

PACE

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI  
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House of Representatives  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

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

March 11, 1996

Mrs. Glendora Fulton



North East, PA 16428

Dear Mrs. Fulton: - *Glendora,*

This letter is in response to your recent letter regarding the income threshold for PACE. The Department of Aging, which administers PACE, does not permit any special exclusions to the threshold.

I sincerely sympathize with your difficult situation and, in an effort to assist persons in your predicament, I have continually supported legislation to increase PACE beyond its current threshold of \$16,200. As you may know from media reports, Governor Ridge has proposed a \$1,000 increase to the threshold; therefore, you could now earn up to \$17,200 annually and qualify for PACE.

Again, thank you for alerting me of your particular situation and support of an increase in the PACE threshold. If I may ever be of assistance on this issue or additional state matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas Scrimenti  
State Representative

TS/sd

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April 13, 1998

Caroline Dickout  
12675 Hill Road  
Abington Crest Center  
Erie, PA 16509

Dear Ms. Dickout:

Thank you very much for sending me your note about the PACE program. The care and well being of Pennsylvania's senior citizens is of the utmost importance to me. I treasure receiving correspondence addressing issues important to the mature citizens of our community.

The PACE program has undergone a variety of changes over the past few years, including the creation in 1996 of the PACENET program. PACENET's purpose was to "catch" senior citizens whose income exceeded the maximum dollar amount by \$ 2000 to qualify for PACE and provide them with limited benefits. In order for people to qualify for PACENET, a \$500 per-person deductible must first be met. The copayments under PACENET are \$8 for generic and \$15 for brand-name prescriptions. Unfortunately, PACENET has not been as successful as originally planned by its creators and many senior citizens have been unable to qualify for aid with their pharmaceutical needs.

Proposals meant to rectify this situation have been introduced in the House of Representatives. Representative Todd Eachus was successful in amending House Bill 201 to repeal PACENET and increased the qualifying incomes by \$2000. The House of Representative subsequently passed HB 201 and sent it to the Senate where it remains as of the writing of this letter. Please be assured that I will do my best to ensure senior citizens are treated fairly and given the aid they so deserve.

Again, thank you so much for sharing your opinion about PACE with me. If I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti  
State Representative

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HARRISBURG

September 18, 2002

Walter Zdunczyk

██████████████████  
Erie, PA 16511

Dear Mr. Zdunczyk:

Thank you very much for taking time from your busy schedule to share your thoughts with me in response to my recent survey on workers' rights in Pennsylvania. Periodically, I ask my constituents to answer such questionnaires in order for me to make informed decisions and better execute my duties as a state legislator.

As I hope you know, preserving the quality of life for the residents of Erie County is of supreme importance to me. Whether it is fighting to improve workplace safety or to raise the minimum wage, I support efforts to ensure working Pennsylvanians and their families have a voice in state government. To that end, I appreciate the opportunity to offer my views on significant issues of shared concern. More importantly, I am grateful for your thoughts with respect to the issues that are important to you and your family.

In regards to your thoughts on affordable prescription drugs, I wholeheartedly agree with your assessment on the high cost of prescription drugs. As a state representative, I believe it is paramount that every citizen of the Commonwealth has access to affordable prescription drugs. In the past, I have supported proposals to expand prescription drug coverage for seniors. Specifically, House Bill 2, which I supported, utilizes funds from Pennsylvania's share of the national tobacco settlement to reinstate those seniors who lost Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly, (PACE), benefits due to a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Seniors who lost PACE benefits effective December 31, 2000, are able to remain in PACE for two additional years.

The tobacco settlement plan also provides a \$1,000 increase in the income eligibility level for the Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly Needs Enhancement Tier (PACENET). The new income guidelines for PACENET are \$14,000 to \$17,000 for singles and \$17,200 to \$20,200 for married couples. A \$500 deductible is required before the program assists with prescriptions. Upon meeting the deductible, a co-payment of \$8 is required for generic prescription drugs and \$15 for brand name

prescription drugs. The \$1,000 increase in the income eligibility level will allow approximately 10,500 more seniors to enroll in the program.

Another bill currently being considered before the General Assembly is House Bill 1, which would increase the income eligibility levels slightly more than House Bill 2. House Bill 1, which passed the full House, proposes to increase income eligibility thresholds for PACENET from \$16,000 to \$22,000 for a single person and from \$19,200 to \$30,000 for married couples. It also would remove PACENET's \$500-per-person annual deductible and implement a \$40 per month payment per enrollee. House Bill 1 is currently in the Senate Aging & Youth Committee for legislative consideration.

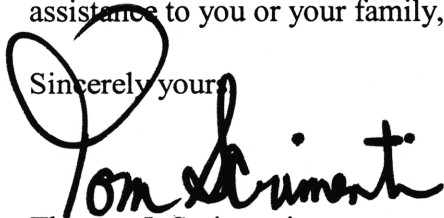
The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services is offering states \$77 million in federal funds over the next ten years to help states expand drug coverage to low-income seniors. In my view, as well as the view of many of my colleagues, the Commonwealth needs to utilize these funds to make approximately 203,000 residents eligible for prescription assistance and ensure \$196.6 million in out-of-pocket savings for seniors. In addition, the move to federalize the state's prescription assistance program would authorize the state to purchase drugs at the lower Medicaid prices. Pennsylvania seniors need solutions now, and not later.

Please be assured that I have supported legislative proposals dedicated to this issue in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. The time to act is now, instead of conducting more public hearings and focus groups on the issue. The available federal funds exist and it is time for the Commonwealth's seniors to reap the benefits.

Regarding corporate greed in America, I too, am dismayed at the rate of its occurrence. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to witness news accounts of the fall of giant corporations and the subsequent incarceration of high-powered chief executive officers (CEOs). Please be assured that I share your frustrations and will work with my fellow state lawmakers to try to prevent these situations from erupting in the Commonwealth's business communities.

Again, I want to thank you for taking the time to complete my survey and alerting me of your views on topics of importance to the Commonwealth. As always, it is a pleasure to serve you and the other residents of the 4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. If I may be of any future assistance to you or your family, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Scrimenti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T".

Thomas J. Scrimenti  
State Representative  
4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



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# House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

October 2, 2002

Mr. & Mrs. W. J. Stephenson

████████████████████  
Corry, PA 16407

Dear Mr. And Mrs. W. J. Stephenson:

Thank you for taking the time to contact me and share your concerns and thoughts regarding issues important to you. As Democratic Chairman of the Subcommittee on Care and Services for the House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee, I appreciate and share your interest in seniors' health care.

As you may know and as proven by my record of service, ensuring a high quality of life for Pennsylvania seniors is one of my top priorities. I recognize the contribution seniors have made to the strength of our Commonwealth and to the vitality of our communities. Because I believe that the current health care system often leaves behind those who need help the most, I will continue to work for a more effective and efficient health care delivery system.

In an effort to help older Pennsylvanians, I joined my colleagues in the current legislative session to aid seniors in affording prescription drugs. Specifically, I co-sponsored an amendment to the Tobacco Settlement Act allowing for a portion of the settlement funds to be allocated to the Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract to the Elderly (PACE) program. This act provided an important eligibility adjustment allowing for temporary re-enrollment, until December 31, 2002, of those who were bumped from PACE beginning December 31, 2000 due to social security adjustments for cost of living. In addition, I support newly introduced legislation that will enable seniors expecting a social security cost of living increase through 2003 to continue to benefit from the PACE program.

I appreciate your concerns in regards to doctor fee determination and Medicare. Because of your concern at the state level, I would like to bring your attention to a law I co-sponsored called the Health Care Practitioners Medicare Fee Control Act of 1990. It specifically states:

*The General Assembly declares its policy to be that, in accordance with the provisions of this act, providers of health care services should not charge or collect from a beneficiary of health insurance under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act (Public Law 74-271, 42 U.S.C. § 301 et seq.), known as the Medicare Program, an amount in excess of the reasonable charge for the service provided, as determined by the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services.*

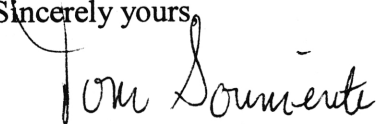
*Balance billing by health care practitioners is prohibited. It shall be unlawful for any health care practitioner, or any primary health center, corporation, facility, institution or other entity that employs a health care practitioner, to balance bill.*

This law provides consumer protection by not allowing patients to be billed over and above the reasonable cost. This creates a ceiling of expense incurred by the consumer for a given service.

Because Medicare is administered as a federal program, it would be appropriate to contact Medicare directly at 1-800-633-4227 or your congressional representatives regarding any concerns you have in the implementation of this program. Representative Phil English's office can be reached at 814-456-2083. Senator Rick Santorum's office phone number is 814-454-7114. Senator Arlen Specter's office number is 814-453-3010.

Again, I thank you for contacting my office and including me in your thoughts. I will certainly share your concerns with my colleagues in Harrisburg. In the meantime, 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". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Sincerely yours," text.

Thomas J. Scrimenti  
State Representative  
4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

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August 29, 2000

Mr. Kerry W. Duncan

Union City, PA 16438

Dear Mr. Duncan:

Thank you for writing and sharing your concerns about the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Chapter 4 regulation on Academic Standards. I believe we are all interested in assuring that all children in the Commonwealth receive a quality education that will arm them with the tools needed to be productive citizens.

According to the Department of Education, these standards were developed to establish a single, clear, concise, and comprehensive regulation to govern the educational offerings of the public schools of the Commonwealth. Chapter 4 combines and replaces Chapters 3, 5, and 6. I would hope it is not the Department's intent to usurp the authority of the local school districts in setting the learning path of its students but to establish a basic standard of expected achievement.

House Bill 2282, which is currently in the House Education Committee, has been introduced to place limitations on the authority of the State Board of Education in regard to regulating instruction, graduation, strategic planning and assessment based on academic standards. Enclosed please find a copy of a letter I sent to the Democratic Chairman of the House Education Committee requesting that they bring this bill before the Committee for consideration.

Thank you again for your input. If I can be of additional assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Scrimenti  
State Representative

enclosure

11 July 2000

Mr. Kerry W. Duncan  
[REDACTED]  
Union City, PA 16438

Representative Thomas Scrimenti  
25 East Wing  
House Box 202020  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

As an individual member of a Board of School Directors, I am deeply concerned with the direction the Commonwealth appears to be headed in the area of education. It appears that the Department of Education empowered by Acts passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor is usurping the powers of the locally elected Board of Education.

The imposed regulations of "Chapter 4 : Academic Standards and Assessment" are a good example. These regulations, which may well be in violation of the Pennsylvania School Code and are being challenged by many local school boards, remove from local control decisions regarding curriculum, the teaching of mores and morals, and graduation status.

Although the Department of Education does not go as far as to mandate that their "standards" be met by the local school district, they publish and through press releases advertise results. This appears to be a deceitful method of the Department of Education to establish curriculum. It says to me, "You don't have to do as I say, but you will be sorry if you don't."

During the Commonwealth's flirtation with "Outcome" based education, the citizens of Pennsylvania made it clear to the Legislature that they should not attempt to determine local mores and morals . However, the Department of Education is attempting to do just that with some of the proposed "standards" set forth in the areas of Wellness and Fitness, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Career Education and Work .

The Department of Education through its Chapter 4 regulations has greatly diminished parental prerogative as to whether their child will be tested. When the assessment procedures began, a parent could for any reason and at any time remove their child from the assessment. Currently the only way a parent can remove their child from the testing is for religious reasons.

The Department of Education in the coming school year will require "assessment" testing of the severely mentally handicapped. Further it is rumored that the Department of Education wishes to correlate the results from their "assessment" tests to the admission to state universities and student grants and loans.

The Chapter 4 regulations require that the diplomas issued by the local district to have placed upon them a "Seal of Proficiency" or a "Seal of Distinction" . This "State sponsored" seal appears to be leading to a " State sponsored" diploma .

With the Department of Education setting standards, establishing assessment procedures, determining the learning proficiency of the students, and forcing the local educational agency to place a "State Seal" on the diploma, it appears that the only authority left to the elected Board of School Directors is the unpopular task of levying taxes.

When you vote on legislation which entrusts the Department of Education with the task of improving public schools, I would ask you to consider: 1) If the Department of Education was capable of leadership in the area of education, would there have been a need for Chapter 4 or for that matter education reform ?, and 2) Was the public educational system of the 1950's and 1960's , the educational system which as the envy of the rest of the world, run from Harrisburg and Washington or was it run at the "grassroots" level ?

I would urge you to use your influence to have the Education Committee of the House review the Chapter 4 regulations, and set forth clear and decisive limitations on the Department of Education .

I would further urge you and the Democrat leadership to attempt to move House Bill 2282 from committee and on to the House floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry W. Duncan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

KERRY W. DUNCAN

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives  
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HARRISBURG

January 28, 2002

Mr. Dave Herr

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Corry, PA 16407

Dear Mr. Herr:

Thank you for your recent letter wherein you wrote to request my support of House Bill 2059, which would give the school directors of a school district, which operates a high school, the sole authority to decide what shall be affixed on a diploma or transcript of a student.

As I am sure you are aware, this bill was re-referred to the House Appropriations Committee, January 3, 2002. Please know that when this bill comes before the House of Representatives for a vote, I will certainly take your thoughts into consideration.

Again, thank you for writing. If I can be of any further assistance to you on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti  
State Representative