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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

February 10, 2004

Ms. Jean Eller

[REDACTED]
Waterford, PA 16441

Dear Ms. Eller:

Thank you for contacting me regarding legislation which, if enacted, will authorize a back-end referendum and affect the budgets of Pennsylvania's 501 public school districts. As a state representative, I appreciate learning about your concerns and look forward to assisting them when possible.

As you may know, the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires the General Assembly to provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education. Throughout my legislative career, I have worked hard not only to maintain that system, but to ensure that our schools are adequately and fairly funded.

Given the gross disparities in wealth among Pennsylvania's communities and school districts, I agree that the implementation of a back-end referendum would be highly detrimental to our public schools, especially due to the potential unequal financial impact a back-end referendum would have on certain communities. For that reason, I worked diligently with my colleagues in the Democratic Caucus to keep the back-end referendum out of the 2003-2004 state budget.

Thank you again for contacting me and sharing your views. Please know that I shall keep your thoughts in mind when I am presented with this important issue in the future. Should you have any questions or concerns, or if I can provide assistance with any state-related matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

Tom Scrimenti
State Representative

January 17, 2004

JAN 27 2004

The Honorable Tom Scramenti
Pa House of Representatives
Capital Building
Harrisburg, Pa. 17120

Dear Tom,

For years you have been a friend of public education. The recent movement on the other side of the aisle to pass legislation that contains a back-end referendum on school district budgets.

Our school district members are elected locally. They are trained by P.S.B.A and work closely with parents and educators, already. Such legislation will undermine their expertise. The public currently can examine the budget and has the opportunity to comment on it in public meetings.

In Ohio where my daughter teaches, such a system of voting on the levy is currently in place. This has meant disaster from year to year. Budgets have to be prepared prior to primary elections, and prior to allocations. Schools are faced with huge lay offs based on public votes. After school activities, extra curricular and homework clubs which are great for children are left unfunded. Do we want this for the children of Pennsylvania?

I hope you remain steadfast in your opposition to any of these bills!

Sincerely
Jean A. Eller