAMS, BUT ARE RELUCTANT TO MAKE NEW HIRES, WHEN THE RELIABILITY OF THE FUNDING STREAM IS UNKNOWN.

AS I'M SURE MANY OF YOU ARE AWARE, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF MEETING WITH EACH OF THE 29 INTERMEDIATE UNITS IN PENNSYLVANIA. THESE MEETINGS, UNFORTUNATELY, ARE DESIGNED TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF BARE BONES BUDGET PROPOSALS BY THE INTERMEDIATE UNITS.



HISTORICALLY, THERE HAS BEEN AN ANNUAL ALLOCATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION TO COVER PROPOSED NEW PROGRAMMING. GENERALLY, THESE NEW PROGRAMS ARISE FROM DETERMINATIONS BY THE IU OR DISTRICT, <sup>which</sup> ~~THAT THEY~~ ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MEET LOCAL REQUIREMENTS.

WE KNOW THAT IN MANY INSTANCES, THESE DETERMINATIONS STEM FROM PRESSURES BROUGHT BY RECIPIENTS AND ADVOCATES TO INITIATE NEW PROGRAMS, OR EXPAND EXISTING ONES.

THE ALLOCATION FOR NEW PROGRAMMING IN THE COMING SCHOOL YEAR HAS BEEN PARED DOWN SUBSTANTIALLY, AND IN PLACE OF NEW PROGRAMS DEEMED NECESSARY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION HAS PROPOSED A SERIES OF NEW INITIATIVES AND PILOT PROGRAMS TO BE FUNDED BY THE STATE.

I REALIZE THIS POSES A SORT OF CATCH  
22 FOR THE DISTRICTS AND IU'S. IF YOU  
REFUSE TO INITIATE NEW PROGRAMS DUE TO  
LACK OF FUNDING OR STAFF, THERE IS A GOOD  
CHANCE YOU WILL WIND UP IN LITIGATION  
BROUGHT BY YOUR CONSTITUENTS.

IF YOU GO AHEAD WITH THE NEW  
PROGRAM, AND THE DEPARTMENT DENIES  
FUNDING, THEN THE ALTERNATIVE IS TO SEEK  
ADDITIONAL FUNDING LOCALLY... OR TAKE THE  
DEPARTMENT TO LITIGATION.

ONE LAST AREA I'D LIKE TO TOUCH  
ON... DURING THE LAST SESSION OF THE  
LEGISLATURE, A MEASURE WAS INTRODUCED,  
BUT NOT APPROVED, PERTAINING TO  
INTERMEDIATE UNIT BUDGETS FOR AUXILIARY  
SERVICES, AND THE FUNDS THAT LAPSE FROM  
THAT ALLOCATION.

THE LEGISLATION WOULD HAVE PROVIDED FOR THE UTILIZATION OF FUNDS RETURNED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THAT WERE NOT USED IN PROVIDING AUXILIARY SERVICES TO NON-PUBLIC STUDENTS. CURRENTLY THESE FUNDS SIMPLY LAPSE AND THE IU'S HAVE NO OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE USE OF THEM.

THIS MEASURE WOULD REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO HOLD ALL MONEYS RETURNED TO THEM BY OCTOBER 31ST, TO BE RETURNED TO THE IU'S ON A NEEDS BASIS.

IU'S WOULD ~~BE THEM~~ SUBMIT WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT SUCH AS VANS, AND <sup>OR</sup> THE MORE EXPENSIVE TEACHING AIDS TO THE DEPARTMENT, WHICH WOULD THEN EVALUATE THE REQUESTS AND FILL THEM AS FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE.

THIS SORT OF LEGISLATION IS VERY NECESSARY, AND I EXPECT A MEASURE SIMILAR TO LAST SESSION'S LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED SOON.

I SUGGEST WHEN IT IS INTRODUCED, THE SUPERINTENDENTS, THE FAMILIES OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS, AND THE ADVOCATES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, JOIN TOGETHER IN A LOBBYING EFFORT. PUBLIC PRESSURE IS YOUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IN THE FIGHT FOR INCREASED FUNDING. I WILL BE HAPPY TO ASSIST YOU IN THAT EFFORT.

NOW... WHAT I HAVE TOLD YOU IS WHAT MOST OF US IN THE LEGISLATURE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE. HOWEVER, I AM ALSO AWARE THAT YOU ALL MAY HAVE MUCH MORE INFORMATION ON THESE ISSUES.

IF YOU FEEL I AM NEGLECTING  
SOMETHING, OR IF THERE ARE CERTAIN  
PROBLEMS OR ISSUES WE ARE UNAWARE OF...  
PLEASE TELL ME. MOST OF THE LEGISLATORS  
IN THE STATE ARE VERY CONCERNED WITH OUR  
EDUCATION SYSTEM. HOWEVER, IF WE ARE  
MISINFORMED.... OR UNINFORMED, WE CAN NOT  
DO WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU.

THE BUDGET HEARINGS HAVE ALREADY  
BEGUN IN HARRISBURG, AND NOW IS THE BEST  
TIME TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD. HELP US  
HELP YOU BY MAKING SURE WE KNOW THE FULL  
STORY.

*County Budget Hearings -*

AS ALWAYS, WHEN YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ON THE EDUCATION BUDGET, OR ANY EDUCATION RELATED BILLS, SUCH AS THE ONE I SPOKE OF MOMENTS AGO, FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME. IF I DON'T HAVE THE ANSWERS, I WILL DO MY BEST TO GET THEM FOR YOU.

ONCE AGAIN, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH YOU ~~TODAY~~, AND IF I CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE TO YOU IN THE FUTURE, MY DOOR IS OPEN.

THANK YOU.

###TR

OP11/3/8/89/TANGRETTI/IUSPEECH



# WESTMORELAND INTERMEDIATE UNIT

222 EAST PITTSBURGH ST.

GREENSBURG, PENNA. 15601

PHONE: (412) 836-2460

January 31, 1989

*Noted calendar*

Representative Thomas Tangretti  
327 South Main Street  
Greensburg, PA 15601

Dear Tom:

Thanks very much for enthusiastically agreeing to be the speaker at our March 16, 1989 Legislative Council meeting. The meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. in the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit Board Room.

Tom, we usually have from ten to twenty people, mostly School Board members, in attendance. It would be good if you could update us regarding educational developments in Harrisburg; give us some of your perspectives as a newly-elected representative; and then open it up for questions.

The meetings are somewhat informal and the audience congenial. They are, however, Board Members and will want to make you aware of their concerns.

Again, thanks for agreeing to come and we look forward to seeing you on March 16, 1989.

Sincerely,

*John*

John Kristof, Jr.  
Legislative Council  
Coordinator

JK:aw

cc: R. Gene Malarbi

## Westmoreland County Intermediate Unit Notes

### General statement of gratitude for asking me to come

Make a humorous statements about them inviting a freshmen to their meeting "I am very honored that you asked me to come. After spending three weeks in Harrisburg as a freshmen legislator I have become very humble, filled with humility and am astounded that I am asked to do anything other than go get coffee.

Once Joe Markosek introduced the legislative delegation was installing the virtues of having me as the newest members, he said a few kind things and the bottom line that he reached at that point was to explain his extreme happiness was due to the fact that when we have our caucus he no longer had to get the coffee. I think that probably very telling. I am kidding of course because I have been treated with the utmost courtesy and respect even though the fact that we are called freshmen we certainly aren't treated as freshmen. Both sides of the aisle and both caucuses staff executive branch people have been overly helpful to the new members of the general assembly. Although we kid about it alot I want you all to know that that is the case.

Talk about legislative aspects of education that is pending particularly perhaps as it relates to IU. That depends on what Bob Hollis gives me.

### Personal aspects of a first-termer:

I have been around for a number of years on the political scene as you all know. I spent some years with a congressman and was a local county official for two terms so I shouldn't be surprised by any situation that may or may not occur as it relates to the political and governmental scent in Harrisburg. But I have to tell you this, the differences between the processes that I was used to on the county level and those that are of significant in terms of accomplishing legislative inactments is the difference between night and day. Without getting too modulate about it or corny or even egotistical I believe that there seems to be a sense of awe a sense of some significance of self-worth in terms of the dramatic responsibility that has now been thrust upon you as a member of the general assembly. I guess this will, at some point, wear off, I guess. I haven't really had an opportunity to question any senior members about how they feel. I suppose at some point I will, but at this point in these early early days of my first session I can tell you that I feel a huge sense of obligation to not only read and understand every piece and scrap of paper that crosses my desk which as you can well imagine is almost overwhelming, but I also feel a sense of heightened awareness of my obligations to you and other members of the legislative district. Just to walk into the House chamber, the most beautiful, ornate room I believe I have ever been into in my life, and that includes the United States Congress' house, fills you with such a sense of pride that you feel up for your accomplishments or of getting there or of even considering those mementoes questions that we will be dealing with, but rather the system itself, the wonderful decision makers, that 300 years ago who have the foresight and the capability, an intellect to write a constitution, a method of government that allows free people to govern themselves. And then to fulfill that obligation that manifested itself in those words drafted so long ago within the confines of that room is overpowering.



And that did sound corny and I know it, and I apologize for it, but I really am inspired by being there. Certainly it has not been all roses. I had very much wanted to serve very much on the Education Committee. I had Allen Kukovich whose recent election to one of the Leadership positions pulling very hard for me and with Jim Manderino as Speaker, I felt that I had a good shot, but in one of the conversations with Jim about that possibility he told me on no uncertain terms that although he would like very much for me to be able to accomplish that, he could not. There were too many members who have been around too many years who have been waiting to get on that committee. So the very few openings that did exist were filled by those individuals and rightfully so. I suppose that it is not an unreasonable situation. I am not disappointed to the extent that I dislike my assignments, to the contrary I think that the Labor Relations committee and some of the heady issues that we are going to be dealing with as well as the Health & Welfare Committee which deals with some significant aspects of the Commonwealth itself are going to be things that I will be extremely involved with in a very intense way. So it would have been nice to be on Education, but certainly Health & Welfare and Labor Relations aren't bad either.

I think that there are going to be alot of issues that are going to be under consideration on the House floor that any new guy on the block is going to need alot of help with. It is not unheard of, in fact it is a common practice for individuals and groups, whether organized or not in some formal fashion to express their opinions in a very constructive way to the legislator about those issues and I would urge you to do that and I am not limiting it to those members in the group here who are from the 57th legislative district. Indeed no, I would appreciate nor am I limiting it to just educational issues or IU issues, but any issue that you have some particular issue in, some knowledge about perhaps or just happens to strike your fancy and you think that something I have done or haven't done that needs to be corrected, please let me know. Certainly I have in my state of extreme humility at this point, I don't want to turn down anyone's offer of assistance or suggestions about how to do my job. The only other aspect that I would add to this get together is that you know that I have an office here in town, at the end of South Main, 327 South Main and that I was very very fortunate in being able to convince my 15 year working companion, Mrs. Romaine Truxell, to come with me and be my assistant here in the district. That process was not an easy one to talk her into. Not that she did not want to do it, but she has expressed on more than one occasion that she is tired of us changing jobs so often that we haven't been able to secure any pension rights and that is a valid concern of hers and as a result it was a difficult decision for her to make, but the last final analysis, she accepted the challenge to do the kind of work that I think she feels good about as well as I do. As you know we worked