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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 13, 1993

COMMITTEES

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE,
SECRETARY
AGING & YOUTH
INSURANCE
POLICY

Ms. Shirley A. King

Erie, PA 16509-0712

Dear Ms. King: - *Shirley,*

Thank you very much for sharing your concerns about the need for curtailing government spending and thank you for your words of encouragement. You are absolutely correct. All levels of state government must be mindful of their spending practices and do everything possible to eliminate unnecessary expenditures. I have done my best to adhere to this principle during my previous two terms in office and I will continue to fight for fiscal prudence during the ongoing budget negotiations.

Though it is hard to believe sometimes, Pennsylvania is probably in a better position to handle its short-term fiscal challenges than most other states are. While the rest of the region has been in the throes of a severe economic downturn for the past several years, Pennsylvania has been relatively stable. So, while we were forced to take some extraordinary actions to balance our budget in 1991, our immediate and long-term budgetary prospects are looking fairly promising. The frugal and necessary process of paring unnecessary state spending began in earnest in 1991 and has become a yearly exercise ever since. I know that the House Democrats are committed to continuing this trend and to providing a balanced budget by June 30.

I appreciate hearing your views on what is unquestionably a legislator's number-one responsibility: the pursuit of a fair and prudent budget. Please be assured that your letter will be remembered during my participation in this year's budget negotiations. I hope you will continue to contact me with your thoughts and ideas about the budget process or any other issue of importance to you or our state.

Best regards.

Tom
Sincerely,

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/js

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 22, 1993

COMMITTEES

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGING AND YOUTH
INSURANCE
FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS

Maureen Barber-Carey, Ed.D.
Gertrude A. Barber, Ed.D., LL.D.
Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center
136 East Avenue
Erie, PA 16507

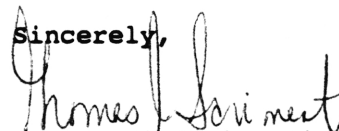
Dear Dr. Barber-Carey and Dr. Barber:

I received your letter about the Governor's plans for the Commonwealth's Approved Private Schools (APS). I appreciate you including me in your efforts regarding the preservation of these institutions and the protection of the special services they provide. I know very well of the good works done at the Center and of the reliance that students have on your unique and specific care. Your service to this community is admirable and appreciated.

With that in mind, I share your concern over the Casey Administration's proposal for revision in the funding procedures for the Commonwealth's APS's. However, it is important to note that the budget process is just that, a process. The Governor's proposal is now being reviewed and revised in the General Assembly. In fact, just this week a rally was held protesting this particular funding change. I believe that it is notable that Representative Ron Cowell, Chairman of the House Education Committee, participated in that rally.

Though I cannot tell you what the final outcome of the Governor's idea will be, I can assure you that your concerns are being expressed and respected. I think we both agree that local districts do need flexibility in their expenditure of precious state dollars while these special students do need the continuation of services that have proven so effective in the past. These two tenets are not by their nature mutually exclusive.

I have taken the liberty of sharing your letter and its ideas with the House Appropriations Committee. I join in your hope that this lobbying effort now coming from around the state from educators and parents will work to halt any short-sighted decisions during this budget year and will result in a long-term plan and goals on which the Governor, the Department of Education, the providers, and the taxpayers can all agree. I look forward to participating in that effort.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/js

cc: Rep. Dwight Evans
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

DR. GERTRUDE A. BARBER CENTER



31 March 1993

MAR 14 1993

The Honorable Thomas Scrimenti
Box 96
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17129-0028

Dear Representative Scrimenti,

On Friday, February 12, 1993, in a meeting with John Tommasini of the Bureau of Special Education, the Approved Private Schools (APS), of Western Pennsylvania, were informed that PDE's funding proposal for 1993-94 was to eliminate the APS line item from the Governor's budget and distribute that appropriation through formula funding directly to the school districts. This shift would remove the Bureau of Special Education as an active agent in the placement of special needs students and require districts to either contract directly with qualified private service providers (such as the APS) for the provision of special education programs and services or develop programs within district to accommodate all special needs students. We were further told that this was an accomplished action and that there was no room for discussion. This abrupt change in the funding system presents school districts, parents, the Approved Private Schools and, most importantly, the special needs students assigned to APS with the potential for serious problems in the provision of mandated appropriate special education services and programs.

The current proposal for dissolution of the APS line item does not allow for any form of transition and, thus, presents the potential for serious problems for all parties involved. Although there ultimately appears to be value in the establishment of a system of direct contracting between school districts and Approved Private Schools, the abrupt removal of the long established funding mechanism is not the appropriate first step.

Of serious concern, as well is the governor's proposal to dispense the funds in the APS line item to school districts based on a formula which does not consider the number of district students who are presently in PDE approved APS placement. In addition until now, districts with severely impaired children in an APS received state reimbursement for up to 80% of the placement cost. Now, these expenses would be paid along with all other special education costs through the formula. We feel that in special education, actual incidence rates and costs can vary significantly from one district to another. Exceptional children are not evenly distributed among all school district. Therefore, the use of an artificial formula is inherently inequitable. Although a contingency fund is available for higher than ordinary costs, there is no assurance that districts will receive additional financial assistance.

In consideration of the above, we propose the following:

- * Maintain the APS line item in the Governor's budget for the 1993-94 school year at the level of funding indicated by Governor Casey for the 1993-94 school year when the 1992-93 budget was approved.

31 March 1993

page 2

* Establish a task force comprised of legislators and representatives of PDE, the approved private schools and school districts, for the purpose of developing a program of transition to an alternate funding system prior to the development of the 1994-95 budget.

* Assure continued funding of appropriate placement for these students until such time as an orderly transition has been implemented.

We believe that the assurance of services to special needs students through maintenance of fiscal support and the thoughtful development and implementation of a transition program to alternate funding mechanisms is the only manner through which the quality of special education programs in the Commonwealth can be maintained.

We thank you for your consideration of this proposal and your ongoing involvement with and support of the special needs children of Pennsylvania. We look forward to working with you in this endeavor.

Very truly yours,


Maureen Barber-Carey, Ed.D.

Deputy Administrator



Gertrude A. Barber, Ed.D., LL.D.
President/Chief Executive Officer

/mbd

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HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGING AND YOUTH
INSURANCE
FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS

May 24, 1993

Emma J. Rhodes

[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16510

Dear Ms. Rhodes:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 21 concerning the 1993/94 General Fund Budget. Faced with an improving but not quite recovered state economy, the House Democrats propose a \$14.9 billion General Fund Budget for 1993/94. If approved, the Commonwealth will spend \$735 million more in state funds than was budgeted in 1992/93. There are no tax increases.

Times were not always so good. In 1991, faced with a huge budget gap and the wrath of the taxpayers, the House Democrats pushed through a revenue package which put the state's fiscal affairs back on solid footing. The action enabled the state to continue funding vital human service programs, and additional dollars were provided where they were most needed. Funding for Children and Youth Services was increased by nearly \$58 million. The budget also allowed the state to redress 100 percent of adoption services and increase reimbursements for institutional services and foster family and community residential programs. Added money for a host of programs for children came as a result of the 1991 budget action. And, the Human Services Development Fund was restored and increased to \$45 million.

In 1993, House Democrats still recognize that resources need to be devoted to investment in both physical and human capital so that Pennsylvania will once again hold its position as a major producer of goods and services. The House Democrats' proposal recognizes the strength of the family unit as an anchor for our communities. There are a number of initiatives throughout the proposal which work toward that end. The proposal includes a number of investments such as family centers, allocated \$1.5 million. The program requires the state Departments of Education, Health, and Public Welfare to develop family centers to provide early childhood development and parenting education programs and establish information and referral networks with local health care and social service agencies. This is part of Governor Casey's Family Care Matching Funds initiative.

Emma J. Rhodes
May 24, 1993
Page 2

House Democrats propose \$1 million for family planning services. This is in addition to the \$2 million proposed by the Governor for the Women's Services. More than \$10.5 million is earmarked for domestic violence and rape crisis services. It includes an initiative to increase domestic violence services in six underserved areas of the state. Another initiative expands rape crisis services to the entire state, an additional nine counties and provides special training to state mental hospital and mental retardation center staff to identify and assist residents of the state facilities who may have been victims of sexual assault at some time.

Another commitment to the most vulnerable in our communities is a \$17.5 million allocation for the Women, Infants and Children program. An increase of nearly \$1.5 million up to \$15 million for State Health Centers is proposed, as is a \$4.3 million allocation, an increase of \$1.4 million for AIDS education under the Department of Health. A \$2.7 million increase, up to \$34.5 million, is allocated for drug and alcohol treatment programs. Treatment and prevention can save the Commonwealth millions in potential incarceration or hospitalization in years to come.

A \$32 million increase is proposed for community residential mental retardation programs and the expansion of services for community employment, adult day care and family support. A two percent cost of living increase is proposed for community mental retardation programs.

The House Democrats have once again proffered a responsible and frugal budget proposal, one which addresses the needs of the people while maintaining a sure rein on the growth of state government. The \$14.9 billion General Fund proposed spending plan is a 5.1 percent increase over 1992/93, about \$5.4 million less than the Governor requested in February. The proposal includes \$158.8 million in increased funding for some state programs and \$164.3 million in cuts to other state programs. Of the 857 line items, House Democrats increased spending from the current year on 44; decreased spending on 81.

Please be assured that my role in the current budget process will be to both cut wasteful spending and to secure adequate funding for essential services. When funding levels for human services are discussed, I will remember your letter and be guided by your experience and opinions. In short, I will be doing my utmost to see that your point of view is well represented.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS

June 14, 1993

Ms. Valarie Sieberkrob

[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16510

Dear Ms. Sieberkrob:

Thank you very much for your recent inquiry concerning the fiscal year 1993-94 general fund budget with respect to what it provides for special education. I appreciate your interest in this particular and important budgetary item.

Using the current special education funding formula, the House Democrats, during the recently completed 1993-94 budget negotiations, fought for--and won--\$555.9 million to help cover the costs of educating Pennsylvania's exceptional students. The House Democrats' 1993-94 initiative will provide \$1,000 per student for 15 percent of the student population (mildly impaired) and \$11,390 per student for one percent of student population (severely impaired). Also, the approved 1993-94 general fund budget will enable us to direct additional funds to those districts with populations of severely classified students that exceed the one percent provided for in the formula.

I hope this information addresses all of your major concerns regarding the total allocation for special education for the next fiscal year. If I may further assist you with this or other matters related to state government, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Thomas J. Scrimenti in cursive.
Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/js

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

March 23, 1993

COMMITTEES

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
SECRETARY
AGING & YOUTH
INSURANCE
POLICY

Mr. Bill Essigmann

Erie, PA 16509

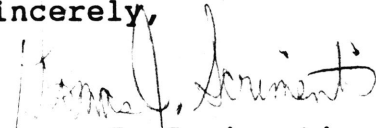
Dear Mr. Essigmann:

Thank you very much for your recent correspondence regarding Attendant Care.

I share your concerns over funding for Attendant Care services. At this writing, the Casey Administration has requested an additional \$1.7 million for Attendant Care from the Federal Government for the 1992-93 fiscal year. On the state level, Governor Casey has called for \$11.6 million for Attendant Care, a \$2.2 million increase for the 1993-94 fiscal year. This includes \$1 million to provide services to an additional 200 physically disabled individuals. At this writing, the House Appropriations Committee has informed me that no additional supplemental appropriations will be available for the 1992-93 fiscal year.

I hope this information proves useful to your inquiry. If I am of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/js

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FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS

March 8, 1994

Mr. Jim Whitehall

[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16509

Dear Mr. Whitehall:

Thank you for your recent inquiry to my office in which you asked why the Wattsburg School District received so little an amount in state funding (\$16,000) for a district with such little wealth.

Generally, if a school district does not provide at least \$4,700 in combined local and state support, it will receive supplemental funding to bring them to that level this 94-95 fiscal year. State support includes the amounts payable to districts during the 93-94 year through Equalized Subsidy for Basic Education, Equity Supplement and the School Employees' Social Security and Retirement Programs.

I have checked with the House Appropriations Committee and was told that the Wattsburg School District would be receiving a basic education subsidy of \$9,900 for the 94-95 fiscal year. The extra \$6,100 is probably the amount showing the number of qualified AFDC students in the district. Twenty seven million will be distributed to the school districts this year at a rate of \$120 per child based on the number of students receiving AFDC in school districts which have at least 35 percent of their average daily membership made up of students of this category.

Under program revisions, low spending but high taxing school districts will receive assistance through the foundation guarantee set at \$3,875 per student and all school districts will receive additional assistance through the poverty supplement.

I trust that the aforementioned response has adequately addressed your original inquiry. If you need additional assistance on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Scrimenti".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/js

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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
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FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 20, 1994

*Supporter 1tr
1994*

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1~

Dear 2~:

After the long frozen winter, coupled with its severe hardships, it seems appropriate to review our goals and accomplishments. The winter months certainly tested all our strengths -- be they the confinements of weeks indoors, record low temperatures, roofs collapsing, pipes bursting and car batteries dying. We were all tested in one way or another. I am proud to say that our residents stood strong during the winter's adversity, including the state-of-emergency Governor Casey called in January due to the repeated days of sub-zero temperatures. I am proud of your efforts.

The winter months also presented the House of Representatives with the opportunity to show its dexterity and tackle the controversial and much debated issue of tax reform. As many of you know, I have been predicting for some time that local tax reform would be adopted by the General Assembly.

House Bill 2202, as passed by the House of Representatives, was an honest bi-partisan effort created to relieve homeowners from the statewide problem of ever-increasing property taxes. House Bill 2202 which equated home ownership with wealth, to income tax, which is more reflective on one's ability to pay. Please remember this was an optional plan and required approval by local governments and the voters. Not all local government would have elected this plan.

When House Bill 2202 was considered in March by the Senate, it was completely amended with new provisions from a Senate bill. The same day that vote occurred, the Senate changed party leadership and the new chairperson stated that she will hold statewide hearings this summer. Given these events, I believe this legislation will probably go to a conference committee or, perhaps, the Senate will foil our efforts of providing a tax relief to the good citizens of Pennsylvania.

1~
April 20, 1994
Page 2

As the spring approaches and we each begin to start anew, the General Assembly begins the earnest process of reviewing the state budget. The entire House of Representatives will start formal examination of the budget in May and debate the provisions in June. As many of you know, the state's fiscal year runs July 1st to June 30th of each year.

You may be sure that I will continue to represent your interests and concerns to the best of my ability. Based on recent statements released from the Department of Revenue, I do not foresee the need to raise taxes and, hopefully, we will be able to decrease certain taxes, including those for small businesses. As 1994 moves forward, I will also continue to fight internal abuses and improve the government's process.

I attribute part of my effectiveness to my constituents. I am always happy to assist you with problems and it is primarily through those efforts that I learn of waste, inefficiency and other bureaucratic nightmares. By helping individuals, I believe I can best serve our district and our region in Harrisburg. Consequently, do not hesitate to request assistance from myself or my office staff. We are here to serve and we work for the public good.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/js

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 9, 1994

- THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
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Ms. Pamela Whitmore
President
Harborcreek Education Association
11034 Sunset Drive
North East, PA 16428

Dear Ms. Whitmore: - Pam,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the transfer of funding for early intervention programs from the Intermediate Units to the school districts. I truly appreciate learning of your opinions on this matter for every letter I receive adds to my awareness of each side of this issue.

Within the Governor's Budget there is a Program Revision Request which would transfer the funding of the early intervention programs for children ages three to five from the Intermediate Units to the individual school districts. This provision would ultimately make school districts responsible for educating children ages three to five, which is in accordance with a federal mandate. The school districts would then have the option to develop their own early intervention programs or contract out to either private providers or Intermediate Units.

The potential increase in the number of children who could participate in the Early Intervention services is a very positive aspect of the Governor's proposal. However, the House Education Committee is currently studying the Governor's proposal, which is considered very broad. It appears that the program revision is under close scrutiny and is met with much skepticism. With that in mind, I believe there is much room for revision and debate. Your letter will prove to be very valuable in that debate.

I would appreciate hearing any additional comments that you may have as the Legislature progresses toward adoption of the Commonwealth's Budget. Thank you once again for your letter. Finally, if I can be of any additional assistance with this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Scrimenti".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 16, 1994

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The Honorable Dwight Evans
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
512-E-3 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman Evans:

I write to ask for your support of an additional budget allocation for the acquisition of equipment for the non-profit institutions of higher education in Pennsylvania. Mercyhurst College is currently planning to renovate its Zurn Hall to make is a state-of-the-art technology center.

Chairman Evans, I strongly support this initiative and well understand that without the needed state assistance for the acquisition of equipment, it is unlikely that non-profit institutions such as Mercyhurst College will be able to make the needed upgrades to their facilities that are required to remain current and fresh. I believe that upon your consideration of this matter, you too will share my belief that the Commonwealth can and should do more in this regard.

I would greatly appreciate your favorable consideration of this matter, and would respectfully request your advocacy and leadership in making this worthwhile goal a reality.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas J. Scrimenti".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/js

cc: Dr. William P. Garvey

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May 17, 1994

Mr. Robert C. Morrison

████████████████████
Erie, PA 16410

Dear Mr. Morrison:

I thank you for your recent letter outlining the need of resources for supervising parolees in Erie County. After receiving your letter, I immediately contacted the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole for an overview of Erie's situation and to explore the possibilities for additional resources for our area. The Board has now provided me with information which should prove interesting to you.

The Board of Probation and Parole has identified Erie as an area in need of additional resources. During the 1993-1994 budget discussions, Erie had been slated for a Special Intensive Supervision Unit, being seventh on the list. Unfortunately only the top six areas were allocated funding for such units. The Governor's 1994-1995 proposed budget requests \$3.3 million specifically for intensive parole supervision. This represents a 121% increase in funds over the 1993-1994 budget. It is my understanding that the Board has identified Erie as an area to receive funds from the 1994-1995 budget for the establishment of a Special Intensive Supervision Unit.

It is obvious from your letter that you remain deeply concerned for the safety and welfare of our community and that you are personally aware of the tremendous need for intensive supervision of those on probation and parole. I want to thank you for your past and continuing dedication to the betterment of our community.

As budget discussions progress, I can assure you I will be carefully monitoring the Governor's proposed allocation for Special Intensive Supervision Units and Erie's interest in that allocation. Again, I thank you for writing and highlighting Erie County's probation and parole officers' needs. If I may be of further assistance in this or any other matter of concern to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Scrimenti
4th Legislative District

TJS:JMM/jm

COMMITTEES

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House of Representatives
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April 7, 1995

Dr. Joseph Hines
Metabolic Disease Associates
300 State Street #204
Erie, PA 16507

Dear Dr. Hines:

Thank you very much for your recent correspondence regarding Governor Ridge's proposal to eliminate the Diabetes Task Force.

I staunchly support diabetes education programs, and I have heard from many of the fine organizations which support diabetics and offer medical guidance. Time and again, I hear of the wonderful testimonials from diabetics and their family members about education classes that have taught them to eat properly, exercise in moderation, give themselves insulin and use glucose monitors. I am well aware of classes that teach diabetics how to travel safely without fear of sugar shock, prepare for sick days and deal with the stress that accompanies diabetes.

You may be sure that I will support your request as much as possible in the coming months. At this writing, the House Democratic Caucus has yet to formulate its own formal budget; however, my caucus has always been sensitive to health education and prevention.

Again, thank you for taking the time to alert me of your position on this important issue. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Scrimenti".

Thomas Scrimenti
State Representative

TS/sd

Joseph H. Hines, M.D.
Endocrinology

Anne-France Bulls, M.D.
Endocrinology

Luis F. Aparicio, M.D.
Pediatric Endocrinology

mda
Metabolic Disease Associates

300 State St. #204 • Erie, PA 16507
Telephone (814) 452-2218
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Theresa J. Fryer, M.D.
Rheumatology

James D. Katz, M.D.
Rheumatology

March 16, 1995

Thomas Scrimenti
2204 Bernwood Drive
Erie PA 16510

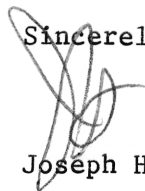
Dear Representative Scrimenti:

I am writing in regards to the changes in Governor Ridge's budget which would eliminate the Diabetes Task Force.

I am an Endocrinologist in Erie County and, as a result, care for many patients who have diabetes. The programs that are covered by the Diabetes Task Force supply a valuable service to the members of Erie County and help them to keep their diabetes under control and prevent complications of diabetes. I feel that eliminating this budget item will have a detrimental impact on the health of many Erie County residents, and I hope that you will restore this item to the budget.

If you have any questions concerning this issue and feel that you need to discuss them with me personally, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph Hines, M.D.

JH:bh

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

9 WEST MAIN STREET
NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428
PHONE: (814) 725-8664

9 WEST WASHINGTON STREET
CORRY, PENNSYLVANIA 16407
PHONE: (814) 664-9126

25B, EAST WING
HOUSE BOX 202020
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2020
PHONE: (717) 787-9475



Budget

COMMITTEES

AGING AND YOUTH
DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OF THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 1, 1995

Honorable Ivan Itkin
Room 428, Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Ivan:

The "Local Development Districts" of Pennsylvania are an important economic service delivery system within my district. Through their Enterprise Development Program and the professionalism of their staff, the business community within my district has received assistance in the areas of low-interest loans, export outreach, procurement outreach, M-Net, and general technical assistance.

The provision of quality economic assistance remains an essential agenda; therefore, I am recommending the 1995-1996 budget contain a line-item titled "local development districts" in the amount of \$2.1 million.

Your leadership and assistance in this matter are important and greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/djr

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

June 20, 1995

Linda Lyons King
Executive Director
Hospitality House
Services For Women Inc.
P.O. Box 1436
Erie, PA 16512

Dear Ms. King:

Thank you for your recent comments concerning domestic violence. This ongoing crisis has summoned a call for attention throughout the legislature and the community. Although there is still a great deal that needs to be done, I feel there has been great progress through recent initiatives to raise public awareness of this often ignored or overlooked crime. I appreciate you including me in your efforts on behalf of the victims of domestic violence.

As you may know, the 1995-96 state budget allows for a slight increase in the funding available for domestic violence programs and services. I wholeheartedly support these worthwhile and very necessary appropriations. However, I did not feel that this year's budget provided adequate funding for other important programs for our community. Therefore, I did not support the overall fiscal plan for the upcoming year. I am hopeful that next year careful consideration will be devoted to developing a budget that more adequately supports domestic violence programs as well as other fundamental services Pennsylvanians need and deserve.

Again, I thank you for your insightful comments and I appreciate this opportunity to share our views. As always, please feel free to contact me if I may be of future assistance on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Scrimenti".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

TJS/lb

cc: Barbara C. Hutzelman

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
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HARRISBURG

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June 28, 1995

Ms. Laura J. Eaton
Executive Director
MECA
1001 State Street
Erie, PA 16501

Dear Ms. Eaton: - *Laura*

Thank you for your recent letter. I appreciate hearing from you and admire and congratulate the people of MECA for the excellent and significant service that they provide.

As you know, under the Governor's budget, special education would have received only a 0.1 percent increase in funds over the 1994-95 appropriation. This proposal would have done a serious injustice to special education in Pennsylvania. The legislature managed to pass a budget with a \$1,563,000 increase to special education, though many districts will receive less funding for special education than the previous year, with poor school districts and school districts with a higher number of special education students suffering the most. Efforts made last year to provide supplemental funding to districts with the most extraordinary costs related to special education have been cut by 50% under the final version of the budget, which was passed by the House on June 20, 1995. On June 27, a motion was made by Representative Itkin to suspend the rules to consider an amendment that would have restored the supplemental funding to 100% for those same districts. Although I voted in favor of this motion, the motion failed and the amendment was not considered.

Because of the very volatile debate surrounding the education budget, I am truly thankful for your letter. Comments from groups like yours, which are the result of concerned parents, need to be brought to the attention of my colleagues so that the impact that these budget cuts and revisions have is realized. I will continue to keep your concerns in mind, especially due to the continued efforts made by many legislators to restore the special education funding. If you have questions, or if you would like any further assistance with this, or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely

Tom Scrimenti
Tom Scrimenti
State Representative
4th District