

Dear Representative

Sesimanti :

As someone who works with handicapped children, I am being told that the Commonwealth is cutting back on its support for Special Education and that my job and programs could be affected.

I ask you to oppose any cutbacks in the state's support for special education and to support full funding. My kids' welfare depends on your concern.

DEBORAH KACPURA

(Name - Please Print)


(Full Street Address)

CORRY PA 16407

(City, State, Zip)

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI, MEMBER
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS
MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS
GAME & FISHERIES

May 9, 1989

Ms. Deborah Kacpura
[REDACTED]
Corry, PA 16407

Dear Ms. Kacpura:

Thanks for your note on special education. Debate on the 1989-90 budget has not yet begun, but you may rest assured that I will do all that I can to preserve vitally needed programs for our special education youngsters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tom".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

TJS/ldn

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 7, 1989

Mr. John McCracken
Superintendent
Corry Area School District
800 East South Street
Corry, Pennsylvania 16407

Dear John:

Thank you for contacting my district office in Corry with your concerns regarding the funding deficit in the Special Education budget. I'm sorry for the delay in getting back to you, however, I wanted to obtain some background information on the subject before responding.

It's generally acknowledged that without some budgetary allocations for the coming fiscal year, Special Education will show a deficit in the area of \$90 million by June 30, 1990. Through his FY 89-90 budget, Governor Casey has attempted to attack the deficit in three ways. First, he has proposed a 6.8% increase in the Special Education line item. That translates into \$22 million and will take the line item up to \$348.3 million. Most, but not all, of this will go to the Intermediate Units. Second, Governor Casey proposed a supplemental appropriation of \$25 million for the current school year. That amount was increased to \$48 million by the House when it considered House Bill 623, the legislation containing the Special Education supplemental appropriation and appropriations for other departments. However, it's unlikely that the higher figure will be the final amount approved since there are limited funds available from the State Treasury for the supplemental appropriations. Governor Casey has also proposed five yearly payments of \$12 million each for the school districts. These payments essentially amount to paybacks to the districts for funding shortages over the past several years.

I believe everyone realizes that Special Education has been underfunded in the past, and that sincere attempts are being made to rectify the problem. Unfortunately, due to the underfunding of other programs in the early and mid-1980s, and limited resources at this time, the state is forced to correct the Special Education situation over a period of time rather than through a one-time catch up appropriation.

Mr. John McCracken
Page 2
April 5, 1989

I hope that I have been able to address your concerns on this issue.
If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

TJS/ldn

PENNSYLVANIA MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS' ASSOCIATION

c/o M.H.A.P.

900 Market Street

Harrisburg, PA. 17101

(717) 236-7742

June 6, 1989

*Send
letter*

The Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
House of Representatives
Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

As you know, citizens throughout the Commonwealth are asking how we can strengthen our system of mental health services.

Too often, mentally ill Pennsylvanians are caught in a "revolving-door" cycle of repeated hospitalizations. This cycle can continue for years or even decades. The expense to the state is staggering.

Other Pennsylvania citizens who need mental health services fall through the cracks of the traditional system and don't get them. They and their families suffer. On rare occasions they become a burden to their communities.


Self-help programs run by and for men and women who consume mental health services are a proven, cost-effective way to address these problems. These initiatives include peer support centers, small businesses and housing cooperatives.

The Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association is seeking a \$1 million appropriation from the state this budget season to fund the establishment of new consumer-run programs throughout the Commonwealth.

Please note that consumer-run initiatives do not compete with existing mental health services. Instead, these programs are an economical complement to the traditional system. They are supported by a variety of mental health professionals, and several already operate in Pennsylvania with a successful track-record.

I urge you to take a few minutes to read the attached summary of our proposal. You will see how consumer-run programs address the problems I discussed at the beginning of this letter. The Commonwealth's mental health consumers need your support.

Sincerely,


Mark Davis
President

JUN 9 1989



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

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MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS
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February 20, 1990

Dear :

Like you, I have been watching with interest and concern the progress of the Special Education Regulations and Standards as promulgated by the State Board of Education. I would like to pass on to you my observations; I hope you will in turn be able to tell me how the situation looks to you.

As you may be aware, both Representative Ron Cowell, Chairman of the House Education Committee, and Senate Education Chairman, Ralph Hess, have urged the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) to reject the proposals. The two major areas of contention are the proposed Early Intervention Programs and the Instructional Support Teams. Conversations with both men lead me to believe that they are in favor of both ideas. They have a financial and procedural objection:

- They usurp the constitutional power of the Legislature by creating new education laws, and
- They inferentially levy significant new taxes on local districts without having any responsibility or authority to fund new programs.

I wholeheartedly agree with both positions. It is my wish and tentative belief that IRRC will reject the proposed regulations. If IRRC does not reject the regulations, and the House and Senate vote on the matter, be assured that I will consider your concerns when voting.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Tom Scrimenti
State Representative

TS:js



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

February 15, 1990

Dear:

As you know, the Governor recently presented his FY 1990-91 budget proposal to the General Assembly, which will now proceed to shape a final document for passage this summer. I'm pleased to say that for the second year the ESBE formula will be funded at a level of 100 percent, since the Governor has proposed an increased funding level of approximately 85 million dollars.

I think it unlikely that that amount will increase appreciably, since it's difficult psychologically to break the full funding barrier and because current diminished tax revenues make it clear we are moving into a modest (I hope) recession.

I believe that in the following year (FY 1991-92) we will begin to hear calls for major modification of the current allocation system. In part this is simply a cyclic occurrence, but recent court cases redefining "equality" will also come into play. If you would like to chat about this or about the current systems, I'd be glad to hear from you, and as the budget formulation proceeds, I'll try to stay in touch

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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SECRETARY
AGING & YOUTH
INSURANCE
POLICY

May 15, 1991

Ms. Judith A. Patch

[REDACTED]
Edinboro, PA 16412

Dear Ms. Patch:

Thanks very much for your letter of May 2, 1991 regarding special education programs and funding. Thanks also for being so gracious to my wife at the Holiday Tri-County meeting.

First off, I'm quite hopeful that the computer funds will be restored to the PHEAA budget. It is not a large amount of money, but it funds what we both believe to be a critical service. I'll do what I can do to have it restored.

As to the A.S.A.P. proposal, it currently is not before us as a proposal for voting. Through it no doubt will be part of the budget discussion on all special education, it's not at all clear in what directions those discussions will lead us. I hope over the next few weeks that we will begin to develop a sense of what the education package will look like; as we do, I'll certainly keep your arguments in mind.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

TJS/pm

Edinboro, PA 16412
May 2, 1991

Representative Tom Scrimenti
House Post Office
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

MAY 07 1991

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

Please extend my thanks to your wife for attending the meeting of the Northwest Tri-County Education Association on April 14 at the Holiday Inn in Edinboro. Taking time from her schedule was appreciated by everyone in attendance.

By way of introduction, I am a special education teacher for the Intermediate Unit. I have been employed by the Intermediate Unit for the past twenty years. Currently, I work with junior and senior Learning Disabled students at Northwestern Senior High School. I have also spent ten years working with elementary Learning Disabled students and five years working with institutionalized juvenile delinquents with a learning disability, emotional disturbance, and/or mental retardation.

I am writing this letter to urge you to vote for the A.S.A.P. funding proposal. As a tax paying citizen of Pennsylvania, I am well aware that the cost of funding education must be borne by all Pennsylvania citizens. If this means a tax increase, then let us have a tax increase. All of this "politicking" and calling tax increases something else is ridiculous. I am also a home owner and my property taxes help to fund my local school district. In my opinion, a state income tax would be much more equitable than to raise my local property tax again. It is more difficult to bear the tax burden among a few than among many.

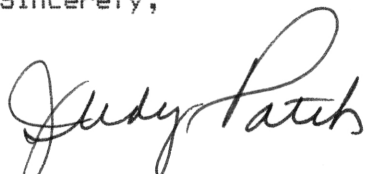
Along with funding for education, I urge you to reinstate the funding for the I.T.E.C. classes. It is currently under the PHEAA line item budgets. I have participated in many classes offered through the Intermediate Unit to teach computer literacy to teachers. In turn, that information has been invaluable to me in the classroom. My students are currently learning how to use a word processing system, a data base, and a spreadsheet. If funding permits, I intend to purchase another disk drive so that I can also teach the students how to use a desk top publishing system. Other students in the class are learning to use a basic math program in which they must write the commands to make the program function. I wrote those programs myself through the knowledge acquired in an I.T.E.C. class. This is a technological age. Elimination of training programs will certainly diminish our ability to work with the students. Each classroom should be equipped with a network of computers. No student should leave school without having some basic knowledge of computers.

In all of the discussion relative to the funding of special education, I have heard only discussion of the cost - not what is best for the students. I have discussed this issue with my students and believe that many people would be enlightened by their perspective. This is their life that we're talking about - they should be consulted. Ask the students in all types of school districts how they feel about their special education classes - particularly those at the secondary level who have been through special classes for most of their school life.

As I stated earlier, I have been employed by the Intermediate Unit for twenty years. Governor Casey's statements regarding the unaccountability of Intermediate Unit's is absolutely ridiculous. They are responsible to an elected school board representing the school districts located within that Intermediate Unit. Our Intermediate Unit has been fiscally responsible, but we are being punished for the sins of others. Remember, the Intermediate Unit is not a "thing". It is a group of dedicated individuals who work to educate the nation's youth, most of them with special needs. To eliminate or curtail Intermediate Units is to create more unemployment in Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your time. I apologize for the length of the letter, but felt compelled to state my views on the current issues facing education. Good luck on the upcoming birth of your child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith A. Patch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Judith A. Patch
Special Education Teacher

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AGING AND YOUTH
INSURANCE
FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 25, 1994

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
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Susan R. Smith, B.S., Director
Erie Irlen Clinic
4238 Prestwick Drive
Erie, PA 16506

Dear Ms. Smith:

I thank you for sharing your information and enlightening me to the treatment of Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome. The statistical success rate for reading improvement through the Irlen Method is very impressive. As SSS affects more than 15% of the general population, I feel it is important for the Department of Education to review the materials you so kindly provided me.

I requested a member of my staff to contact Mr. Edwin Lint, a Special Education Advisor with the Department of Education. Mr. Lint expressed interest in learning more about SSS and the Irlen Method. I have now written to Mr. Lint forwarding the information you provided. (A copy of my letter is enclosed.) Mr. Lint plans to review the information and then forward the packet of information to the Pittsburgh Regional Director for further investigation and contact with you.

In the meantime, if you would want to discuss this issue further with Mr. Lint, he would welcome your call. Mr. Lint may be reached at (717) 783-6913. On a local level, if I may be of assistance to further the awareness of the general public to SSS, please do not hesitate to call me. Again, I thank you for the very valuable information you have provided me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
4th Legislative District

TJS:jm

MAR 21 1994

**ERIE IRLLEN CLINIC
SUSAN R. SMITH, DIRECTOR
4238 PRESTWICK DRIVE
ERIE, PA 16506**

Mr. Tom Scrimenti,
State Representative
9 West Main
North East, PA 16428

March 17, 1994

Dear Mr. Scrimenti:

I have recently received requests to send you information about Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome. This is a perceptual problem which affects approximately 50% of the population of children identified as qualifying for Chapter I Reading programs in our schools. Studies have shown that as many as 70% of those individuals who have been identified as learning disabled in reading, Attention Deficit Disorder, or having visual Dyslexia suffer from symptoms of SSS. 90% of those who have high symptoms can easily be treated by the Irlen Method (see enclosed material).

For some, SSS is the entire problem, and performance improves immediately, without remediation. On the other hand, there are many learning disabled children who have multiple, varied, and complex problems. These children have difficulty coping and developing compensating strategies when SSS is involved. By removing this layer, many of those students are able to better cope with remaining problems.

Children who need remediation for reading have shown a greater ability to progress in learning new skills once they can see words and numbers without having them blurr, move, or disappear.

Another interesting statistic is that 52% of people suffering from alcohol and/or drug abuse have been classified as having significant reading disabilities. (Could this have something to do with our high dropout rates?) Our juvenile detention facilities are filled with these children.

One of the most significant observations reported by parents of children and adults who have been treated for SSS is a noticeable improvement in self-esteem, and a renewed motivation to learn.

It is important that our schools and community leaders become aware of the Irlen Method. Children can be screened as early as seven years old. The potential in terms of prevention of future problems is impressive.

I believe that one of our most valuable resources is our children. We are recently finding that there are many gifted children who are unable to achieve their potential because they

suffer from SSS.

I would like to work with you to find a way to help people in our area to obtain treatment for this disorder which affects at least 15% of the general population. Please review the enclosed material and contact me if you are interested in pursuing a solution to this problem.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Susan R. Smith

Susan R. Smith, B.S.,Ed.

p.s. Victoria Sciarron-Mankowski, of 1110 Phillippsville Road, Wattsburg, PA 16442, and her friend, Sharon Galloway, are in the process of starting a parent support group called MOMS (Mothers and Others for Misunderstood Students). They would appreciate any new information you or your staff might find regarding these matters.



THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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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

June 14, 1995

Dr. Maryann Anderson, Supervisor of Special Education
Millcreek Township School District
3740 West 26th Street
Erie, PA 16506-2096

Dear Dr. Anderson:

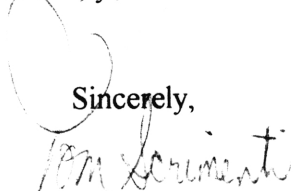
Thank you for your letter asking for support of your proposed amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and welcome the opportunity to comment on your ideas. The Act is scheduled for reauthorization by Congress.

I understand the District's concern about perceived conflicts between the interests of children with disabilities and those of the school district, especially as regards safety in the schools. Providing a safe learning environment for all students is a paramount concern for school districts and I welcome your reasoned suggestions to amend the Act.

Providing not just a safe school but also the actual educational opportunity to all children, including those with special needs, is a district's other major charge. Should your amendments be adopted, Millcreek Township School District must remain vigilant that, while assuring safety it also preserves access to education opportunities for all children, avoiding the possibility that difficult, but nonviolent, children may be moved out of the system.

Please don't hesitate to share your views with your federal representatives. I assure you that, should state regulations pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act be reviewed by the House, your views will inform my deliberations.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

TJS/hfn



Millcreek Township School District

MAY 25 1995

"An Equal Opportunity Employer"

Millcreek Education Center
3740 West 26th Street • Erie, Pennsylvania 16506-2096 • (814) 835-5300

May 22, 1995

The Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti
Box 96 Main Capitol Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representatiave Scrimenti:

As you participate in discussion related to the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, the Millcreek Township School District would like you to consider amendments outlined in the attached resolution.

Although the Millcreek Township School District aggressively strives to serve children with disabilities, the present law interferes with the schools' charge to provide a safe learning environment for all students.

Attached is a resolution in favor of proposed amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act developed by the School District. We are asking your full support.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Dr. Maryann Anderson
Supervisor of Special Education

Attachment: Proposed Amendments to Individuals with Disabilities
Education Act.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH OFFICE
HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

SCOTT CASPER, DIRECTOR
620 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-0028



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(717) 783-1588

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

June 14, 1995

MEMO

SUBJECT: Reply to Dr. Anderson of Millcreek Township School District re: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments
TO: Representative Thomas J. Scrimenti
FROM: Helen F. Norton, Analyst, Legislative Research Office

Attached is a reply to Dr. Anderson, Special Education Supervisor, who submits to you suggested amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The stated fear is that teachers will be required by the Education Act, as it stands, to keep in their rooms students who are violent and who may be armed. While that situation may arise and undoubtedly would adversely affect nonviolent students and teachers if left unremedied, the actual incidence of such situations is very low.

The Bureau of Special Education's Instructional Support System reports that attempts to move special education students out of the classroom often are made for behavior that is troublesome or noisy or annoying, but not violent. There is some concern among parents that amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act will result in more frequent and less necessary removals from class of special education students.

They fear that eventually their children may be moved out of the state supported school system altogether, returning to the days before Special Education was available. Special Education has lost support over the years and now is more the stepchild of hard pressed school districts than a free standing education program for special needs residents of the Commonwealth.

Please review the letter and contact me at 783-1580 should changes be required.

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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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

September 24, 1996

Timothy Bidwell

Union City, PA 16438

Dear Timothy:

This letter is in response to your recent letter regarding computers for children with learning disabilities.

I have contacted the Department of Education on your behalf regarding the availability of programs where computers are provided to youngsters at home. It is very possible for children with disabilities to obtain a computer for home use if they are home bound because the school district cannot accommodate their needs. However, if a child is home because their parents want to teach them or the parents deem the school district cannot provide sufficient resources, then the child could not obtain a computer for home use. According to the Department of Education, the reason for the latter rationale is that the parents have given up the right for public school funds.

If your school district cannot accommodate your needs, please have your parents contact my office, and I will put them in touch with the appropriate officials at the Department of Education. If you are home at your parent's option, then another route would be via a charitable organization. I would suggest they try The Directory of Pennsylvania Foundations. This wonderful publication, found in most public libraries, list various organizations that provide grants for various needs, such as yours.

I hope this information proves useful to you and your family. I commend you on your initiative in contacting persons and organizations to help with your special needs. If I may be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Thomas Scrimenti in black ink.
Thomas Scrimenti
State Representative

TS/sd