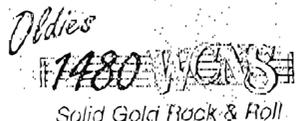


Longo Media Group



June 18, 2002

Amy
Representative Tangretti's office

Dear Amy:

John Longo received a verbal commitment from Representative Tangretti to be the featured speaker at our annual Greensburg Senior Lifestyle Show in June.

The date for the Senior Lifestyle Show is Saturday, June 22, 2002 at the Sheraton across Route 30 from Westmore.

Longo Media Group, Inc. produces a four-hour program featuring an informative speaker, fashion show, musical entertainment, free health screenings, and a variety of exhibitor product/service displays special to older adults.

Representative Tangretti is scheduled to speak beginning at 12:30 pm for approximately 45 minutes including questions and answers. If past shows are any indication, he will find a very attentive audience. Upon his arrival, have him ask for either John Longo or myself. We could use some bio information on the Representative to facilitate his introduction.

Representative Tangretti is welcome to bring along materials he would like to distribute at the show.

If you have any questions, need additional information or any further help from WCNS/LUCKY-FM in coordinating the Representative's appearance, contact me at 724-537-3338. We are looking forward to having Representative Tangretti join us in what has been a popular event each year.

This letter will serve as our agreement. If everything looks good to you, please sign and fax back to us at 724-539-9798.

*Tom -
I relayed to Glenn
the situation with
your budget vote
next week. I
don't know if you
want to sign this*

ker at our annual

Four Points Hotel by

uring a light lunch, an

entertainment, free health screenings, and a variety of exhibitor

Authorized agent for
Representative Thomas Tangretti

Glenn Boyd

Glenn Boyd
Client Services Manager WCNS/WLCY-FM

Longo Media Group



June 18, 2002

Amy
Representative Tangretti's office

Dear Amy:

John Longo received a verbal commitment from Representative Tangretti to be the guest speaker at our annual Greensburg Senior Lifestyle Show in June.

The date for the Senior Lifestyle Show is Thursday, June 27th, 2002, and it will be held at the Four Points Hotel by Sheraton across Route 30 from Westmoreland Mall, Greensburg, from 11 am till 3 pm.

Longo Media Group, Inc. produces a four-hour event for the local mature (55+) consumer featuring a light lunch, an informative speaker, fashion show, musical entertainment, free health screenings, and a variety of exhibitor product/service displays special to older adults.

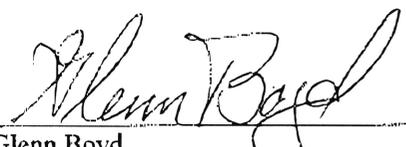
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Authorized agent for
Representative Thomas Tangretti



Glenn Boyd
Client Services Manager WCNS/WLCY-FM

Rep. Tom Tangretti
Remarks to Seniors
June 27, 2002

Good afternoon ... I'm very happy to have the privilege to speak to you today.

If you read the newspapers, and I know that all of you do, you no doubt realize that those of us in the General Assembly are in the midst of one of the most grueling weeks we've had in a long time.

Agreeing on a budget for the next fiscal year has proven extremely difficult, ...

...[here you can make mention of the fact that only through hard work and compromise you were able to meet the June 30 deadline OR say something about how your work is still not done and you will

*we think we are going to make
deadline - June 30th*

Will

Immediately

be returning to Harrisburg in ~~a few hours~~ to keep working ~~on behalf of local residents~~, whichever scenario ~~Thursday presents~~]....

Still, I thought it was important to take the time to come and speak with you today, to tell you what I am trying to do in Harrisburg and to answer any questions you might have.

**During the past seven years, the biggest questions lawmakers had to answer when putting together the state budget was:
Where should we spend the money?**

With the economy booming, and tax revenues growing – even with the many tax cuts we enacted – there was still plenty of money to go around.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the case this year.

The slowing economy and the terrorist attacks hit the nation hard, and Pennsylvania was no exception.

The budget shortfall at the end of this fiscal year, which is Sunday, is going to be about \$~~2~~ 1.2 billion.

Even in the face of this staggering amount, I should point out that Pennsylvania should probably consider itself somewhat lucky.

Other states are in much more dire positions, and their residents will be facing much higher tax increases and many more cuts in state programs.

Here in Pennsylvania, we've hedged our bets a bit over the past half decade, and it has paid off.

While we've had to make some very difficult decisions this budget season, we've also saved ourselves a lot more pain than we could have faced because we kept some money socked away and we managed to hold down and even reduce taxes when we could.

Still, this year, and probably the next few, will be difficult.

But there is one thing that remains true in bad economic times, as well as good economic times:

The state must have the proper priorities in place in order to successfully guarantee prosperity and a good quality of life for its residents.

So, despite the budget and economic difficulties we face in Harrisburg, we still need to make sure that seniors continue to receive the prescription assistance they need, the health care they deserve and the protection they've been promised, and have earned.

I want to assure you that almost every lawmaker in Harrisburg believes the same, and that's why, even in the midst of all the disagreements over the past month or so about the budget, consensus, at least among

the lawmakers I talk to every day, remained that this budget should not be balanced on the backs of Pennsylvania's seniors citizens.

In fact, my colleagues and I continue to believe that seniors must remain a budget priority, even in lean budget times. budget cuts should not be made on the backs of this state's population of senior citizens, and that those seniors and the programs that support them must remain a funding priority, even in these lean budget times.

Pennsylvania is a great state to live in as a senior citizen.

We provide more programs and assistance for seniors than almost any other state in the nation.

From PACE and PACENET to the Property Tax/Rent Rebate, from reduced vehicle registration fees to the state's network of agencies on aging, Pennsylvania does a pretty good job providing health care,

protection, activities and a good quality of life for its seniors.

But both you and I know that we can do better, and we must continue to strive to do better.

One area where we can do much better is prescription drug coverage.

At one time, Pennsylvania was a model for the nation as far as prescription assistance for senior citizens is concerned.

Sadly, that's not the case anymore.

The lottery-funded PACE program that was created in the 1970s has not been able to keep up with the skyrocketing costs of prescription medications.

The PACENET program Governor Ridge created in the 1990s hasn't enrolled the number of seniors it originally was intended to.

Thousands of seniors who did qualify for these programs at one time no longer get benefits because their rigid income-eligibility ceilings don't allow for small Social Security and other pension increases.

Because of all these things, hundreds of thousands of seniors in Pennsylvania who need help to pay for their prescriptions don't get any help, and even many who do receive assistance don't get nearly enough help.

We need to change that, because no older Pennsylvanians should have to go without the prescription medicine they need ~~simply~~ because they can't afford it.

Unfortunately, that is what is happening still too often in Pennsylvania.

Some seniors skip meals so they can afford their prescriptions; others turn down their thermostats in winter and avoid running their

air conditioners except on the very hottest days in summer.

Others simply take half doses of their medications, or take them every other day instead of every day as prescribed.

All these choices are unhealthy, but many seniors feel forced into them.

Of course, this is a tragedy on a personal level, because many seniors get sicker than they have too, and sooner than they ought to.

Unfortunately, many end up in the hospital, instead of at home living the active lives they must know they are capable of.

Others, of course, die too soon

But this is also a tragedy on a societal level.

Financially, forcing seniors into these kinds of decisions ends up costing all of us millions

more dollars a year in health care and long-term care.

It's also a tragedy on a societal level because we are stripped of much of the vitality, vigor and experience that many of ~~these~~ seniors could have provided to our communities for many, many years.

I do bring some good news, today, though.

I can tell you that there are an increasing number of lawmakers in Harrisburg that believe we can and must fix this situation now.

I can also tell you that Governor Schweiker's administration also now seems to be poised to make this a priority.

Before I explain, let me first describe for you a recent proposal that was made in the House of Representatives to expand prescription drug coverage for more than 200,000 additional senior citizens in Pennsylvania.

The first component of this plan would pour millions more dollars into the PACE program, making it possible to give all seniors who earn less than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines full PACE benefits.

This plan would eliminate PACENET, with its \$500 a year deductible, and make all seniors currently enrolled in that program, and the hundreds of thousands who aren't eligible for either of the state's assistance programs, eligible for full PACE benefits.

For seniors earning more than 200 percent of the poverty level but less than 225 percent, full PACE benefits also would be granted for up to \$1,800 worth of prescriptions a year.

After that, seniors in this income bracket would still only have to pay 20 percent of the cost of their prescriptions for the remainder of the year.

For seniors earning between 225 percent and 300 percent of the federal poverty level, a PACE Plus Subsidy Card program would allow them to purchase their medications at the same subsidized rate the state pays.

Finally, money from Pennsylvania's share of the tobacco settlement would be used to help working people from age 50 to 65 who aren't eligible for PACE to participate in the PACE Plus Subsidy Card program.

This plan would offer some form of state-sponsored prescription coverage to every single senior in Pennsylvania earning up to \$25,680 a year, and every married senior couple with a household income of up to \$35,820.

In contrast, the current lottery-funded PACE and PACENET programs offer coverage only to single seniors earning up to \$17,000 and senior couples earning up to \$20,200.

This plan would add more than 200,000 addition seniors to the rolls of PACE, and save those seniors almost \$200 million a year in out-of-pocket prescription costs.

Of course, the big question is, how do you pay for something like this?

[After all, we all know what we lawmakers are currently going through trying to put together the state budget]

~~OR~~

[After all, we all know what ~~lawmakers~~ just went through trying to put together the state budget.]

That struggle to find money for Pennsylvania's most important initiatives doesn't seem to jibe with creating a brand new prescription assistance program that gives improved benefits not just to the people who currently are eligible, but to 200,000 more people, as well.

Well, there is an answer to the dilemma, and it's really rather simple.

The federal government wants us to do it, and is willing to pay for it.

About two years ago, the federal government began offering a Medicaid waiver program to the states known as Pharmacy Plus.

This program provides \$77 billion in federal funds to states that want to expand pharmaceutical benefits for people earning less than 200 percent of the poverty level.

By applying for and receiving this Medicaid waiver, Pennsylvania could put in place the program I just described, and at the same time saving the state lottery fund more than \$132 million.

Several other states have already received the waiver, and are offering prescription assistance to thousands more of their seniors.

For the past two years, many legislators, including me, have been asking first Governor Ridge and most recently, Governor Schweiker, to do the same.

I'm happy to say that in May, Governor Schweiker finally agreed to look into this possibility, and directed the state departments of Aging and Public Welfare to investigate the federal Medicaid waiver program to see how it can help Pennsylvania's seniors.

I am hopeful that Pennsylvania will soon be a participant in the program, and be able to start giving thousands more seniors the prescription assistance they need and deserve.

Of course, prescription assistance is just one of the many issues Pennsylvania senior citizens are concerned with – there's health care in general, tax reform, long-term care and a host of other issues.

The General Assembly cannot take a break – even^{IN} these ~~in~~ tough budget times – from dealing with any of these issues.

In fact, just recently, I voted for a number of bills that would improve the quality of life for seniors in Pennsylvania regarding all these issues.

I voted for legislation that would make long-term care homes more responsive to seniors and their families by requiring them to return security deposits, application fees and other prepaid fees as soon as a patient no longer is receiving care at the home.

I voted for legislation that would allow seniors who reenter the work force and are laid off to collect their full unemployment compensation benefits.

Pennsylvania currently offsets UC benefits for seniors by half of any Social Security or pension benefits they are receiving, and

that's not fair to seniors or to the businesses that hire them.

I also signed a petition last week that would require the governor to call a special session of the legislature to deal with local school property tax reform.

Local property taxes continue to rise, and continue to tax many older Pennsylvanians out of their homes.

We must focus on this issue once and for all, and come up with a solution that is fair for both taxpayers and our schoolchildren.

If we can get enough signatures in the House and Senate, that is exactly what will happen.

Finally, I voted for legislation that would require the state to provide everyone with information about all HMOs and other managed care plans operating in Pennsylvania, and give patients in those plans a chance to compare and contrast their

performance, quality of care and other factors.

Many of Pennsylvania's seniors are members of HMOs and managed care plans, now, and these numbers are increasing every day.

I believe you ought to have an opportunity to see what kind of care you are getting for your money, and to choose if there is another plan out there that can provide better care.

Of course, there are many, many issues on your minds I know I haven't mentioned today, and in just a moment, I'll be giving you the opportunity to ask about them, as well.

Before I close, though, I would just like to say that I know, more than any other group in Pennsylvania, that seniors are counting on me and my fellow lawmakers in Harrisburg to make it possible for them to live health, lives, stay financially health, too, and to experience real quality of life in their golden years.

I want you to know that I'm firmly committed to meeting that responsibility.

I won't be taking a break in the fight for you, and neither will my colleagues.

In May, we found out who the Democratic nominee for governor will be.

In less than five months, we will know who the next governor will be.

He, and Democrats and Republicans in the General Assembly, will face a host of challenges and a list of priorities for the future of Pennsylvania.

Let me assure you that improving the health, well-being and economic standing of this state's senior citizens is at the top of both of those lists.

I've worked hard in a bipartisan spirit with the Ridge/Schweiker team to do what I could

for seniors here in Westmoreland County and across Pennsylvania for the past eight years.

I will continue that effort with the next administration, whoever is leading it.

In the meantime, please get in touch with me if you have any questions, or need any kind of help at all, with a state-related problem.

It's my job to serve you, and it's always my pleasure to get the chance to speak to you and meet with you.

Thank you very much, and now, I would be happy to take any of your questions.

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