

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGING AND YOUTH
INSURANCE
FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS

April 5, 1995

Ms. Brenda Weaver

[REDACTED]

Erie, PA 16510

Dear Ms. Weaver:

I want to thank you for getting in touch with my office regarding the concerns you have about the teacher certification process. I understand that you checked with the Department of Education about Emergency Certification requirements and found that a superintendent or school district could hire a non-certified teacher under several emergency provisions.

In situations where the superintendent has to hire a long-term full-time substitute he or she must obtain permission from the Department of Education to fill the position and demonstrate to the Department of Education that they have fulfilled two (2) basic requirements.

The first is that the superintendent must assure PDE officials that he or she has advertised the position, has exhausted all reasonable avenues of employment and has no fully qualified and properly certified applicant available; and (2) that the school entity does not have a legal work stoppage of its certified staff.

The teacher receiving the emergency certificate for a professional position must agree to enroll in a Pennsylvania approved certification program leading to a Level I Certificate and agree to have completed at least nine hours of coursework by the following year.

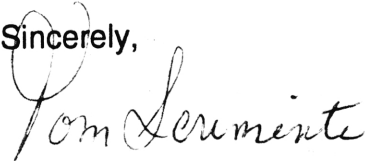
Ms. Brenda Weaver
Page 2

I realize that the aforementioned process does little to help you or your daughter in her situation. Perhaps an idea which I could offer would be for the school district to make arrangements for seniors with college eligibility to be able to enroll in the same course in a contiguous school district; or allow the student the option of taking the course at the community college level, at the expense of the host school district.

These ideas might require changes in the law. However, that seems to be the most equitable solution to this dilemma. Please be advised that I will be pursuing legislative initiatives in this area.

I encourage your continued communication with my office on this matter and trust that the aforementioned suggested method will be of interest to you so that we might prevent this type of situation from happening again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Scrimenti". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned directly below the word "Sincerely,".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/djv

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH OFFICE
HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

SCOTT CASPER, DIRECTOR
620 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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April 13, 1995

MEMO

SUBJECT: Opinions of school superintendents to proposed amendment

TO: Representative Tom Scrimenti
Room 25 B East Wing

FROM:

Larry Jack, Research Analyst
Office of research & Legislative Services
Room 609 Main Capitol Building

Attached as per our conversation are four letters in my signature to school superintendents. The purpose of the letter is to solicit their opinion to the proposed amendment contained therein.

If I can be of any further assistance to you please don't hesitate to contact me at 7-3111.



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

April 13, 1995

Mr. Randolph Outen, Superintendent
Harrisburg School District
1201 N. 6th Street
Harrisburg, PA. 17105

Representative Tom Scrimenti, A Democrat from Erie County had a constituent problem which was assigned to me for my review. The issue involved the daughter of a constituent, a high school senior, who was unable to take her third year of French from a certifiable teacher. The school district did advertise the position but was unable to find a certifiable teacher in the subject.

I need not tell you what state of mind the mother was in when she contacted Representative Scrimenti's office. She was disgruntled and felt that she nor her daughter were getting their money's worth from their school district.

Representative Scrimenti talked to me and asked whether he should provide a remedy for other constituents who might find themselves with a similar problem. I advised him that I would try to draft an amendment to fit this situation and would seek the assistance of several established leaders in the field. I would appreciate your reaction to the proposed amendment which reads:

In the event that a school district is unable to find a certifiable teacher to fill a long term substitute position in a major core curriculum course, or in a major elective which jeopardizes or impairs the students ability to demonstrate maximum learning potential, the resident school district will offer college, or professional school bound juniors and seniors involved in the non-certifiable instruction, the option of enrolling in an identical course in a consenting, contiguous school district or allow the student

Mr. Randolph Outen

April 13, 1995

Page 2

the option of taking the course at the community college level. The instructional and transportation costs for the expense of the course same shall be paid by the resident school district.

I would appreciate any comments or suggestions you would wish to make relating to the aforementioned proposed amendment. You can contact me by calling (717) 787-3111, or by writing me at 609 Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA. 17120. If you wish you may contact Representative Scrimenti directly at (814) 725-8664 or at (717) 787-9475.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter.

Larry Jack,
Research Analyst

LJ/lj

cc: Representative Thomas J. Scrimenti

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COMMITTEES

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

House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 30, 2001

Mr. Frederick Evans

████████████████████
Erie, PA 16510

Dear Mr. Evans:

I would like to thank you for your letter expressing your thoughts and concerns on various issues concerning Pennsylvania's Educational System. I appreciate the time and effort taken to contact my office and include me in your thoughts.

As you may know, Governor Ridge signed House Bill 996 into law on May 17, 2001. The bill, now Act 4 of 2001, gives the Department of Education the authority to implement their teacher-testing program in reading and math literacy next fall. In addition, it would allow a school district to create an independent school similar to a charter school, and increases the education tax credit program for larger corporations.

To that end, I voted against the final passage of HB 996 on concurrence when the bill was before the House of Representatives. This legislation fails both students and teachers in many vital areas. However, there are a few benefits to Act 4. House Democrats were able to protect public school teachers' tenure and certification - both of which were threatened by language in the Ridge proposal. Act 4 gives out an additional \$78 million in special education funding, and that is a 5 percent guaranteed increase for school districts. Also, it would provide \$23.6 million in grants to parents for after-school tutoring.

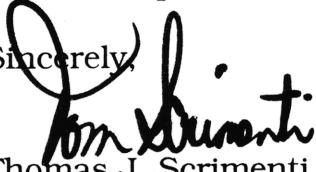
In addition, House Democrats made sure the measure included teacher protections, particularly in forming independent schools. Teachers cannot be dismissed arbitrarily by independent schools, and will remain employees of the school districts, so they stay a part of collective bargaining agreements.

Mr. Frederick Evans
Page 2

As a supporter of meaningful education reform, early childhood education, smaller class sizes, and improved teacher training, I will continue to advocate for these and related issues. Also, I will keep your thoughts in mind when, and if, these education issues are considered.

Again, thank you for sharing with me your concerns. As always, your input is welcomed and appreciated. If you need further assistance with this issue, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Scrimenti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "S".

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

Scrimenti, Tom

From: Frederick Evans [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 22, 2001 11:36 AM
To: Scrimenti, Tom
Subject: I Care, I WAS There: March 4, 2001

Frederick Evans
[REDACTED]

Erie, Pa 16510

April 22, 2001

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

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

As a constituent, I wanted to let you know that I was in Harrisburg to attend PSEA's March 4th Rally for Children & Public Education. Here's why I attended the rally:

I support smaller classes, safe schools, involved parents, more early childhood education, and improved teacher training;

I believe state government has a responsibility to restore the state/local partnership to provide adequate resources for all public schools;

I oppose attempts to enact legislation allowing tax dollars to flow to private and religious schools in the form of tuition vouchers;

I oppose tax credits for religious and private school tuition;

I believe in appropriate use of Student Assessments (proficiency scores for PSSAs, focus on improvement of teaching and learning, elimination of high-stakes outcomes);

I believe teachers must be allowed to remove disruptive students from their classrooms, and that school districts must guarantee that their curriculum is tied to state standards;

I believe that teaching is more than just content knowledge, and that licensing of teachers should not be dumbed down through "alternative certification" schemes;

I believe current Special Education regulations cripple not only district budgets, but also the effectiveness of the classroom teacher and must be reformed;

I believe teachers and school employees deserve respect, and should be treated professionally and with rights and benefits equal to those of state employees.

I invite you to take action in support of children and public education by supporting legislation based on these principles.

[sample]

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COMMITTEES

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

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

June 18, 2001

Ms. Katrina Henry



Erie, PA 16511

Dear Ms. Henry:

I would like to thank you for your recent letter regarding your opposition to additional testing of public school teachers. I appreciate the time and effort you have taken to contact my office and include me in your thoughts.

Teaching our youth is one of the noblest professions one can aspire to. The impact that educators have on the lives of their students cannot be overstated. You should be proud to be part of such a fine profession. As I hope you know and as proven by my record of service, I have worked hard to ensure our educators get treated like the professionals they are. As you may know, House Bill 996, which provides for a teacher-assessment program, was approved by the Governor on May 17, 2001.

I, along with many of my Democratic colleagues, voted against this proposal because it unjustly penalizes the professionals who have devoted their time, money, and energy to teaching. Unfortunately, due to strong support from the Governor and the Republican Leadership, there were no opportunities to offer amendments to this bill. Instead, what we are left with is another misguided attempt at educational reform.

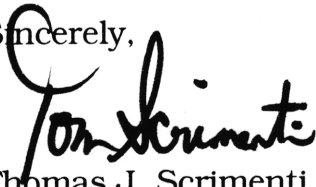
I, too, agree that investing in programs that are not proven to work is a waste of valuable tax dollars. What we need to do is concentrate on things that are proven to improve educational performance, such as smaller class sizes, full day kindergarten, and early childhood education. I assure you that as an advocate for real educational reform, I will not

Ms. Katrina Henry
Page 2

rest until "half-hearted attempts such as HB 996 become the exception not the rule. After all, nothing should be "half-hearted" when our children's education and future are at stake.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to convey to me your stance on this important issue. If I may be of further assistance in the future, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

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

Scrimenti, Tom

From: Katrina Henry [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 28, 2001 11:44 AM
To: Scrimenti, Tom
Subject: Oppose additional testing of teachers

Katrina Henry
[REDACTED]

Erie, PA 16511

April 28, 2001

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

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has announced its intention to spend \$8 million (\$4 million this year and \$4 million next) to develop and implement tests for all public school teachers. The Department will seek to have legislation require all teachers to take the tests beginning in the fall of 2001.

The Pennsylvania State Education Association and the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers oppose legislation, which would spend \$8 million to develop and implement math and reading tests for all teachers. Our reasons are listed.

Professional development research suggests that content knowledge is important to effective teaching and job-related training has a lasting impact on performance. Research does not support cause/effect relationships between reading and math skills and teaching effectiveness.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has been unable to show any correlation between student PSSA scores and the results of these teacher-tests.

The tests can neither predict how well teachers will teach nor how students will achieve on the PSSA test. Without a link between these tests and teacher effectiveness or student achievement, it is difficult to understand how meaningful staff development activities can be determined from their results.

School children would benefit more if the proposed \$8 million were applied to reducing class sizes in elementary reading and math classes. Research shows that lower student/teacher ratios make a difference in student achievement.

Since 1987, Pennsylvania's certified teachers, in addition to being tested in their area of specialization, have had to pass basic reading and math tests. Additionally, all certificated educators must meet state preparation standards. This suggests that additional literacy tests are costly redundancies.

We encourage you to reject this proposal that expends money and time, while producing no positive results for students or taxpayers.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
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COMMITTEES

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

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 24, 2002

Mr. Thomas R. Blose

[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16510-3165

Dear Mr. Blose:

I would like to thank you for your several e-mails regarding various education issues and funding. As your state representative, I am interested in hearing about those issues that are important to my constituents.

Without exception, public education is the single most important investment we can make in our Commonwealth's future and the future of our families. As you may know, I voted against House Bill 996, which became Act 4 of 2001, because of its many flaws, especially its approach to teacher testing. Although I support initiatives to ensure teachers are well qualified, I do not support the teacher assessment program proposed by Act 4. It has been shown that tests can neither predict how well teachers will teach nor how students will achieve on the PSSA tests. Consequently, teachers will be tested only in math and reading to judge their qualifications. It is conceivable that a Spanish teacher might be forced to pass a math equivalency course, which has nothing to do with the qualifications of a Spanish teacher.

I realize that teachers are dedicated people whose hard work shapes the lives of our youth. Continuing professional development is a key to ensure Pennsylvania has high quality teachers. However, this approach neglects the needs of both our teachers and students. In an effort to be of further assistance, I have taken the liberty of writing the Chairman of the House Education Committee, Representative Nicholas A. Colafella, to share your concerns. In addition, I urge you to contact your state senator and the Governor's office to express your objections to the PDAP, current education funding, and other education concerns.

Furthermore, on April 30, the House of Representatives passed House Bill 2489, the General Budget Bill, which included an increase in basic education funding by \$283,800,000 million. As you know, the budget process is an arduous process, made more difficult this year by the current economic situation. On May 8, the House of Representatives passed the Senate version of

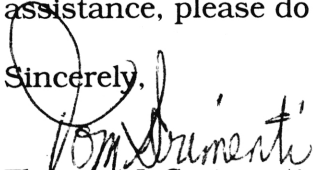
Mr. Thomas Blose
Page 2

the General Budget Bill, Senate Bill 5, which included the same amount of funding for both basic and special education funding as HB 2489. Next, both versions will go to a Conference Committee, composed of leaders from the House and Senate, to decide on the final version of the 2002-2003 Budget, which will then be sent to the Governor for his approval.

Again, thank you for sharing with me your concerns. In addition, I want to commend you for your activism regarding this vital issue.

As always, your input is welcomed and appreciated. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

enclosure

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
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COMMITTEES

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DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OF THE
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AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 24, 2002

The Honorable Nicholas A. Colafella,
Democratic Chairman
House Education Committee
300 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman Colafella:

I am writing to you on behalf of one of my constituents, Thomas Blose of 3891 Saltsman Road Extension, Erie, PA 16510-3165.

As a fellow state representative, I am deeply troubled with the state of Pennsylvania's schools and the challenges our school districts, teachers, and students face on a daily basis. Mr. Blose expressed several concerns to me regarding the Professional Development Assistance Program (PDAP) and state funding for education.

I understand and support the PDAP's *purpose*, which is to improve the effectiveness of the almost \$140 million spent annually on professional development for teachers and to ensure that Pennsylvania schools employ high quality teachers. Nevertheless, it has been shown that PDAP tests can neither predict how well teachers will teach, nor how students will achieve on the PSSA tests. Consequently, teachers are only being tested in math and reading to judge their qualifications.

Many teachers do support continuing professional development that will help improve their skills. However, professional development should be appropriate and adapted to fit the individual teacher's needs and qualifications. Additionally, many teachers have complained about experiencing technical problems when taking PDAP on-line tests on the Department of Education's website.

On the other hand, I am pleased that the House of Representatives passed both House Bill 2489 and Senate Bill 5, which provided for an increase in basic education funding. However, more needs to be done to

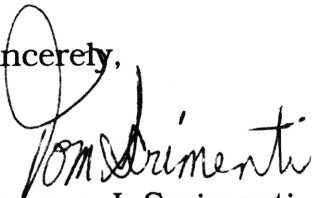
Page 2

close the ever-widening gap between rich and poor school districts in the Commonwealth.

Therefore, it is with the greatest respect that I ask your good office to review and study the provisions of the PDAP and the on-line test system and urge the Schweiker Administration to do the same. I believe that this program can be greatly improved to provide teachers with quality professional development that fits their needs.

Thank you in advance for your kind assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

cc: Thomas Blose

TJS/kh

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE,
SECRETARY
AGING & YOUTH
INSURANCE
POLICY

May 5, 1993

Ms. Patricia L. Davis
President, HUGS
P.O. Box 3322
Erie, PA 16508

Dear Ms. Davis: - *Patty*

Thank you once again for your correspondence on child abuse. To reiterate my previous affirmation, I enthusiastically commend your spirit in creating HUGS.

At this writing, there are numerous bills which address child abuse, including two major pieces of legislation. House Bill 1001, sponsored by the Chairman of the House Aging and Youth Committee, Representative Kevin Blaum, and House Bill 266, sponsored by Representative Pesci.

The first bill I mentioned, House Bill 1001, was reported on April 19, 1993 as amended and is currently being reviewed by the House Appropriations Committee. Given the broad-based support this bill has from Leadership, I am confident that it will be brought before the full House of Representatives. House Bill 266 is currently under study in the House Aging and Youth Committee. Both pieces of legislation are enclosed for your review.

I hope this information proves useful to your inquiry. Once again, thank you for your correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

Tom Scrimenti
Thomas Scrimenti
State Representative

TS/sd

enclosures

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 5, 1993

M E M O

MAY 05 1993

SUBJECT: HUGS

TO: Representative Thomas Scrimenti
Att.: Lisa Lewandowski, District Office

FROM: Sharon DePalma, Research Analyst
Research & Legislative Services Office

As per your recent request, enclosed is a draft letter to Patricia Davis, President of HUGS regarding an update on child abuse legislation.

Essentially, the letter notes the status of Representative Kevin Blaum's House Bill 1001. You should note, however, that you are not a co-sponsor of this major bill. You should also make note that Ms. Davis sent this form letter to every member of the House and Senate.

According to Jane Mendlow, Research Analyst for the House Aging and Youth Committee it would be very difficult to implement an unlimited statute of limitations when civil suits may be filed against alleged abusers. Specifically, it would be most difficult to receive accurate testimony on alleged abuse after a thirty or forty year lapse.

I hope this draft proves useful. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

enclosure

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House of Representatives
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COMMITTEES

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

Mailed from
N.E.

December 5, 2000

Ms. Diane Shafer

[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16511

Dear Ms. Shafer: *-Diane*


Thank you for your letter regarding Senate Bill 381. Your thoughts on the issue of allowing children to testify by videotape in court cases are greatly appreciated.

As you know, prosecutors often have trouble getting children to testify in court cases, particularly those relating to sensitive issues, because of the traumatic circumstances. In fact, many convictions of criminals rest on whether or not a child is emotionally able to testify on specific issues surrounding a court case. Indeed, Senate Bill 381 will make testifying much easier for children. Auditor General Casey has said that, with this bill, "we have the opportunity to send a powerful message that violence against children will not be tolerated, and that Pennsylvania supports swift and judicial prosecution of those charged with heinous crimes."

House Bill 381 passed in the Senate, but did not reach the House of Representatives for a final vote. Because the bill proposes separate amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it would need to be passed in the full General Assembly during both of the next two sessions. If the bill is reintroduced next session, please be assured that I will give strong consideration to supporting this legislation.

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

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

October 30, 2000

Dear Mr. Scrimente,

I am writing to request your support of Senate Bill #381. It involves the use of videotaped testimony of children against their perpetrators in court proceedings. As a therapist who works with juveniles (some as young as 10) who are often victims of sexual, Physical, and emotional abuse, I strongly support the use of videotaped testimony (where needed), as children who are abused or otherwise witness a crime need to be protected from further emotional abuse.

I count on your full support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Diane Shafer

Diane Shafer

████████████████████
Erie, Pa. 16511

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

July 23, 2002

Lloyd & Joyce Baldwin

[REDACTED]
Erie, PA 16510

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Baldwin:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding the proposed cigarette tax increase. As your state representative, I am grateful for your input concerning this important issue.

As you know, the House of Representatives and the Senate recently voted on and passed House Bill 1848, which implements a cigarette tax increase and is included in the 2002-2003 final budget package. The final budget package consists of the largest tax hike in over a decade, including the 69-cent-per-pack cigarette tax increase. While some Leaders in the House of Representatives and Senate believe that such a tax increase will decrease the deficit currently facing the state, my Democratic colleagues and I view this budget package as a short-term solution that is unfair to the people of Pennsylvania. To that end, I voted against the final budget package, which included the cigarette tax increase.

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 promote future fiscal responsibility. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any further assistance to you.

Sincerely,

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

Tom Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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

□ 202 NORTH CENTER STREET
CORRY, PENNSYLVANIA 16407
PHONE: (814) 664-9126

□ 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 9, 2003

Mr. Paul Rankin
Vice-President
Country Fair, Inc.
2251 East 30th Street
Erie, PA 16510-2551

Dear Mr. Rankin

Thank you for your letter concerning the cigarette excise tax in Pennsylvania. It is always a pleasure to be able to assist my constituents whenever possible.

As you may be aware, the current economy in Pennsylvania is suffering, hence the need to generate additional revenue through various legislative proposals. However, I am hesitant to once again place the burden of generating that revenue on the shoulders of Pennsylvania's smokers. For that reason, I am committed to examining all other funding sources, such as slot machines at racetracks, before revisiting legislation designed to increase the cigarette tax.

With that in mind, House Bill 985 was referred to the House Finance Committee for further review and consideration on March 26, 2003. Please be assured that I will take your concerns and opinions into deliberation when presented with this legislative initiative.

Again, thank you for your correspondence. If I may be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

MAY 12 2003

COUNTRY FAIR

May 6, 2003

The Honorable Thomas Scrimenti
PA House of Representatives
PO Box 202020
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

I am writing to express my concerns and Country Fair's opposition to House Bill 985. The proposed bill would increase the excise tax on a pack of cigarettes from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per pack, giving Pennsylvania one of the highest cigarette excise taxes in the nation.

Last year the Pennsylvania Legislature raised cigarette excise taxes from 31 cents to \$1.00 a pack. In the eight (8) months following this increase in the excise tax, Country Fair's 59 Pennsylvania convenience stores experienced a volume decline of 13.3% in cigarette sales versus the previous year. I am sure this is an industry trend in Pennsylvania. The national decline in smoking was estimated at 3 percent for the same period. When comparing our 13.3% decline to the national 3% decline in cigarette volume, it is apparent that some 23% of Pennsylvania adult smokers are purchasing their product elsewhere. These other sources include sales across state borders with lower excise taxes, Indian reservation sales, Internet sales, and sales of smuggling product. The magnitude of House Bill 985's proposed tax increase will have further unintended consequences. These will include:

1. Northwest Pennsylvania smokers will continue going in record numbers to New York state Native American reservations to purchase tax-free cigarettes. During this past year, Indian reservation began heavy advertising on both Erie radio and newspapers stating they offer cigarettes without excise and sales taxes. Credible estimates reflect that in excess of 20% of Erie Country PA smokers are consuming product that has been purchased from New York State Native American Indian smoke shops. Since implementing the \$1.50 excise tax in New York State, cigarette companies are showing that an estimated 56% of all cigarette sales in western New York State are being sold from native Indiana Smoke shops. New York State gets zero tax revenue of these sales.
2. Internet Sales are growing in Pennsylvania. The Internet sites are from Indian reservations or states with extremely low excise taxes. These sites are not subject to the age verification laws and therefore have little effect on deterring youth smoking. By contrast, traditional convenience stores such as Country Fair have implemented policies,

procedures, and training programs to prevent cigarette sales to underage customers.

3. Smuggling cigarettes from Native American locations and states with lower excise taxes has become a cottage industry as smokers seek to circumvent paying increasing state taxes.

It may be politically difficult to oppose PA House Bill 985 for the increase in the cigarette excise tax. However, the facts show that increasing excise taxes will result in additional significant tax evasion and have a devastating effect on Country Fair as well as Pennsylvania's convenience store industry in general.

On behalf of Country Fair and its 1,300 employees, I want to thank you for your attention to this most serious issue. I would be happy to discuss this legislation with you or your staff at any of our stores or in your offices. Please feel free to contact me if I can answer any questions for you. My telephone number is 814/898-1111, Ext. 284. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Paul C. Rankin, VP
Country Fair Division

PCR/lg

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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COMMITTEES

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

mailed 8/19

August 15, 2003

Pat Matczak

[REDACTED]

Erie, PA 16510

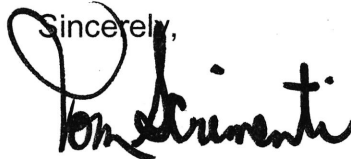
Dear Pat:

Thank you for your letter regarding cigarette taxes and taxes on smokeless tobacco. I appreciate your views and welcome your opinions.

As you know, House Bill 985 is currently under consideration. House Bill 985 would increase the tax on cigarettes to 10 cents per cigarette. At present, this bill was referred to the House Finance Committee on March 26, 2003.

Smoking is a detriment to our youth and we need to explore every option available to deter smoking, not just in children, but in our society as a whole.

Let me assure you that I will keep your thoughts in mind when discussing this matter with my colleagues in the General Assembly. Should you need my services in the future, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Sincerely,

Tom Scrimenti
State Representative

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

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

February 19, 1997

Gerald P. Kupris, Exec. Director
Pennsylvania Distributors Assoc, Inc.
Suite 408, 212 Locust Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kupris: - *Jerry*

I am in receipt of your letter of February 10th, wherein you requested that I contact Representative John Taylor's office to co-sponsor his legislation providing for the licensing of cigarette wholesalers. Please be advised that this date I have added my name as a co-sponsor of this legislation.

Thank you for writing to me on this important piece of legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

/dje

COPY

FEB 24 1997

Mailed
NE office