

# Greensburg Rotary Club

October 10, 2006

## I. Message—Hope and Faith

*we can restore*  
A. Hope that ~~the~~ <sup>of</sup> creditability ~~can be restored~~ to the State  
Legislature

B. Faith that reforms can be put into place that will prevent  
the kind of arrogance of power that we witnessed last  
year with the pay raise debacle. - *and ongoing saga*

*19th Century Eng Philosopher*  
(Quote of Arrogance of Power) David Hume said “When men are  
the most sure and arrogant they are commonly the most mistaken,  
giving views to passion without that proper deliberation and  
suspense which alone can secure them from the grossest  
absurdities.”

C. History tells us that too much power in the hands of just a few individuals proves to be corrupting.

- ON WILDER level -*
1. Nations have gone to wars-both outside and inside it's own borders
  2. Dictators ~~have arisen~~ *breed in their atmosphere*
  3. Corporate Leaders have stolen millions of shareholders dollars and cheated their employees out of their pensions

OR

- close to*
4. A small ~~cadre~~ *cabal* of Legislative Leaders ~~is~~ *are* able to bully the Legislative process *into passing* an outrageous pay raise.

And

5. A Judicial panel, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania can render a ruling that is an obvious conflict regarding their own incomes.

D. Without accountability and transparency the leaders of any entity will be corrupted into thinking they can do anything they want and remain untouchable.

E. I submit to you we cannot allow this arrogance of power hidden under the darkness of corporate or government secrecy to continue at any level, whether private or public.

F. ~~At least~~ <sup>and it abuses</sup> at the State Legislative there has been some light exposing the <sup>shown on</sup> distasteful and arrogance of the Legislative Leaders which has resulted in some <sup>political</sup> retribution.

where there  
own arrogance  
brought some  
down!

II. And the good news is that usually as result of public disclosure of these kinds of abuses reform follows-and I believe the possibility exists for that to happen in this case.

A. Because of the Media, Grass Root organizations and <sup>the</sup> you/public have made the repeal of the pay raise a cause celeb

B. press conference – if it ever gets to the floor it will pass-and it did—

1. started with unvouchered expense accounts and mushroomed into total repeal

2. by the very leaders who created it in the first place

C. Politics/re-elections and polls were responsible

Justice  
NIGRO

D. And because that was a successful effort we can move onto reforms measures of some merit.



### III. Bipartisan Effort

A. Approached by Rep Schroder and Steil

B. Asked for like minded Members to Join--63

C. Meet for several months trying to resolve our own differences among the many avenues.

IV. In June agreed on an agenda and broke out in "summer work groups" each working on recommendations

#### A. Legislative Agenda

1. Lobby Reform-only state in nation without
2. Campaign Finance Reform-
3. (Reapportionment Reform)-couldn't agree
4. Open records

6

## B. House Rules (bear with me-inside baseball)

1. Rules Committee abuses corrected *pay raise*
2. Ethics Committee reconstituted
3. House Rules that govern when amendments are considered and how
  - a. Constitutionally bill supposed to be on colander for three days
  - b. Amend on second reading and final passage on third
  - c. No business conducted after 12 midnight
  - d. No Lame duck session/or at least must have 2/3rds vote
4. Audit all leadership funds-millions of dollars spent under the control one or two people in the Caucus' *\$100,000 new-leadership funds —*
5. Constitutional Convention-5 previous

a. problematical-scope

(1) 1967-68 last one

(2) Five topic-reapportionment (deal with Baker v. Carr), judiciary, taxation and local governance

b. limited-to what topics

c. legislative section only

(1) size-203 House, 50 Senate

(2) Ironically-1871 convention increased the number from 100-200 House and 33-50 for the Senate

**(THIS CHANGE WAS NOT BASED  
ON ANY PREVAILING THEORY  
OR REPRESENTATION, BUT UPON  
THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT  
WOULD BE HARDER TO  
CORRUPT THE LARGER**

**NUMBER)—The History of**

**Constitutional Conventions-Reference**

**Manual #3**

(3)pay

d. judiciary

(1)judicial districts

(2)magistrate courts

(3)commonwealth court

(4)election or retention vote

V. Those on the radar scope not included in our agreement

A. Reapportionment Reform

B. Judiciary-ruling came up after we agreed on goals-bill

introduced-severability/non-severability-great lengths

1. repeal pay raise

2. repeal retention system-must run for re-election

a. why was it adopted-judicial independence

b. many states must run for re-election without  
any problems of independence

3. reduce term from 10 to 5 years

#### C. Budget process

1. Not decided by 8 or 10 ten people who sit in  
room and decided how to wack up the pie.

2. open discussions

3. amendments that mean something-not the non-  
sensical process we now have

VI. These are important changes to restore the credibility and  
hope to legislative process. Can we get this done?

A. not all but possibly some-63 Members is rather  
significant

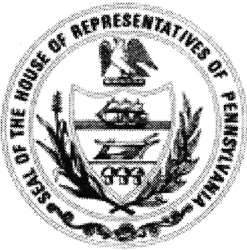
B. blood letting not done-November elections

C. leadership races

D. a change in direction-open and

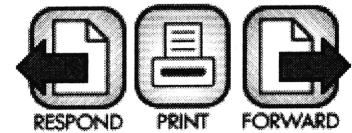
IX - intro bees - began  
end of session

Rules adopted -  
swearing in day —

**COLUMN**

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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**Nov. 29, 2005**

**The pay raise repeal**  
***By state Rep. Tom Tangretti***

It's been two weeks since the House and Senate passed legislation to repeal the pay raises for legislators, judges, cabinet secretaries and other top officials in the executive branch by an almost unanimous vote. However, the anger and furor that arose after the late-night vote in early July when the pay raises were approved has hardly subsided -- rightfully so. In my 17 years in the legislature I have never been as embarrassed or ashamed by anything that this body has done. That single act did more harm to the credibility of the institution than anything before, and called into question every future action of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

As most people know, I voted against the pay raise and did not accept the unvouchered expenses. Many members protested strongly when the legislation was first presented to us by leadership just hours before the vote. But, since the votes to pass the legislation had already been secured, it was obvious that any effort to defeat the measure on the floor was futile, and opponents like me remained silent during the vote. What I didn't take into account, of course, was that the citizens of the state and the media viewed our silence as approval, which added an air of conspiracy to the affair. At the press conference Sept. 13 announcing the introduction of legislation to repeal the pay raise, I publicly apologized, stating that I regretted my decision to remain silent the night of the vote. My rationale for not speaking up in those early morning hours was unwise.

In all my years in the legislature, I have never been more outraged than by what happened on the night of July 7. Let me assure you that those of us who opposed the pay raise did not stand idly by. From the moment the pay raise vote was taken, I, along with other opponents of the raise, began actively laying the groundwork to successfully repeal the law. Those efforts included drafting and introducing the repeal bill, and pushing leaders of both parties to allow a swift vote.

Furthermore, once the repeal bill was introduced and the speaker referred it to the Rules Committee to die a slow death, I joined with several other members in a rarely-used parliamentary effort called a discharge petition to force the bill out of committee and to the full House for a vote. A discharge petition requires the signature of 25 members, and I was proud

to sign. House rules also require a 15 day wait before filing a discharge petition, and we were on the seventh day of that wait (I was keeping careful count) when Senate President Pro Temp Robert Jubelirer scheduled a repeal vote on the unvouchered expenses in that chamber. As most of you know, before long the dam broke, leading to a repeal of the entire pay raise law by both the House and Senate.

I have actively criticized the pay raise – both in the legislature and in public – and pursued its repeal. I applaud the citizens of Pennsylvania for not letting this issue die. Without their voice, we never could have achieved this landmark legislative reversal and corrected what I have always viewed as an unconstitutional and ill-advised action by the General Assembly.

Let us hope that the judicial branch does not see fit to file a lawsuit to overturn this action. It is possible they could try to limit such a lawsuit to preserve the pay issue for the judicial branch only; however, I think the voters spoke loudly and clearly on how strongly they feel about the pay raise when Supreme Court Justice Russell Nigro was not retained in his re-election bid.

###mjh/2005/pr

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