

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

March 28, 2003

Mr. Paul Carpenedo, Executive Director
Erie Homes for Children and Adults, Inc.
226 East 27th Street
Erie, PA 16504

Dear Mr. Carpenedo:

Thank you very much for your letter of concern regarding the current process of approving the Commonwealth's budget. Please know that I share your commitment to those with mental retardation and other disabilities and concur that adequate review and deliberation is important to creating a budget that takes the Commonwealth's citizens' complex needs into consideration.

As you may know, shortly after Governor Rendell introduced the first phase of his budget for fiscal year 2003/04, House Republican Leadership chose to quickly and without review bring the bill, House Bill 648, before the General Assembly for a vote. Because of my concerns with funding specifics, including the reduction in funds for important community needs, I was among the 84 Democrats to vote against this budget bill. The Governor line item vetoed this bill and signed it into law on March 20, 2003. In the Governor's second budget address he presented a plan to invest in the future of our fine Commonwealth. Specifically, the plan includes more funds for a variety of quality educational initiatives, tax structure reform, and an increase in state resources to create a more equal quality public education system for all of Pennsylvania's communities.

At this time, the General Assembly is currently considering the Governor's comprehensive plan. Specific funding allocations, or lack thereof, for the next fiscal year remain unclear at this writing. Given the financial constraints Pennsylvania faces, I am unable to guarantee that we can restore any funding cuts that have already been made. However, I believe in adequately funding programs for those with mental retardation and other disabilities, and will continue to monitor this issue.

Again, thank you for writing me. As always, if I may be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely yours,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative



1912-2002
90 Years of Caring

MAR - 7 2003
Residential and Community Services

Providing Quality Care for People with Developmental Disabilities

Erie Homes for Children and Adults, Inc.

226 East 27th Street Erie, Pennsylvania 16504 (814) 454-1534 Fax (814) 452-6723

March 5, 2003

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Executive Director

Paul V. Carpenedo

The Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti
Room 25B, East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

RE: Fiscal Year 2003-2004
Pennsylvania Budget

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

I am writing to strongly urge you to not approve the budget presented by Governor Rendell on March 4th. There needs to be time to review the entire budget including the second part to be presented March 25th. Passage of the budget at this time would not allow adequate review to determine the impact on Pennsylvania citizens, especially those with mental retardation and other disabilities. I urge you to please wait in order to review all aspects of the budget, allow for public debate and hopefully pass the best budget for Pennsylvania at this time. A quick passage at this time is not in our best interest.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Carpenedo
Executive Director

PC:kab

cc: Shirley Walker, PAR
Rev. Samuel W. Bourne, Board President

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DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

March 31, 2003

Joel Magee, Manager
Harborcreek Township Sewer Authority
5601 Buffalo Road
Harborcreek, PA 16421

Dear Mr. Magee:

Thank you very much for your letter regarding Commonwealth funding for the Harborcreek Township Sewer Authority's sewage treatment plant. Like you, I believe that Commonwealth financial support for maintaining sewage treatment plants is important to local communities as they are an investment in our environment and the health of our citizens.

As you know, Governor Rendell introduced the first phase of his budget for fiscal year 2003/04 on March 4 and stated that he would soon introduce a second phase of the budget. Regrettably, House Republican Leadership chose to quickly and without review bring the budget, House Bill 648, before the General Assembly for a vote. Because of my concerns with funding specifics, including the reduction in funds for important community needs, I was among the 84 Democrats to vote against this budget bill. The Governor line item vetoed this bill and signed it into law on March 20, 2003.

Recently, Governor Rendell unveiled his second phase plan, which demonstrates to be a comprehensive plan to invest in the future of our fine Commonwealth. Specifically, this plan provided additional funding for a variety of quality educational initiatives and community and economic development programs as well as providing a framework for tax structure reform.

Specific funding allocations, or lack thereof, for the next fiscal year remain unclear at this writing. Given the financial constraints Pennsylvania faces, I am unable to guarantee that we can restore any funding cuts for local sewage treatment plants. However, I believe that it is important that the state contribute its fair share to local communities and will continue to monitor this issue.

Again, thank you for writing me. As always, if I may be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely yours,

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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HARRISBURG

May 5, 2003

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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
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DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

John, Gayle and Sherry Dyne

██████████
Corry, PA 16407

Dear John, Gayle and Sherry:

Thank you for taking the time to contact my office and inform me of your position with regards to property tax reform. As your state representative, I appreciate learning about issues that are important to my constituents and being of service whenever possible.

As you may know, property tax is an issue that has been revisited by the General Assembly several times, but a true remedy to the debilitating tax that many residents in our state are hindered by has not been enacted. For that reason, our Governor line-itemed a portion of the enacted 2003/2004 General Fund Budget in an effort to force the majority party in the House and the Senate to address this important issue. The second phase of Governor Rendell's proposed budget, also commonly referred to as a "Plan For A New Pennsylvania," was presented to the General Assembly in late March, but has not yet been introduced in legislative form.

Nonetheless, the package that was presented to the members of the General Assembly is designed to provide real property tax reform by increasing the state's share of education spending. Doing this will take the burden off local school districts that depend on property taxes to fund public education. Generating revenue for these initiatives may be difficult, but can be done through a variety of measures that are currently being explored. Those measures include but are not limited to a less than one percent increase in the personal income tax, closing the loopholes on Corporate Net Income taxes, introducing slot machines at racetracks, implementing reckless driver surcharges, increasing the Malt Beverage Tax, and broadening the Utility Gross Receipts Tax.

I look forward to examining Governor Rendell's proposal once it is presented before me. Until then, please be assured that I will keep your thoughts in mind regarding this important issue. Further, if you have any additional questions or concerns relating to this or any other state-related matter, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

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

Tom Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

APR - 2 2003

March 30, 2003

Representative Scrimenti,

We have been following Governor Rendell's budget and in particular his view of property tax reform.

Once again homeowners are about to be taken to the cleaners!

It's amazing when congressional pay raises or frivolous 'entitlement programs' are submitted to the legislature, they sail thru without any problem, but property tax reform never seems to be of much importance.

Every election cycle the politicians campaign on the issue of 'property tax reform', but as soon as they are elected it gets put on the back burner.

Rendell's proposal to increase the state income tax in order to lower property taxes is a hoax! This need's to be a mandatory requirement, if the state income tax goes up, the property tax must come down in direct proportion.

As it stands now our state income tax will increase and property taxes will increase as well.

So many times when more money is generated for our schools, it ends up funding pension plans or hiring more administrators rather than helping the students.

Tom, this is a serious problem! The property owners are taxed to the point where some may lose their homes.

We have faith that you and the legislature will hold Governor Rendell accountable and propose property tax legislation that will actually help the homeowner.

Sincerely,

John, Gayle & Sherry Dyne

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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

May 13, 2003

R.P. Schreckengost, Executive Director
Erie-Western PA Port Authority
208 East Bayfront Parkway, Suite 201
Erie, PA 16507

Dear Mr. Schreckengost:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority funding for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. Please know that I share your concerns regarding this important issue.

Governor Rendell presented a grave budget proposal for the Commonwealth, which the House quickly affirmed on March 6 and the Senate passed six days later. Regrettably, this occurred without consideration of the Governor's proposal to generate new revenue and without addressing other important issues. It was because of this and several other reasons that I voted against the 2003-2004 fiscal budget.

PennPorts was appropriated \$14 million during the 2002-2003 fiscal year. As you know, the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority received a \$2 million grant from PennPorts last year. However, the projected appropriation for the 2003-2004 budget is \$11 million, which would decrease the PennPorts grant by \$800,000.

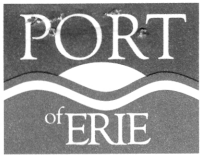
Pennsylvania and the rest of the nation are continually facing economic challenges that are beyond our control. As such, budget allocations for the 2003-2004 fiscal year is an area of growing concern for many organizations and various industries across the Commonwealth. While the General Assembly approved the budget, it is very possible that further negotiations will take place. Please know that your thoughts will be remembered and respected as my colleagues in the House and I continue to monitor this situation.

Once again, thank you for your letter and sharing your concerns with me. I assure you that your thoughts will be remembered and respected as I continue to work with my colleagues to identify future revenue sources. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any further assistance to you.

Sincerely,

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

Tom Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District



ERIE-WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA PORT AUTHORITY

208 East Bayfront Parkway, Suite 201
Erie, PA 16507
Phone: 814-455-7557
Fax: 814-455-8070
www.porterie.org

07 MAR 2003

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Vice-Chairman
EDWARD P. JUNKER, III
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MATTHEW J. GRESS
Secretary

March 6, 2003

Honorable Tom Scrimenti
PA State Representative
9 West Main Street
North East, PA 16428

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& Government Relations*

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*Director of Operations
Harbormaster*

Mary E. Simmons
Chief Financial Officer

Thomas M. Maggio
Grants Administrator

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

As the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority moves forward with its Bayfront Development Plan to transform Erie's Bayfront into the economic development engine it can be, it is critical that we maintain our \$2,000,000 grant from PennPorts.

We understand this is a difficult budget year, but with the job losses Erie County has sustained, it is of the utmost importance that Bayfront development does not slow down; but, in fact, it must accelerate.

We respectfully request your assistance in maintaining a strong and viable Port Authority. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

R. P. Schreckengost
Executive Director

RPS:sms

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 21, 2003

Mr. Joseph J. Marshall

████████████████████
Wattsburg, PA 16442

Dear Mr. Marshall:

Thank you for your letter of concern regarding the Commonwealth budget. Please know that I share your concerns regarding the budget cuts in key human services areas. Clearly this is a difficult year for many, but it is particularly hard on those who are in need of programs that provide services to help Deaf people be more independent.

Pennsylvania is faced with a dire budget crisis as a result of the poor economic conditions throughout the nation. Governor Ed Rendell, after less than two months in office, was forced to deal with this difficult situation by introducing a constitutionally mandated balanced budget.

Unfortunately, the balanced budget cut key social and governmental programs so greatly, they simply cannot exist. While I have stood for fiscal responsibility throughout my career, I cannot support any budget that may prevent Pennsylvanians from receiving the care and services they deserve. Therefore, I along with nearly all of my Democratic colleagues, voted against the 2003-2004 state budget.

While the budget was passed over our many objections, I can assure you that I will work tirelessly with the Governor and members of both parties to restore some level of funding for these crucial programs.

Once again, thank you for contacting my office and alerting me to your concerns. If I can be of 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

Shannon
Please forward
to Rep-
Scrivenor's office.
This is one of
his commitments
JE
5/13/03
MAY 13 2003

April 24, 2003

The Honorable John R. Evans
State Representative
145E East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3049

Dear Representative Evans:

My name is JOSEPH S MARSHALL. I am Deaf. I am writing because I am worried about the Human Services Development Fund being cut from the 2003 – 2004 governor's budget.

Voices for Independence (VFI) used those funds to provide employment readiness, skills training and service coordination to the Deaf community in Erie County.

VFI's Deaf Services Program is the only program that helps Deaf people be more independent. If these funds are not put back into the budget, VFI won't be able to continue helping Deaf people in Erie County. Deaf people will be lost without this support. Our communication access needs will be ignored. I fear the loss of these funds and this program will hurt the Deaf community.

When a Deaf person tries to communicate with a hearing person, it is very confusing and difficult and sometimes impossible depending on education level. The Deaf Services Program helped our community have real communication. Without it, Deaf people will have a difficult time getting the hearing community to understand what we need. Deaf people cannot access the emergency room, the court system, or the police department. The Deaf Services Program staff helps us to access these systems to make sure we get the help we need.

Please advocate that the Human Service Development Fund money be put back into the budget for 2003 – 2004. The Deaf community in Erie County depends on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph J. Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with some capital letters.

Type name here

JOSEPH J MARSHALL

cc: Shona Eakin, Voices for Independence

MAY 07 2003

Kathleen Sumner

██████████
North East, PA 16428

May 2, 2003

Representative Thomas Scrimenti
25B Main Capitol Building
East Wing, Box 202020
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

I moved to the Erie area in the fall of 1997 and was amazed at the condition of the library collection at the new Central Library (Blasco). Quite frankly, the collection was one of the worst I had ever experienced in my forty-five years of working in public libraries. The six branches in Erie were not what I had been accustomed to seeing in Ohio, New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, California and Texas. Aside from being small, five of the six were in horrible condition. One had sewage oozing up out of the floor at least twice a year, three had leaky roofs. Staff washed their dishes in the public bathrooms. Most facilities were in small, old strip malls meant to be stores, not conducive the proper library service. Furniture and carpeting was old and tattered. The bathrooms were really dreadful. Outdoor signage was, and is so terrible that it would be better to have none at all. There was nothing budgeted for building maintenance other than cleaning. Never the less, the staff was gracious, helpful and the branches were heavily used.

It is my belief that people in Erie simply are not, for most part, aware of what a public library should be. While we have had and presently have numerous and wonderful library supporters in Erie County, it has not been enough to raise and maintain our level of library service at an acceptable level. The positive side of all this is that there is only one way to go and that is up.

Fortunately, the sad state of public libraries in Pennsylvania was brought to light in 1997 and as a result, the State saw fit to improve the funding of libraries. This funding enabled us to add staff, increase hours at the branches, open Sundays at Blasco, improve collections, services, programs—all of which were reflected in library usage in the following years. However, we (Erie County Public Library) are still well below the

standard of service we provided in the early 1970's. Although improved, Pennsylvania still ranks far below most states in library support. I find these facts quite distressing considering that this is the state where the Declaration of Independence was written and where public libraries in America began.

Pennsylvania's literacy rate is low, particularly in urban areas. Public school libraries are shameful-especially in urban areas. How much time does the average student spend in the school library each week? Perhaps 30 minutes. However, most students rely on the public library for their school needs because the collections are more extensive and the facilities are open evenings and weekends and summers. Have you ever considered how much of a public library's budget supports students (public, private, college) doing homework every year?

Yet public libraries are currently being threatened with a 50% cut in state aid. This is really shameful. If you are concerned about the future of Pennsylvania we must provide educational facilities that are open and free to all the people of the state. I realize that we are living in financially challenging times but this kind of thinking is exactly why Pennsylvania cannot attract and keep good young talent and new businesses. We must improve what we have now and plan for new programs down the road when the economy is better. Just what are our highest priorities? We have come so far toward our goal of decent library service in the past few years. Surely it is not your intention that libraries return to providing inferior library services.

Should the present plan of a 50% cut come to pass, four, possibly five of six Erie Branch libraries will close. Over 200,000 children's books will not be borrowed by Erie's youth. 2,654 children will not attend storytimes and programs at the branches. The vast majority of these programs are attended by pre-school children. Much of the circulation comes from pre-school children. Bookmobile service will be discontinued. Our Internet Lab and the Heritage Room (local history and genealogy-used by patrons from 37 states, Canada and Europe) will be jeopardized. One of our local philanthropic organizations will not go forward with plans for building new branches (which would replace two or three of our existing branches allowing us to provide better and more efficient services).

Public libraries provide service for a very, very small amount of money. The American Library Association tells us that Americans spend \$330 billion a year on legalized gambling—enough to fund public libraries for 75 years and that Americans spend less than \$20.00 a year in taxes for public library service. Most families of four spend more on junk food each week than they do supporting library services in a year.

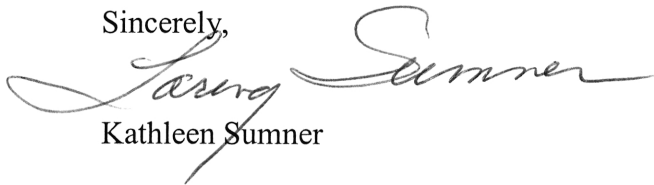
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Please revisit your decision to cut 50% of Pennsylvania State funding for libraries. If anything, you really should increase funding for libraries at this time, not decrease it. Having to face these kind of decisions must be very challenging and cuts must be made but a 50% cut is simply beyond my comprehension. Perhaps projects like the construction of the Presque Isle Welcome Center could be postponed for a while? These projects are wonderful but not if we have to sacrifice other basic services. I am told that it is different money but I feel that in times like these we need to reprioritize some of these things.

Library services are part of our "Quality of Life" in Erie. Generally speaking, the nicer the library, the nicer the community. I urge you to reconsider.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Sumner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Kathleen Sumner

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG
June 5, 2003

Robert & Barbara Daley

████████████████████
Erie, PA 16510-4009

Dear Robert & Barbara:

I received and read your recent letter regarding the "nursing home provider assessment" proposed by Governor Rendell. Please know that I understand and share your concern relating to this issue.

According to the administration, the provider assessment was devised to counterbalance lost federal revenue caused by the phase-out of the intergovernmental transfer, a financing method involving 21 counties by which the state draws \$800 million in federal Medicaid funds annually that would otherwise bypass Pennsylvania. As I understand it, the plan will produce an extra \$145 million in state funds, which in turn will generate an estimated \$175 million in added federal Medicaid support for nursing homes. Nevertheless, I am aware that there are many people who question whether this assessment will actually provide the matching support that is intended, or whether in the final analysis the additional tax will be born by the consumer. Because information has been sketchy heretofore, I hope the administration will address these important concerns in the days and weeks ahead.

Incidentally, I did not support the administration's novel "Phase I" budget, which, sadly enough, was hastily enacted into law earlier this year in an ill-advised effort to embarrass a popular new governor. My 'no' vote was cast not only because I had major concerns about this particular issue but because the budget also made draconian spending cuts to vital health and human services that I simply could not tolerate. In my view, the General Assembly should have respected the governor's wishes to consider both phases of his budget proposal together as one. As it is now, we are left with the unpleasant task of trying to negate as much of the damage as possible—an unorthodox budget progression, to say the least.

Again, thank you for your correspondence. I hope this information is helpful. Please know as the budget process continues to unfold in Harrisburg, your letter and its insights will be remembered and respected. If I may be of further assistance with this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

MAR 24 2003

[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16510-4009
March 19, 2003

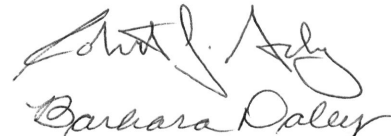
Representative Tom Scrimenti
House Box 202020
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Representative Scrimenti,

As the family of a nursing home resident, we believe Governor Rendell's proposed "Nursing Home Assessment" is an extremely poor solution to our state's budget shortfalls. Nursing homes will have little choice but to pass this cost on to private pay residents. Annual costs exceed \$50,000 now. The Governor's assessment (TAX), will add another \$1,825.

Finding a new revue source always seems to be the solution to government's budget shortfalls. Take the high road for a change. Root out government waste, it won't be hard to find. This won't be easy, but you'll be doing what's right. Don't prey on the vulnerable in our society.

Respectfully,


Robert and Barbara Daley

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2003

Steven Bishop
Executive Director
Corry Higher Education Council
221 North Center Street
Corry, PA 16407

Dear Mr. Bishop: - *Steve,*

Thank you very much for taking the time to write to me with your concerns regarding the 2003-04 Commonwealth allocations for rural initiatives. While I always appreciate hearing about the issues that affect my constituents, I am particularly appreciative of your informative letter advocating on behalf of rural Pennsylvanians who benefit directly from these important programs.

As you may already be aware, I was one of the 84 Democrats to vote against the original budget bill, which was passed into law earlier this year. I voted against this budget because of my concerns with funding specifics, such as allocations for rural initiatives, as well as the process, which did not allow for public comment or legislative deliberation. At this writing, the General Assembly is working with Governor Rendell to create a *Plan for a New Pennsylvania*. This plan specifically includes revenue enhancements to invest in public education, economic development initiatives, and property tax reform. I remain hopeful that this plan will create a better Pennsylvania for our rural communities.

In addition, I have taken the liberty to draft the attached letter to the House Democratic Appropriations Chairman, Representative Dwight Evans. Because I sincerely share your support of investing in our rural communities, I respectfully requested the review of funding allocations to rural initiatives. While I can not guarantee the restoration of funds for these important initiatives, I assure you that I will work diligently with my colleagues to restore such funding.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns and providing me an opportunity to advocate on your behalf for rural initiatives. I not only commend the Corry Higher Education Council for its efforts to provide such important educational opportunities, but am grateful to you for having chosen such an honorable role in serving our citizens as well. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of any further assistance to you or the Council.

Sincerely yours,


Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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

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



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2003

The Honorable Dwight Evans
Democratic Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
512-E-3 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Representative Evans-

Dwight,

I am writing to respectfully request that your office review funding allocations for rural initiatives. I sincerely appreciate your kind consideration of this request, especially given the severe budgetary constraints the General Assembly is facing.

These important programs have provided rural Pennsylvanians with much needed educational and economic opportunities. As you know, Governor Rendell's *Plan for a New Pennsylvania* invests in exactly these types of programs, which ensure that Pennsylvanians have access to the opportunities that naturally arise from a well educated population coupled with economic opportunity. The spirit of this plan is exemplified in programs like rural initiatives.

Therefore, it is with the greatest respect that I ask your office to review funding allocations for rural initiatives. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration and review of this matter. If you have any questions regarding my support of these important programs, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

cc: Steven Bishop, Executive Director, Corry Higher Education Council



Corry Higher Education Council

Smith Education Center
221 N. Center Street
Corry, PA 16407

Office: 814.664.9405
Fax: 814.664.2552

Web site: www.corryhied.org
Email: sbishop@corryhied.org

30 MAY 2003

May 29, 2003

The Honorable Tom Scrimenti
9 W. Main St.
North East, PA 16428

Dear Rep. ^{Tom} Scrimenti:

An upcoming statewide videoconference by the Pennsylvania Rural Development Council will focus on what the RDC calls "*the two most critical building blocks for rural development, education and workforce development.*"

The 10 Community Education Councils of Pennsylvania are at the very forefront of delivering those "critical building blocks" to much of rural Pennsylvania, including to the businesses and residents of your legislative district.

With the recent announcement of federal funding being made available to Pennsylvania, the Legislature has the opportunity to restore the 32 percent, \$625,000 cut that was made to the Rural Initiatives line item.

If education and workforce development truly are the backbone of the state's efforts to revitalize Pennsylvania, rural Pennsylvania cannot be left behind.

I urge you to make the restoration of the Rural Initiatives line item one of your priorities. Without that funding, your constituent businesses and residents will simply be at a competitive disadvantage.

Sincerely,

Steven Bishop
Executive Director

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

June 20, 2003

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

Honorable Dwight Evans, Chairman
Appropriations Committee
Room 512-E-3, Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Rep. Evans:

I am writing to urge that The Franklin Institute receives funding in the upcoming budget for Fiscal Year 2003-2004 at a level at or near that of the previous year.

The proposed cut of 30%, by far the largest for any museum in the Commonwealth, would be detrimental to the Institute's programs and threatens its service to the citizens of Pennsylvania. In fact, other Pennsylvania museums only face a 5% reduction from FY02-03 levels in the upcoming budget.

Your support for the reduction of this proposed cut for The Franklin Institute is important for several reasons.

The Institute is of immeasurable value to the Commonwealth, as it inspires in our young people an interest in science and technology, and a passion for learning. By educating our young citizens today, the Institute is ensuring Pennsylvania's continuing national leadership in science and technology fields.

Additionally, The Franklin Institute is the Commonwealth's most visited museum, welcoming nearly 800,000 visitors, including 300,000 schoolchildren, each year. The Institute's traveling science program reaches another 300,000 people annually. This impact makes the Institute not only an important quality-of-life and educational resource for the Commonwealth, but also an anchor of Pennsylvania's tourism economy.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

June 23, 2003

Mark A, DiVecchio
Erie County Courthouse
140 West Sixth Street, Room 116
Erie, PA 16501-1081

Dear Mr. DiVecchio: - *Mark,*

Thank you very much for your correspondence regarding state funding for Presque Isle State Park. I appreciate the time and effort you have put into contacting my office, and I commend you on your initiative and passion to the cause of maintaining the beauty and the improvement of conditions in Pennsylvania's most visited state park.

The 2003-2004 Governor's Executive Budget commits \$51.2 million in funds to be allocated to state parks within the Commonwealth, a \$10.5 million decrease than in last year's budget. Even with decreasing state revenues, the 2003-2004 Budget recommends funding of \$400,000 for Presque Isle's future visitor's center, and the continuation of last year's funding of \$3.5 million for the Presque Isle Greenway.

As I'm sure you know, the economy has taken a downturn which has caused chaos with the nation's financial markets, its state and local economies, and the budgets of nearly every American family. Pennsylvania is facing a budget deficit of considerable proportions, not unlike the federal government. Our Constitution, however, does not allow us to run our government via deficit spending. Consequently, it is necessary for the Commonwealth to accept a strict spending plan, and across the board cuts, for Fiscal Year 2003-2004.

I share your concerns, and I realize the importance of maintaining the beauty of our state parks. I ensure you that I will work with my colleagues to resolve this problem. Again, thank you for your correspondence regarding state funding for Presque Isle State Park. If I can be of any further assistance, please do hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

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

Tom Scrimenti
State Representative

JUN 11 2003

Mark A. DiVecchio
Erie County Councilman



Erie County Courthouse
140 West Sixth Street, Room 116
Erie, Pennsylvania 16501-1081
Telephone: (814) 451-6303
Fax: (814) 451-6350

COUNTY OF ERIE

June 10, 2003

The Honorable Thomas Scrimenti
State Representative - Fourth District
Box 202020
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Mr. Scrimenti:

I am writing to ask for your assistance in obtaining funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Parks and Recreation for use at Presque Isle State Park.

I was shocked during a recent visit to Presque Isle. The deplorable conditions of the concession stands and the restrooms/changing areas revealed the absolute necessity of increased funding. I urge you to visit the park and take note of these problems. I'm sure you will appreciate the possible negative impact this disrepair might have on park visitors. In keeping with our efforts to promote tourism in the Erie area, it would certainly be desirable to provide visitors to Presque Isle with the best facilities possible.

I am asking you to put forth your best efforts to obtain this much needed funding to improve facilities at Presque Isle for the many hundreds of thousands of people who will spend time there during the summer tourist season. If I can be of any help in this matter, please don't hesitate to contact me at the Council office.

Thank you for your assistance.

Very truly yours,

Mark A. DiVecchio
Erie County Councilman

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

June 24, 2003

Karla Smith

North East, PA 16428

Dear Ms. Smith:

I would like to thank you for contacting my office and alerting me of your concerns with regards to the pending state contract negotiations in our Commonwealth. As your state representative, I look forward to learning about issues that are important to my constituents, and being of service whenever possible.

Governor Rendell introduced Phase I of his budget proposal to the Commonwealth in early March, which was quickly passed along party lines in both chambers of the General Assembly and subsequently enacted. Unfortunately, this action excluded the residents of our state from offering input, and failed to consider the Governor's revenue generating proposals. These proposals were outlined in Phase II of the budget, after the speedy enactment of Phase I. It is with this in mind and more that I voted against the 2003/2004 General Fund Budget and continue to diligently work with my colleagues to generate revenue for Pennsylvania in an effort to restore funding to our state's beneficial programs.

As you know, the enactment of the 2003/2004 General Fund Budget is now causing many state agencies to face the possibility of implementing funding cuts. This may result in the reduction of staffing levels, pay raises and health care coverage. Although the expiration date for the current contract with state employees is approaching quickly, I am confident that a fair and reasonable negotiation will be reached. Please be assured that, given the opportunity to address this important matter with my colleagues, I will keep your thoughts in mind.

Again, thank you for contacting me and alerting me of your concerns with regards to this very important issue. If I may be a further assistance with this or any other state-related matter, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

May 13, 2003

Name: KARLA SMITH

Address: 41 BANK STREET

City: NORTH EAST, PA 16428

The Honorable Thomas Scrimenti
House of Representatives
25 B. East Wing
Harrisburg PA 17120-2020

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

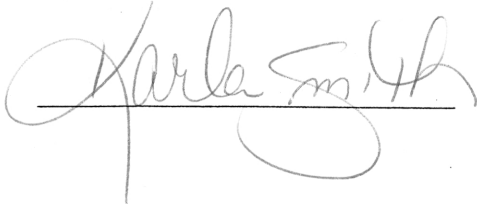
I am a state employee and am requesting your support with our upcoming labor contract with the Commonwealth. Our contract expires 6/30/03 and there have been many rumors regarding the removal of health care coverage and the elimination of any pay raises.

Commonwealth employees, as you are aware, work very hard to serve many of Pennsylvania's most needy and vulnerable citizens and often work with complex and difficult situations. It is only through sincere dedication and commitment that we are able to serve the high demand for services in such an economy.

As a worker and a taxpayer of state and federal tax dollars we recognize the importance of fiscal responsibility and the current budget deficit, but we are also the same citizens who have experienced raises in taxes, heating costs, and the general cost of living associated with raising a family. If salaries and benefits are cut it would only serve to put our economy in a further tailspin since spending power would be reduced even further.

I respectfully request your attention and influence in this vital matter to help employees obtain a modest raise and maintain their current level of health care.

Sincerely,


Karla Smith

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

June 26, 2003

Dr. Janet J. Trychin
Affiliate Board President
NAMI Pennsylvania
1611 Peach Street, Suite 105
Erie, PA 16501

Dear Dr. Trychin:

Thank you for your letter of concern regarding the Commonwealth budget. Please know that I share your concerns regarding the budget cuts in funding for mental health and drug and alcohol programs.

Pennsylvania is faced with a dire budget crisis as a result of the poor economic conditions throughout the nation. Governor Ed Rendell, after less than two months in office, was forced to deal with this difficult situation by introducing a constitutionally mandated balanced budget.

Unfortunately, the balanced budget cut key social and governmental programs so greatly, they simply cannot exist. While I have stood for fiscal responsibility throughout my career, I cannot support any budget that may prevent Pennsylvanians from receiving the care and services they deserve. Therefore, I along with nearly all of my Democratic colleagues, voted against the 2003-2004 state budget.

While the budget was passed over our many objections, I can assure you that I will work tirelessly with the Governor and members of both parties to restore some level of funding for these crucial programs.

Once again, thank you for contacting my office and alerting me to your concerns. If I can be of 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

NAMI Pennsylvania
Erie County Affiliate
1611 Peach Street, Suite 105
Erie, PA 16501
Phone (814) 456-1773
Fax (814) 451-0340

May 27, 2003

The Honorable Tom Scrimenti
25B East Wing
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-2020

Dear Hon. Tom Scrimenti:

I am writing on Behalf of the Erie County Affiliate, National Alliance for the Mentally II (NAMI), Pennsylvania Chapter. NAMI PA is the largest state-wide non-profit organization dedicated to helping mental health consumers and their families rebuild their lives, and conquer the challenges posed by severe and persistent mental illness. Our purpose is to help all people who are affected by mental illnesses.

To that end, we are very concerned with the recently passed state budget and the elimination or reduction of funding for several key programs, for persons with mental illness. The most obvious is the elimination of the Behavioral Health Services Initiative, which received \$47.9 million in state funds in last year's budget. This program provides grants to counties, that allow them to provide community mental health and drug and alcohol services for low-income persons who are not eligible for Medical Assistance. Mental health services are targeted to persons who have serious, mental illness with a history of involuntary psychiatric commitment or who are receiving psychiatric services to avert institutionalization.

Additionally, the Governor's budget assumes the implementation of eligibility changes proposed in the prior year's budget, including the elimination of non-money payment (NMP) spend-down, and limiting unpaid medical expenses, for MNO spend-down. NMP spend-down provides prescription drug coverage, dental coverage, and coverage for durable medical equipment to about 5,000 lower income individuals, including children with autism, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

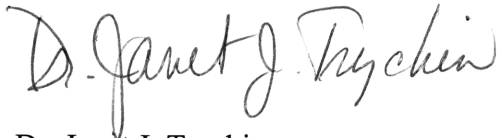
When this proposal was announced during the last budget cycle, it was estimated that over 8,000 Pennsylvanians would lose another form of Medical Assistance through change to the Medically Needy Only (MNO) category of eligibility. MNO covers hospitalization, doctor visits, lab tests and other basic health care. It is used primarily by employees' persons without health insurance.

The total cuts to mental health and drug and alcohol services were over \$103 million. These cuts, coupled with proposed cuts to Medicaid at the Federal level and reductions in eligibility mentioned above will have a seriously detrimental impact on some of our most vulnerable and needy residents.

At a time when our economy is sluggish and the country is recovering from war, it makes little sense to limit services that may be vital to the well being of our residents. The costs of not providing services have the potential to dramatically outweigh the cost of providing the services. By not appropriately treating; the mental ill individuals may loose their jobs, become homeless or wind up in our prison system.

Please consider restoring these important services for Pennsylvanians and investing in programs that will have a positive fiscal impact in the long run.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dr. Janet J. Trcyhin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Dr. Janet J. Trcyhin
Affiliate Board President
NAMI PA Erie County

Cc: NAMI, NAMI Pennsylvania,

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

□ 9 WEST MAIN STREET
NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

August 26, 2003

Kenneth W. Andersen
Director, Science in Motion
Gannon University
109 University Square
Erie, PA 16541-0001

Dear Mr. Andersen:

Thank you very much for your letter regarding funding for the Science in Motion consortium in this year's budget. The program has been a fantastic success for students and teachers alike, and I look forward to seeing this inspired concept endure.

As you know, Pennsylvania is facing a budget deficit of considerable proportions. Given the severe budget deficit, this year's budget reduced or maintained level funding for many programs. However, many revenue generating initiatives have been proposed in an effort to prevent deeper cuts and attempt to restore funding to many of our state's crucial programs.

Regrettably, as of right now the Science in Motion program's funding has not been included in this year's state budget. However, I am optimistic that through budget negotiations these funds will be restored. Please be assured, that as a State Legislator committed to advocating on behalf of students in our Commonwealth, I will do everything possible to see that funding is appropriated for this valuable program.

Again, thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding this issue. If I can provide any additional help on this or any other issue, please do not hesitate in contacting my office.

Sincerely,

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

Tom Scrimenti
State Representative

109 University Square • Erie, Pennsylvania • 16541-0001 • 814/871-7353 • Fax 814/871-7382

August 20, 2003

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

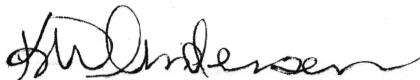
Dear Representative Scrimenti:

As you know there are many concerns about the status of funding for many different programs in education. The PA Basic Education/Higher Education Science and Technology Consortium (Science in Motion) is one of these. The program is supported in House Bill 1618. We are asking you to back it by contacting David Argall and advising him of your support for this appropriation.

This program has been in operation for the past several years and has provided the use of technology and modern scientific equipment to thousands of children in the Commonwealth. Now that the members of the Science in Motion consortium has the equipment and van for transporting it to the school, it would seem a be a big waste not to continue support.

We greatly appreciate your support.

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Andersen
Director, Science in Motion

Cc: North East office



THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS
DEMOCRATIC VICE CHAIRMAN

October 16, 2003

Dr. Joseph Buzanowski
Superintendent of Schools
Iroquois School District
4231 Morse Street
Erie, PA 16511

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding funding for public education in our Commonwealth. As a state representative, I appreciate learning about issues that concern the residents of Erie County.

First and foremost, please know that providing a quality education to Pennsylvania's youth coupled with real education reform is a priority on the top of my legislative agenda. Further, Governor Rendell is an avid supporter of improving our state's public education system and providing first-rate opportunities to all of the students in our Commonwealth. For that reason, the General Assembly has introduced a variety of proposals which will provide honest property tax reform by increasing the state's share of education spending. Doing this will take the burden off local school districts that depend on property taxes to fund public education.

However, given our current economic outlook, successfully generating revenue for these initiatives may be difficult. It is with this in mind and more that my colleagues and I are diligently working to explore a variety of measures that may be utilized to accomplish this ambitious agenda. These measures aim to replace local property tax revenue with other state-generated revenue sources, with the end result being the restoration of basic education funding and providing Pennsylvania's homeowners with sizeable property tax relief. Several proposals have been discussed, including increasing the personal income tax and the sales tax, implementing the slots-at-racetracks gaming plan, closing corporate net income tax loopholes, broadening the utility gross receipts tax, and increasing the malt beverage tax and the reckless driver surcharge. Although I do not expect that all of these revenue-generating avenues will be employed, it is my hope that a mutual understanding on these initiatives will soon be reached.

Dr. Joseph Buzanowski
Page 2

With that in mind, you may realize that each measure has been heavily examined and reviewed by members of the General Assembly. Nevertheless, as debate on these issues continues, I expect the proposals to alter until an agreement is made. Until then, please know that the Iroquois School District and the rest of the school districts in Erie County will remain in my thoughts as the budget process continues.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom", written over the word "Sincerely".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District



IROQUOIS SCHOOL DISTRICT

4231 Morse Street • Erie, PA 16511

(814) 899-7641

FAX (814) 898-2099

26 SEP 2003

Joseph R. Buzanowski, Ed.D
Superintendent

Kimberly A. Smith, CPA
Business Manager

September 23, 2003

Thomas Scrimenti
PA State House of Representatives
District 4
9 West Main Street
North East, PA 16428

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

As Superintendent of the Iroquois School District, I represent the District and School Board members. I respectfully request your responses to the following questions concerning relevant District budget process issues. It is the intent of the Iroquois School Board to provide the unedited firsthand responses, received from all respondents, to the District constituents via our newsletter. I would appreciate your response to the following questions by Wednesday, October 8, 2003.

1. Locally mandated property taxes are a prime source of revenue for our school district. The Governor, state-level administrators and some legislators are proposing other state-generated revenue sources as replacements or supplements for the local property tax.
 - a) What is the most logical source of these monies, what will it generate in dollars on an annual basis over the next five years, and what is the anticipated duration of such relief (e.g., one-year, five-years, permanent)?
 - b) What are alternative sources of these monies, and what will each generate in dollars on an annual basis?
 - c) What guarantee(s) will be legislated that these revenue sources will be (1) dedicated and will (2) remain dedicated to funding public education on an equal and statewide basis, and not be diverted to fund other activities and entities?

2. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Statute requires that all of the 501 local school districts approve and pass an annual school district budget by June 30 of each year. These budgets rely significantly on Commonwealth revenue sources. Why must local school districts be subjected to finalizing an annual budget based on only a gross estimation of a Commonwealth revenue source while the corresponding, state contribution to public education is not established on an equally calendar dependent date?
3. What do the various referendum proposals offer individual school districts, local school board members, and the district's stake holders in the way of assurances that Pennsylvania will not become one, large school district, stripping the locally elected, school board directors of any authority and control?
 - a) Will the main function of the school board become the fashioning of spending plans that can garner the requisite number of votes rather than those that increase student achievement or serve students best.
 - b) Will District revenues have to be spent on public relations campaigns to win referendum elections rather than on programs that can make a real difference to students
4. If the statements made by Commonwealth legislators, the Governor, and other state public administrators (e.g., "... the public education of our state's youth is the 'Number One' priority...", "... no legislation passed, regarding public education funding, is partisan in nature...", "... the authority and integrity of local school districts must be maintained...") are accurate, honest, and sincere,
 - a) why is the adjudication of this year's 2003-2004 budget for public education, delayed to such an extent that it is impacting negatively on nearly all of the 501 local school districts?
 - b) why are the related, individual votes (on both PA House & Senate Bills) so very partisan in nature (i.e., votes generally reflect, almost exactly, the Democratic and Republican membership counts of the respective chambers)?
5. Because of the current 2003-2004 Budget impasse, many of the 501 local school districts are considering budget-anticipation loans to ensure the fiscal stability of their individual district's operation until the impasse is resolved. With this hypothesis as a baseline, will the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 - a) reimburse individual school districts for the cost (e.g., setup fees, legal fees, interest payments and points) of such loans?
 - b) guarantee "budget-anticipation loans" for less fiscally sound districts?
6. In an effort to keep costs to a minimum, a vast majority of Pennsylvania school districts are accessing automotive, liability, property, and workers' compensation insurance programs through various group plans such as those offered by the Pennsylvania School Board Association. The premium cost of

these areas has at least doubled over the past two years. As the Governor and State investigate causes and options for medical malpractice insurance, what is being done to investigate the causes of, the options to, and the establishment of statewide safe guards for Pennsylvania school districts regarding mandated insurance costs.

7. In Pennsylvania, more than \$2.5 billion in additional school building projects are forecasted for the next five (5) years. With much discussion being given to referendum provisions, what are your beliefs regarding the ability of a school district to waive referendum provisions on construction through the mandate waiver program provided strict criteria are set in place by the Department of Education?
8. Under all proposed funding options for public education, where and how will school districts be able to secure new monies for innovative and incentive programs, improvement to technology, construction and renovations?
9. Pennsylvania school districts experience unfunded mandates. In Pennsylvania, specific requirements on collective bargaining, prevailing wage, and charter schools serve to boost expenses for a district. How will pending legislative proposals, including referendum, ease the burden on individual districts given that school districts will not be able to increase revenues by more than the commensurate increase in either the statewide average weekly wage or the consumer price index?

Thank you for your responses to our questions and concerns.

Yours in education,



Dr. Joseph R. Buzanowski
Superintendent of Schools

kat

- c: Gary Foster, President, Iroquois School Board
William Wittenberg, Vice President, ISB
Harry Parker, Secretary, ISB
James Crotty, Treasurer, ISB
Katherine Beaver, Member, ISB
Thomas Loftus, Member, ISB
Brenda Kiehlmeier, Member, ISB
Mark Bratt, Member, ISB