

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OF THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CARE AND SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

February 26, 2002

Susanne M. Porowski
Executive Director
Erie County Rape Crisis Center, Inc.
125 West 18th Street
Erie, PA 16501

Dear Ms. Porowski:

Thank you very much for your letter of January 30, 2002, concerning budgetary funding for the Commonwealth's rape crisis centers.

At the outset, I would like to commend the outstanding work that your center does in providing for those women who have been subjected to the horrors of rape. Without the professional attention offered by your center, many victims would be permanently scarred without any hope of being healed or transcending their pain in some meaningful way. I cannot speak highly enough of the compassion and the care that you offer these brave souls who have been so cruelly violated.

Budget hearings have now begun and the process of appropriating state funds is now in full swing. During this process, you may be assured that I will continue to intone and vote my support for increased funding for rape crisis centers whenever possible.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns regarding this important budgetary matter. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Scrimenti".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

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House of Representatives
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March 6, 2002

Steve and Karen Groshek

██████████
Harborcreek, PA 16421-1015

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Groshek:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you both for your recent correspondence regarding the Governor's proposed funding and eligibility changes for Medical Assistance for children with autism. As a state representative, I always appreciate hearing about those matters that are most important to my constituents.

I always appreciate creating a dialogue with my constituents, which better enables me to express their interests as I evaluate the budget each fiscal year. As you may know, Pennsylvanians are facing a substantial shortfall in revenues this year, which will most likely translate into a reduced revenue base for the following fiscal year. As such, state lawmakers are forced to balance the numerous needs of our diverse communities during the budget process. I certainly agree with you that providing Medical Assistance to children with autism is extremely important, and as I continue to evaluate our Commonwealth's budgetary needs, I surely will be mindful of your concerns.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to convey to me your concerns. If you have any questions on this or other areas of interest, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Scrimenti".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

[Sample]

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- AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 15, 2002

Mr. Paul Vallimont
[Redacted]
Erie, PA 16509-6022

Dear Mr. Vallimont:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Fiscal Year 2002-2003 General Fund Budget and, specifically, funding for public education. I greatly appreciate you sharing your thoughts and concerns with me.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I recently sent to Representative Dwight Evans, Democratic Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, requesting his support for basic education and special education funding increases of 4.5 percent and 5 percent, respectively, under the proposed General Fund Budget.

Last year, I supported an amendment to the budget that would have provided an additional \$19 million for basic education. Unfortunately, this amendment was not included in the final budget. Nevertheless, please be assured that I will support a similar amendment to enhance education funding if one is brought to the House of Representatives for a vote.

Regarding your concerns with the Education Empowerment Act, I voted against this measure and remain concerned with many of its provisions. Please know that I will certainly keep your thoughts and concerns in mind as expansion of this law receives consideration in the General Assembly.

The importance of education in our society cannot be overstated. Although there has been an economic downturn over the past year, it is my hope that the trend of underfunding education in recent years will end with the upcoming budget.

Again, thank you for your letter. If I may be of further assistance to you on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

Enclosure

Scrimenti, Tom

From: Paul Vallimont [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2002 5:43 PM
To: Scrimenti, Tom
Subject: Increase education funding, oppose expansion of school takeover law

Paul Vallimont
[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16509-6022

March 21, 2002

The Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti
324 Main Capitol, Box 202020
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Rep. Scrimenti:

As a constituent, I am writing to urge you to support increased state funding for public education in the proposed 2002-03 state budget, and oppose expansion of Act 16 of 2000, the so-called Education Empowerment Act.

Gov. Mark Schweiker has proposed a 1 percent increase in basic education subsidies and a 1.5 percent increase in the special education funding, which does not even keep pace with inflation. The proposed budget will force many school boards to consider program cuts and/or property tax increases as a result.

Gov. Schweiker also has proposed a \$75 million increase in state funding for the Philadelphia School District. I urge you to seek additional funding for Pennsylvania's other 500 school districts. While Philadelphia School District needs additional funding support from the state government, so does my district.

I also support a full accounting of the \$75 million for Philadelphia to determine how much would actually be directed to the district's classrooms, and how much would be directed to for-profit management companies.

Gov. Schweiker has also proposed to establish 46 new "empowerment schools" by expanding the powers of Act 16 of 2000, the state's school takeover law, to target individual school buildings within districts based on PSSA test scores. I support additional state funding for low performing schools, but I oppose expansion of the current law because it punishes teachers (abrogates their rights) and parents (denies them the right to vote on establishment of empowerment school) and because it permits the use of uncertified teachers.

Sincerely,

Paul Vallimont

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 19, 2002

Craig L. Krull

Harborcreek, PA 16421

Dear Mr. Krull:

Thank you for your recent email regarding the Department of Public Welfare's (DPW) proposed changes in Medicaid assistance eligibility for children with disabilities. I thank you for taking the time to bring your views to my attention regarding this important matter.

As you are aware, DPW is proposing to move from a waiver system of medical assistance to a needs-based system to be determined by household income as a cost-saving measure to the Commonwealth. Specifically, children that require Medicaid assistance from DPW for a disability would be reviewed individually. Services received by children receiving Medicaid assistance for disabilities in households where the income level exceeds \$100,000 for a family of four would be limited under the revised system.

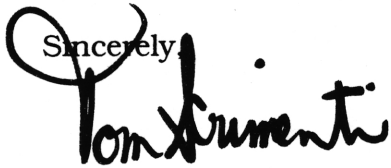
Under the current system, there are no restrictions on who can receive medical assistance for disability services. A family of four with an annual household income of \$200,000 receives the same benefits as a family of four with an annual household income of \$20,000. DPW has proposed modifications to the current system by implementing an income limit of \$100,000 and restrictions on what constitutes a severe disability. According to DPW, under the new guidelines, if a disability is deemed severe, there will be no restrictions placed on services available to the family and the services would be covered 100%.

DPW is currently researching this proposed change to a needs-based system through data and statistical studies. These changes could be implemented as early as a few months from this writing.

Please be assured that I am sympathetic to your situation and will take your comments into consideration as this proposed change is being evaluated. Members of the General Assembly have voiced their concern at the DPW House and Senate Appropriations Hearings regarding whether a gross household income evaluation adequately determines an individual's ability to pay for services. Please know that members of the General Assembly will continue to

have their voices heard before this proposed change is implemented. The General Assembly is in a difficult position attempting to try and balance the fiscal pressure of declining revenues and increasing health care costs. Nonetheless, we, as lawmakers, need to be careful to support funding for critical programs. To that end, I have taken the liberty of drafting a letter to the Democratic Appropriations Committee Chairman, Representative Dwight Evans, voicing my concerns. I have attached a draft of that correspondence for your information.

I thank you again for taking the time to bring your views to my attention regarding this important matter. I sincerely appreciate your input. Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding this or any other matter.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

enclosure

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 19, 2002

The Honorable Dwight Evans
Chairman, Democratic Appropriations Committee
116 North Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman Evans:

I am writing this letter to request your support and consideration of the Department of Public Welfare's (DPW) proposal to limit medical assistance for children with disabilities to a maximum for \$100,000 annual household income limit for a family of four.

As you are aware, DPW is proposing that medical assistance eligibility be determined by a needs-based income formula, in that every child's income and disability would be reviewed individually. I understand that under current regulations, regardless of income, there are no restrictions on services received, no co-payment, and no deductibles.

Additionally, I am certain that you are aware of the number of members in attendance at the DPW House Appropriations Hearing that voiced their concern regarding whether a gross household income properly reflects an individual's ability to pay for services. Further, no statistical data is available to ascertain the income level of households utilizing medical assistance for services, the level of severity of the disability, and the services being utilized.

To that end, I ask you to give complete consideration to this proposed change in eligibility. We owe the constituents of the Commonwealth our utmost attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Scrimenti".

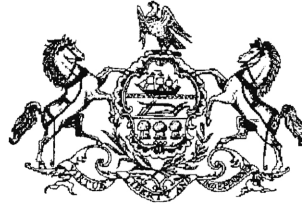
Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

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House of Representatives
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May 9, 2002

Ms. Carolyn Ruth
Harbor Creek High School
6375 Buffalo Road
Harborcreek, PA 16421-1632

Dear Ms. Ruth:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your letter expressing your strong support of the Basic/Higher Education Science Partnership program. I am particularly glad that you, an educator, have shared your thoughts on this important issue. As your state representative, I appreciate the time and effort you have taken to contact my office.

Teaching our youth is one of the noblest professions one can aspire to. The impact that educators have on the lives of their students cannot be overstated. I commend you for the dedication you have exhibited towards this fine profession.

As I hope you know, I am an ardent supporter of public education, and I believe my record of service to the 4th Legislative District reflects that position. I heartily agree that we must make a sound investment in our public school system to improve the quality of our children's education. I believe that programs such as the Basic Education/Higher Education Science Partnership are vital to achieving that end.

I am pleased to inform you that I recently joined my House colleagues in passing Amendment 1256 to the FY 2002-2003 budget, which would increase the line item for this program by \$2.5 million. As I am certain you are aware, the budget passed by the House of Representatives now awaits consideration by the Pennsylvania Senate. Although it remains unclear as to whether the bill will remain in the same form as passed by the House on April 30, 2002, I assure you that I will remain steadfast and vigorous in my efforts to secure this much-needed funding.

Once again, thank you for your letter. As always, if I can be of additional assistance on 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
4th Legislative District

April 12, 2002

Representative Tom Scrimenti
25B East Wing
Harrisburg, PA. 17120-2020

Dear Mr. Scrimenti:

I am writing to urge your continued support of the Basic Education/Higher Education Science and Technology Partnerships, which have been funded by the legislature for the past two years. I understand that budgets are tight, but this is an extremely cost-effective program that is greatly enhancing science education in schools throughout your district and others across Pennsylvania.

In our region, Gannon University administers the program in partnership with high schools throughout Erie County. The program provides workshops on up-to-date science content for teachers, and delivers hi-tech equipment to area classrooms for use by the students.

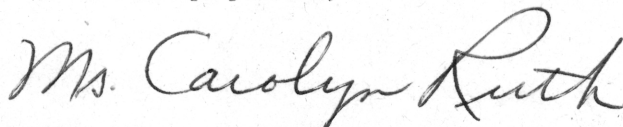
My students have been able to learn about pH and acidity by working with pH meters, about molecular absorption of infrared rays by working with an Infrared Spectrometer, and about detecting alcohol in mouthwash by using a gas chromatograph.

Our school cannot afford this type of equipment on its own, but having these resources on mobile science vans makes this a cost-effective delivery system. This program enhances student learning while increasing their excitement about science.

Please support funding of this partnership again this year.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,



Ms. Carolyn Ruth
Chemistry Teacher, Harbor Creek High School

7830 East Lake Rd.
ERIE 16511-1631

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
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House of Representatives
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DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OF THE
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AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

March 26, 2002

Aldo Jackson, Director
Erie County Technical School
Kenneth D. Frantz Education Complex
8500 Oliver Rd
Erie, PA 16509-4699

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Thank you for writing my office expressing the need to reinstate funding for this year's Career & Technical Education Equipment Upgrade Grant Program. As you know, this critical grant program allows for students to train with the newest technologies and machinery.

As a supporter of vocational technical education, I recognize that programs like these are instrumental in staying current with industry standards and maintaining the employability of our students. I realize that without adequate state assistance we jeopardize the success of Pennsylvania's students. It is important that students in vocational schools obtain adequate state support.

Therefore, as you requested, I have written a letter to the Honorable Governor Schweiker explaining our sentiments and the need to immediately reinstate funding for the Education Equipment Upgrade Grant for this school year. I also extended that I am willing to work with his office further on these matters. Again, thank you for writing me regarding this extremely important issue. If I may be of further assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,
Handwritten signature of Thomas J. Scrimenti in black ink.

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

February 19, 2002

The Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti
25B East Wing
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

For the past two years, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Career & Technical Education has assisted vocational-technical schools to acquire new equipment through an equipment upgrade grant. This grant has been instrumental in allowing the Erie County Technical School to upgrade equipment in several vocational-technical programs to industry standards. Last year, between \$100,000 from the grant and \$50,000 in a local match, the Erie County Technical School purchased \$150,000 of precision machining equipment. The types of equipment we were able to upgrade or add to our program included:

- Optical comparator,
- Electrical discharge milling machine,
- Computerized numerical control (CNC) lathe, and
- New lathes and mills.

As you know, maintaining quality-training opportunities in manufacturing is critical to Erie County's future.

This year, our approved grant proposal for \$50,000, plus a \$25,000 local match, was going to allow us to upgrade equipment in our graphic communications (printing) program. The grant program would allow us to incorporate "computer-to-plate" technology in our graphic communications program. Local firms such as Gohr's, Printing Concepts, and PIP Printing rely on this technology. Without this technology, our students are unprepared for the workforce.

Unfortunately, in February, Governor Schweiker placed a freeze on this year's equipment upgrade grants. This grant program has helped us immensely in staying current with

Representative Scrimenti
February 19, 2002
Page 2

technology standards found in today's industry. Unstable funding conditions (including the absorption of a 25% increase in our retirement contribution) have made it very difficult for the Erie County Technical School to acquire equipment that allows us to train to current industry standards. Without this grant support, our training will fall below industry standards and essentially make our students less employable.

On behalf of the students, faculty and the local business community, we are asking your assistance to have this grant program reinstated. On our behalf, would you please contact Governor Schweiker and request that he lift the freeze on the Career & Technical Education Equipment Upgrade Grant for this school year? Your help with this matter will have significant influence on the economic development and workforce placement needs of Erie County.

Please feel free to contact us if you need additional information.

Respectfully yours,



Aldo R. Jackson, Ph.D.
Director



James H. Bucksbee
Chairperson
Joint Operating Committee

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

March 26, 2002

The Honorable Mark Schweiker, Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

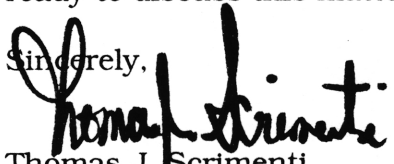
Dear Governor Schweiker:

I am writing you today to address concerns regarding the state grant program for vocational technical schools, known as the Career & Technical Education Equipment Upgrade Grant Program. As you know, your office placed a freeze on this year's equipment upgrade grants in February. This critical grant program allows for students to train with the newest technologies and machinery.

Programs like these are instrumental in staying current with industry standards and maintaining the employability of our students. Without adequate state assistance we jeopardize the success of Pennsylvania's students. I am certain that you agree that these students deserve the best resources available to advance themselves in the workforce. I urge you to recognize that students in vocational schools need the state's support and that higher education is a pivotal need that cannot be disregarded.

Therefore, it is for these reasons that I respectfully request you to reinstate funding for the Career & Technical Education Equipment Upgrade Grant for this school year without delay. Thank you for kind consideration of this request. As always, I stand ready to discuss this matter with you and your staff.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

cc: Aldo Jackson, Director, Erie County Technical School



APR 22 2002

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
HARRISBURG

ROBERT A. BITTENBENDER
SECRETARY
OFFICE OF THE BUDGET

April 22, 2002

Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti
House of Representatives
Room 25B, East Wing
House Box 202020
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-2020

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

Thank you for your recent letter to Governor Schweiker regarding funding that has been frozen in the current year budget in the Vocational Education Equipment Grants appropriation.

The Vocational Education Equipment Grants appropriation in the Department of Education's budget was one of a number of line items affected by the action to freeze \$309.9 million in Commonwealth spending in the current fiscal year. This action was necessitated by the current economic slowdown that has resulted in a serious decline in General Fund revenues. It was imperative to implement the spending freeze in order to mitigate any negative consequences declining revenues could have upon the Commonwealth's General Fund budget.

Initially, the entire Vocational Education Equipment Grants appropriation of \$5 million was frozen and placed into budgetary reserve. Through offsetting savings achieved in other program areas, the payment restrictions were recently lifted on \$3 million of this amount. The Department of Education is now in the process of making these funds available to grant recipients.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write and express your thoughts on funding for this program and please do not hesitate to bring other matters of concern or interest to our attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert A. Bittenbender".

Robert A. Bittenbender

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
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HARRISBURG

May 10, 2002

Aldo Jackson, Director
Erie County Technical School
Kenneth D. Frantz Education Complex
8500 Oliver Road
Erie, PA 16509-4699

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Attached for your perusal please find a copy of a letter I recently received from the Governor's Office regarding the need to immediately reinstate funding for the Career & Technical Education Equipment Upgrade Grant Program.

I have been advised that through offsetting savings in other program areas, the payment restrictions were recently lifted on \$3 million. The Department of Education is now in the process of making these funds available to grant recipients.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 15, 2002

John R. Fuhrmann, CEO
American Red Cross, Greater Erie Chapter
4961 Pittsburgh Avenue
Erie, PA 16509

Dear Mr. Fuhrmann:

Thank you for contacting my office to urge my support for funding of the American Red Cross's Extended Care Program. I appreciate the time and effort you have taken to apprise me of your thoughts on this matter. I am genuinely grateful for your input, especially given your professional insight.

As you may know and as proven by my record of service, the welfare of the residents of this great Commonwealth is of supreme importance to me. More importantly, I recognize the invaluable service the American Red Cross provides to families who are victims of disasters. This is an extremely important program because it allows families to resume a level of normalcy in their lives in a relatively short period of time following a disaster. With that in mind, I am pleased to announce that I voted in favor of Amendment 1526 in the recently passed House Bill 2489, the 2002-2003 General Fund Budget. This amendment allocates \$1 million under the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency's 2002-2003 budget for the American Red Cross Extended Care Program.

At this writing, the House of Representatives has passed its version of the 2002-2003 General Fund Budget on April 30, 2002 by a 167-27 vote. The Senate and Governor must first consider the House version before it can be enacted, for this reason, it is impossible to predict what the final budget will look like. However, please know that I will continue to show my support for this worthy program as the legislative budget process continues.

To that end, I thank you again for contacting my office. If I can be of any further assistance concerning any other state issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OF THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CARE AND SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

May 29, 2002

Barbara A. Gainer, Owner/Director
Barb's Care-A-Lot Child Care Centers
5163 Buffalo Road
Erie, PA 16510

Dear Ms. Gainer:

Thank you for your recent letter concerning early childhood education, related grants and programs, and the wages that child-care employees receive for their important work. Your thoughtful input on these issues is, of course, greatly appreciated.

As a father, I thoroughly understand your assertion that early childhood education is critical to the development of our children. The House Democratic Caucus has, for many years, positioned early childhood education and safety in daycare centers among its top legislative priorities. Unfortunately, our legislative counterparts have been reluctant to undertake the weighty issues of low wages and high employee turnover in the child-care and early education professions. Nevertheless, I appreciate your continued commitment to provide for our children. I will remain supportive of legislative efforts that recognize the importance of your work and seek to increase wages for those employed in this vital area of expertise. For example, I am a co-sponsor of House Bill 1138, which would provide supplemental assistance to existing providers of federal Head Start services.

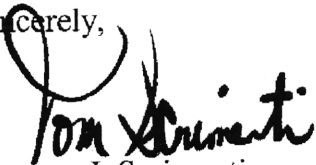
As you know, funding for TEACH (the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps program) is administered through the Department of Public Welfare. Moreover, TEACH is funded through private foundations, corporate contributions and a mix of state and federal monies. For the current fiscal year, the TEACH allotment totaled \$1.75 million (\$500,000 in state funds and \$1.25 million in federal funds), which is an increase of \$250,000 from the previous year. However, there is still no specific line item in the budget for TEACH, which means that an amendment will likely be needed to preserve and expand this valuable program.

Barbara A. Gainer
May 29, 2002
Page 2

Additionally, the Governor's budget proposal for FY 2002-2003 does not include funding for the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency's Early Childhood Education Professional Loan Forgiveness Program. Although we are in a tight budget situation because of economic uncertainties and a burgeoning deficit, this is nevertheless not the time, in my estimation, to raid funding from important programs. Accordingly, I will continue to work with my Democratic colleagues to see that everything is done to maintain this essential program.

The budget process is now in high gear. Given the extraordinary fiscal conditions that have developed, the General Assembly will probably require the entire month of June (and perhaps longer) to craft a workable budget resolution for FY 2002-2003. Throughout that process, please be assured I will remember your letter and its forceful and consistent message. If I may be of further assistance with this, or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

1052

April 29, 2002

To all Pennsylvania State Representatives, *John Evans, Linda Bebeko-Jones, Tom Scrimanti, Gayle Wright & Karl Boyes*
 From: Barbara A. Gainer / Owner Director

Barb's Care-A-Lot Child Care Centers I&II
 5163 Buffalo Road & 3880 Davison Road
 Erie 16510 Harborcreek 16421

Regarding: WALK A MILE IN THE SHOES OF A CHILD CARE WORKER
 PLEASE support QUALITY early childhood education and care!

My message to you is the frustration I feel when I can't pay my employees more then the McDonald's down the street. It is very upsetting to me to think that flipping a hamburger pays more then childcare pays their employees who work with our precious children day after day.

Do you realize if I charged parents what quality care actually would cost, and paid all my staff what they were worth, half or more of my clients would have to stay home and become a burden to our government?

Is it fair to charge parents what quality care costs when the government cannot reimburse centers the full amount of what we charge now? I don't think so; I am not one of the centers that charge clients the difference between what government pays and what the fee is. I feel that charging my CCIS clients the difference is unfair because if they could pay more I would think their fee would be higher. Charging my full-pay parents the extra amount would cause a hardship on them and may be taking a vital necessity out of their life or their child's.

I built a new center on my 100-Acre farm so my children could grow and learn like my biological children have done. Most of my children live in a small home with a postage stamp yard with no pets. I have been able to allow them to enjoy nature with my woods and farmland and learn and grow in a farm like environment.

Not only do my children enjoy this new center and it's surroundings but my parents love it too.

This of course could not have been done without some sacrifices on my part, like ignoring my own house repairs, because of lack of money. Every dollar taken in from my centers goes to paying staff, bills, groceries, loans, craft items and if money allows toys.

There is little left over for my own personal needs, and without my wonderful handy husband who does all the upkeep of both facilities, yard work, toy repair and any other work that needs to be done there is no way I could accomplish my goal in life. We

2082

borrowed \$300,000 for the new center and that was just enough, that is with all the labor my husband did with the electrical work, roadwork, and landscaping work. If I had had to hire someone for all that work the new center would not have been built and I would have had to turn away 30 to 40 children.

The T.E.A.C.H. program is wonderful and I do have a teacher enrolled in it, but I would love to have all my teacher's involved. The problem money! I cannot give them the raise that is required after their completed years in the program.

I feel educated teachers provide the best quality care that a child can receive in childcare. To have educated teachers there is a price tag that goes with it, and centers cannot afford to pay what educated teachers need. I would love to have at least one degreed teacher in every classroom but that is not reality. I could never afford to do that and still stay in business.

I did receive a CCRD grant to do half of my parking lot to improve my center and for the safety of the children. With the rules at the present time I cannot apply for another grant for that center for 3 years. It is a wonderful grant but I would like to see it available to centers yearly if the need is there. I know I would love to complete my entire parking lot, but the funds will not be there.

I look for the day that I can pay my staff a sufficient salary with benefits so my retention and quality of staff can go up tremendously.

I would like to see the Cyber start money go to different avenues to educate our children that could mean more. I have nothing against computers, since I already have them in both my centers. I do know this is the future teaching of our children and I do give them the basics, but I have a problem making the Internet available to young children.

I feel the money could be used in bettering the music and art programs that my children have. My teacher's do art and music, but it would be wonderful to have a real Art teacher come in for a few hours a week to work real art projects with the children. It would also be great to have a music instructor come in once a week to teach an instrument or just to play one for the children. It is sad to know that in Italy this is a reality, and it is just a dream to me in the U.S.A.

I feel these different activities would encourage the arts in our students and they would enjoy using some imagination instead of being programmed to use the Internet. I feel our children do not use their imaginations enough, I don't think some of them even have an imagination. So many of our children are being entertained by T.V., video games, and computers that they have no need for imagination. That is one of the reasons I built my new center so the children have 100 plus acres to explore and use their imaginations.

I urge you to pass the proposed budget not for me but for my staff and my children. I thank-you for taking the time to read this and all the faxes I have sent from staff and my parents.

Barbara L. Gaine

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

July 11, 2002

Mary Ellen Camp
Project Director
Regional Career & Technical Center
8500 Oliver Road
Erie, PA 16509

Dear Ms. Camp:

Thank you for writing to express your support for funding the New Choices/New Options Program in the Commonwealth's General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2002-2003. I appreciate hearing from you with respect to this important program, and am pleased to respond.

The New Choices/New Options Program has been of enormous benefit to many Pennsylvania citizens as it has provided displaced workers, single parents and nontraditional career participants with the opportunity to receive job counseling services, job training, and educational and job placement services. These individuals have gone on to lead productive lives and have become fully contributing members of society.

The line item for this program in last year's budget was \$3.7 million, however, the funding level was reduced to \$2 million in this year's budget, which was recently signed by Governor Schweiker. Due to this kind of misplaced funding priority, I voted against this budget.

Please know that I will continue to support the New Choices/New Options Program in future budget discussions, and that I hope this funding can be restored to its former level. It is far too great a sacrifice to reduce our support for this type of valuable program, while continuing to provide for other misplaced budget priorities.

Thanks again for writing. If I may be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Scrimenti".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District



JUN - 5 2002

REGIONAL CAREER & TECHNICAL CENTER

New Choices / New Options

May 29, 2002

Representative Thomas J. Scrimenti
Main Capitol Building
Box 96
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

At this critical time in the budget process, I am writing to request your continued support for the New Choices/New Options programs in Pennsylvania. As you know, we are currently a line item in the House budget, thanks to your support. I respectfully ask you to contact the House Leadership and urge them to leave New Choices/New Options in the budget for 2002-03.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ellen Camp".

Mary Ellen Camp
Project Director

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG
July 15, 2002

Ms. Barbara Anderson

██████████
Erie, PA 16510-4364

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Growing Greener Program and the efforts to fund the program through an increase in the tipping fee for waste disposal. I appreciate you taking the time to express your views to me regarding this important matter.

As you may know, the General Assembly and Governor Schweiker recently agreed upon a budget package for fiscal year 2002-2003 fiscal year. Although some funds were allocated for the Growing Greener Program, I am concerned that the final budget agreement failed to adequately address the problem of dedicated funding for this program. Specifically, the Growing Greener Program is the beneficiary of funds resulting from the passage of House Bill 2044. This proposal provides for an increase to the current tipping fee at municipal waste landfills from \$2 to \$6 per ton of solid waste. The proceeds of this fee increase will result in a one-time appropriation of \$50 million to Environmental Stewardship Fund used to fund Growing Greener. The remainder of the money will be directed to the General Fund to make up for deficits in the budget.

Clearly, I recognize the importance of the Growing Greener Program and how it has benefited our communities. Nevertheless, given the failure to adequately provide for the future of this valuable program and the burden the tipping fee increase may have on residents of our area, I voted against House Bill 2044 as well as the final budget proposal.

Again, I thank you for contacting my office and sharing your views. Please be assured that I will keep your thoughts in mind as my colleagues and I deliberate the issues affecting you and your families. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me in the future regarding this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

Scrimenti, Tom

From: Barbara W. Anderson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2002 9:46 AM
To: Scrimenti, Tom
Subject: Proposed Trash Tax Increases

Barbara W. Anderson
[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16510-4364

June 27, 2002

The Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti
324 Main Capitol, Box 202020
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Rep. Scrimenti:

I am concerned that several legislative measures under current consideration in Harrisburg would add between \$2 to \$5 per ton to the tipping-fee tax for trash disposal, in order to provide more money for Growing Greener grants.

Five dollars might sound like a modest amount, but we dispose of 14 million tons of trash generated in Pennsylvania each year, which means a

\$5 increase would end up adding over \$70 million a year to the cost of waste disposal for Pennsylvania businesses and households. Most of this would be passed along to the end consumer and, in turn, most of that burden would fall on businesses.

The current Growing Greener tax is 25 cents per ton. An increase of \$5 per ton on top of that would be a tax hike of 2,000 percent!

While the Growing Greener program is a worthwhile initiative, it is clear that the tradeoff will be increased costs of solid waste disposal. I urge you to say no to the trash tax! The cost of doing business in Pennsylvania doesn't need to go any higher.

We already pay taxes on the items we are having hauled away as trash. Why in the world would we want to be taxed on our trash again.

Sincerely,

Barbara W. Anderson

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE



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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

mailed 7/31

July 29, 2002

Mrs. Verna Franz

██████████
Erie, PA 16506-3154

Dear Mrs. Franz:

Thank you for contacting my office to urge my support regarding a cost of living increase for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services. I can certainly understand your concern over this important issue, especially given your personal insight.

As you may know and as proven by my record of service, the welfare of our children is of supreme importance to me. More importantly, I recognize the need to provide our special needs children with the essential services needed to further enhance their development. As a lawmaker, I appreciate the invaluable service and support the MH/MR Services provides for our children, adults, and communities. Unfortunately, the amendment language that provided for the 2% COLA that the House of Representatives unanimously passed on April 29, 2002 did not make it into the final version of the budget. It is for this reason as well as numerous other shortfalls in valuable programs that I voted no for the 2002-2003 General Fund Budget. I could not in good faith approve of a budget that did not include a COLA for the dedicated adults that handle the painstaking tasks caring for our most vulnerable citizens. Please be assured that I will remain mindful of your concerns when my colleagues and I deliberate this and other issues.

To that end, I thank you for contacting me and sharing your views. If I can be of any further assistance concerning any other state issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District