

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

December 29, 1995

LeRoy D. Kline, Jr.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Camp Hill, Pa. 17011

Dear Mr. Kline:

I have received and read your recent letter. Your welcomed comments regarding House Bill 1671 were extremely insightful and informative. I hope that you will continue to contact me with future questions and concerns.

I want you to know that my initial reaction regarding the context of House Bill 1671 is that government intervention in the court reporters' profession is unnecessary at the present time.

As you may already know, House Bill 1671 was referred to the House of Representative's Professional Licensure Committee on May 24, 1995. I contacted the Minority Chairman of this committee to see if this bill was on the agenda to be debated in the near future. He informed me that, currently, there are no plans to discuss this bill in committee. As a member of this committee, I can assure you that I will relay your comments to my colleagues. Please know that if this bill does come up in committee for a vote, your comments will be remembered and respected.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to share viewpoints with you regarding this matter of importance to you. Please feel free to contact me with concerns on this, or any other matter of importance to you on a professional or personal level. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Scrimenti
State Representative

TS/kjv



DEC 13 1995

Delta Development Group, Inc.

Principals:

Government Relations / Public Policy
Management / Planning Consultants

Offices:

Irving Hand
LeRoy D. Kline, Jr.
Donald F. Mazziotti

Suite 103
207 House Avenue
Camp Hill, PA 17011

December 13, 1995

The Honorable Thomas J. Scrimenti
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Room 25B, East Wing
Seat #96
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

Recently, we have learned that the House Professional Licensure Committee may consider House Bill 1671 which would license court reporters in the Commonwealth. Although at first glance it may appear to be a good idea, the proposal to license court reporters and place burdensome restrictions on the shoulders of individual reporters will actually result in job loss and industry contraction. The court reporting industry is almost exclusively dominated by women, many of whom are single mothers and sole providers for their families, and any job losses resulting from passage of the bill would disproportionately effect them.

It is important to note that there are already minimum proficiency levels and experience for official court reporters in effect in Pennsylvania. These requirements were adopted by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1981 as part of its revisions to the Rules of Judicial Administration. "Rule 5000" governs court reporting.

In the almost 15 years that "Rule 5000" has been in existence, there is no evidence that the court reporting industry is not meeting the needs of its clients or is operating at a substandard level of performance. On the contrary, court reporters have set a standard of excellence that most other industries would envy. Quality control and personal supervision of new reporters are strong and the emphasis is on continuous improvement. This is demonstrated by the fact that Sargent's Court Reporting Service, one of Pennsylvania's largest and most respected court reporting organizations, was instrumental in the creation of an Associate's Degree program in court reporting at the Cambria County Community College. Sargent's has also pledged to hire the top ten graduates of this program *every year*. In this case, the private sector is leading the charge for training and industry excellence.

December 13, 1995

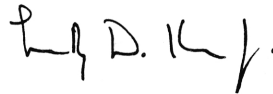
Page Two

The bullet sheet enclosed with this letter illustrates our client's concerns with House Bill 1671. The bill will have an adverse impact on employers and especially employees - most of the provisions contained in the legislation, such as experience requirements and new fees, would fall squarely on the shoulders of individual reporters.

On behalf of my client, Sargent's Court Reporting Service, I urge you to vote no if House Bill 1671 is brought up for a vote in the Professional Licensure Committee.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, or if I can be helpful in other ways, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. D. Kline, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

LeRoy D. Kline, Jr.
President

Enclosure

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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COMMITTEES

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

March 18, 1997

Brian McLaughlin

████████████████████
Erie, PA 16509

Dear Mr. McLaughlin:

Thank you for your letter seeking help in curbing practices of the credit industry with regard to poor credit risks, especially the seriously mentally ill.

As you may know, Pennsylvania once regulated the credit industry stringently, allowing only a relatively low maximum interest rate and no late charge fees. That posture changed in the mid-80s when the legislature, in response to the loss of thousands of banking jobs to the state of Delaware, increased the interest rate cap to 18%, to be reauthorized every four years. Recently, in the hope of making Pennsylvania more competitive, and to lure back the jobs lost to Delaware, amendments to the Goods and Services Installment Sales Act removed the interest rate cap entirely.

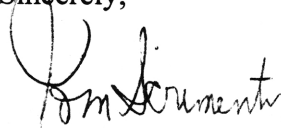
The industry periodically comes under fire for making credit cards available to college students who may or may not have the judgment to manage their credit wisely. It is the parents of those targeted - either the mentally ill or college students - who are left holding the bag. Parents must make the choice either to pay the bill to preserve the child's credit, or to permit the default of payment, leading to a bad credit rating for the student. It may be that mentally ill persons who are invited to use credit cards have no one on whose credit they can rely for back-up. At any rate, the card company's losses are met by exacting higher rates from solvent card users.

In recent years we have seen an erosion of consumer protections. "Tort reform," and renewed attacks on laws regarding product liability demonstrate not only the attitude of business that it is buyers should beware, but also the mood of majority legislators that regulations safeguarding consumers are unnecessarily burdensome and discouraging to business.

Brian McLaughlin
March 18, 1997
Page Two

Thank you for bringing this issue and your particular interest in it to my attention. I will study possible legislative solutions to the problem of solicitation of non-credit worthy customers by the credit card companies. Please contact me at any time for assistance with this or other issues of interest to you.

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

TJS/hfn

MAR 10 1997

3/4/97

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

In recent years the credit industry has been faced with a shrinking pool of credit worthy customers. There response has been to tap into high risk credit consumers. Greed for an ever shrinking market share has prompted some in the credit industry to offer easy credit at an unconscionable risk.

As a result the poor, pensioners, unemployed, and the underemployed, have become targets. People on fixed incomes of all ages are falling prey to purveyors of easy credit.

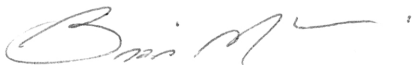
Sadly, there is little protection offered under current laws. Basically, if an individual meets the lending specification of a lender the loan is legal. Therefore, no matter how fiscally unsound a loan, few if any protections are in place for the individual.

As an advocate for the seriously mentally ill I am concerned that this traditionally impoverished group is also falling victim.

Why should we care? When people default because of a recklessness of the credit industry, it is the viable consumers of credit services that ultimately pick up the tab through higher interest payments. The business community similarly suffers when easy credit companies bankrupt themselves leaving the legitimate economy to absorb the financial loss.

In summation, by insisting that reasonable safe guards be implemented we are not only protecting the vulnerable consumer, and the larger economy, but our own economic well being. Clearly, legislation is long over due regarding this issue.

Respectfully,



Brian McLaughlin
1745 West Grandview
Erie, Pa. 16509

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH OFFICE
HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

SCOTT CASPER, DIRECTOR
620 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2250



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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

March 14, 1997

MEMO

SUBJECT: Response to Brian McLaughlin RE: Credit Cards

TO: Representative Tom Scrimenti

FROM: Helen Norton, Analyst, Legislative Research Office

Attached is a draft response to Mr. McLaughlin who is an advocate for the mentally ill. The draft thanks him for bringing the problem to your attention, reviews Pennsylvania's history vis a vis installment sales (credit card) law, and mentions the recent abandonment of a cap on allowable interest rates.

While these matters currently can be solved by somebody (a parent or guardian) paying the bill, not paying the bill and getting a bad credit rating, or through a trial proceeding brought by either party, it is unclear how to regulate or control the practice. The National Council of State Legislatures has, as yet, no information on how other states deal with this phenomenon. Should they produce some information, I will send it to you.

Perhaps it would be a good idea to prepare legislation requiring credit card companies and/or their parent companies (banks) to set aside in their annual reports to members and shareholders a special listing of bad debt due to inappropriate card issuance to college students and others whose credit was unworthy prior to card issuance. It might also require demographics showing who incurred the bad debt, the portion satisfied by others, and how the balance of the bad debt was compensated.

Should you wish changes to this document, please contact me at 783-1580.

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

February 6, 2002

Ms. Judy Kaliszewski

██████████
Erie, PA 16511

Dear Ms. Kaliszewski:

Thank you for your recent email regarding the solicitation of minors by credit card companies. I appreciate you taking the time to contact me regarding this important issue.

I am pleased to inform you that currently there are several legislative proposals regarding this issue before the General Assembly. House Bill 1895 proposes to regulate the solicitation by credit card marketers of students on college campuses for credit card applications. This legislation goes one step further by requiring institutions of higher education to adopt certain credit card education programs. House Bill 1895 is currently in the House Education Committee for review. Senate Bill 137 is companion legislation introduced in the Senate, which proposes language similar to House Bill 1895. Senate Bill 137 passed the Senate unanimously and was referred to the House Education Committee for review.

As you can see, the General Assembly is committed to protecting college students from the predatory marketing practices of credit card lenders. Credit card companies make their offers seem attractive to young adults by offering free gifts as incentives for applying for cards with high interest rates and fees. These credit companies perpetuate the cycle of debt by targeting and enticing these students with attractive offers, many of who are not ready for the responsibility that accompanies the ownership of a credit card.

Please be assured that I am sympathetic to your concerns. To that end, I will support House Bill 1895 and Senate Bill 137, as well as any other legislative initiatives that address this issue. As I hope you know and proven by my record of service, the concerns of my constituents are of supreme importance to me. I appreciate the opportunity to hear your thoughts, as it helps me make informed decisions that represent the constituency I serve. I thank you again for taking the time to bring your concerns regarding this pertinent issue to my attention. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your thoughts and concerns regarding this or any other issue.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

[Sample]

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE



COMMITTEES

- AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

October 24, 2002

James B. Meredith II, Supv.
Bracken Funeral Home, Inc.
211 Mechanic Street
Spartansburg, PA 16434

Dear Mr. Meredith:

Thank you for taking the time to correspond with me and for voicing your support of House Bill 2407, the Cremation Licensing Law. This law will require operators of crematories to obtain a cremation license in order to operate a crematory.

House Bill 2407 is currently posted on the House Voting Schedule for Tuesday, November 12, 2002. Please know that I am in support of implementing new provisions to address the problems pertaining to operating standards for crematories, and I will certainly keep your views in mind if and when the full House of Representatives votes on this legislation.

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

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

OCT 23 2002



October 18, 2002

The Honorable Tom Scrimenti
Pa. House of Representatives
P. O. Box 202020
Harrisburg, Pa. 17120-2020

Dear Representative Tom Scrimenti:

I am writing to voice my wholehearted support for House Bill 2407 sponsored by the Honorable Harry A. Readshaw. This legislation involves the licensure and inspection of crematories in the Commonwealth and will help to insure that what happened in Noble, Georgia, will not happen in Pennsylvania.

Public hearing were held by the House Professional Licensure Committee in May of this year. Testimony supporting this legislation was presented by the Pennsylvania Funeral Directors Association, the Georgia Funeral Directors Association and A.A.R.P. The Bill is consumer oriented to ensure identification, proper handling of the remains and includes provisions to return the remains to the family.

On behalf of the citizens of Pennsylvania and the funeral profession, please vote favorable with respect to House Bill 2407 (P.N.4362).

Very truly yours,

James B. Meredith, II
Bracken Funeral Home, Inc.

MAIN OFFICE
814-664-7735
315 North Center Street Corry, PA 16407
O. William Bracken, Supv.



BRANCH OFFICE
814-654-7822
211 Mechanic Street Spartansburg, PA 16434
James B. Meredith II, Supv.

Ehrhart, Donna

From: Ehrhart, Donna
Sent: Monday, December 03, 2001 3:54 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: House Bill 1873 & 1572

In response to your recent e-mail to Rep. Thomas J. Scrimenti, please be advised that HB 1873 passed the House of Representatives October 23, 2001, and was referred to the Education Committee in the Senate November 8, 2001. House Bill 1572 which provides for violation detection devices authorized for local authorities was referred to the House Transportation Committee May 9, 2001.

When and if these bills come before the full House of Representatives for a vote, Rep. Scrimenti will take your views into consideration. Thank you for writing.

Donna Ehrhart, Legislative Assistant to Rep. Scrimenti

Scrimenti, Tom

From: Dan Daum [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2001 4:05 PM
To: Scrimenti, Tom
Subject: HB 1873/1572

Hello, my name is Daniel L. Daum, Principal of Corry Area High School. Now that the school year is well underway, I am writing to you asking for your support of HB 1873 and 1572. As a high school principal, having the authority that 1873 would grant is very reassuring. With regards to 1572, it only makes sense. The number of individuals who pursue a career in school administration is decreasing and an incentive is needed. If you have any questions, please call me at 665-8297 ext. 108. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time.

Dan

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

June 27, 1995

Keith D. Eller, M.S.
Outpatient Counselor
Saint Vincent Health Center
232 West 25 Street
Erie, PA 16544

Dear Mr. Eller:

Thank you for taking the time to share concerns about the licensure of counselors and family therapists. I sincerely appreciate your professional opinion regarding the need for this legislation.

As you may already know, on June 21, 1995, Representative Sheila Miller introduced House Bill 1861 which would create the Mental Health Professionals Act. This bill was subsequently referred to the House Professional Licensure Committee for its review.

At this writing, I am currently reviewing this legislation along with information provided to me by the Pennsylvania Alliance of Counseling Professionals, other mental health experts and representatives of the insurance industry. Please be assured that I will surely remember your comments if this bill is placed on the House Professional Licensure Committee agenda for discussion.

Again, thank you for your informative letter. Your continued input is certainly welcomed and essential as I consider this legislation. In the meantime, if you should have any questions or would like to be apprised of the status of House Bill 1861, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative
4th Legislative District

TJS:klc

KS
SAINT VINCENT HEALTH CENTER

232 West 25 Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16544
814/452-5000



June 12, 1995

Representative Thomas Scrimenti
Main Capital Building
Senate Post Office
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative Scrimenti:

My name is Keith Eller, I am a member of the National Board of Certified Counselors.

My association is part of the Pennsylvania Alliance for Counseling Professionals. The other disciplines are the Pennsylvania Coalition of Arts Therapies; Pennsylvania Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Pennsylvania Mental Health Counselors Association, The Pennsylvania Association of Pastoral Counselors; and the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Counselors Association. Each one of the disciplines in the Alliance represents a significant number of highly trained and clinically experienced professionals. Currently, 41 other states license my discipline. As my State Senator, I am requesting your support for a Mental Health Practice Act Bill. Managed care insurance companies are limiting agency clinicians only to licensed mental health professionals. This in turn limits agencies and clients access to a wide range of highly qualified and clinically trained professionals. This bill would allow more qualified disciplines of mental health professionals to be licensed, therefore, enabling agencies to provide multiple counseling services to individuals, couples, families, and groups throughout the Commonwealth.

Currently, Pennsylvania is part of a small minority of states that do not license professional counselors and family therapists. The economy of the Commonwealth may be affected if master's degree people in these disciplines are forced to move out of state in order to continue providing the services in which they've been trained. In my own work at Saint Vincent Health Center I see families struggling with significant and severe problems, some of which have a devastating effect on their lives. These families benefit from the expertise of qualified professionals, and this bill would allow them, as consumers, the continued accessibility of a diverse group of skilled clinicians as service providers. I therefore request your support for the Mental Health Practice Act Bill sponsored by Sheila Miller.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith D. Eller".

Keith D. Eller, M.S.
Outpatient Counselor
Behavioral Services

THOMAS J. SCRIMENTI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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- PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
- AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

April 28, 1997

Keith D. Eller

██████████
Erie, PA 16511

Dear Mr. Eller:

Thank you for your letter concerning HB 670, the Professional Counselors and Therapist Licensure Bill.

HB 670 is not the sole legislative vehicle for the licensure of professional counselors and therapists. Legislation (SB 619) that would create a State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists with the authority to license masters level counselors and therapists has been introduced in the Senate.

On Wednesday, April 23, 1997, the Senate held a hearing on SB 619. It is my understanding that SB 619 will soon be reported from Committee. HB 670, as you may know, on March 5, 1997 was referred to the House Professional Licensure Committee. As of today, the committee has not scheduled HB 670 for any action.

As you mentioned, the protection from inadequately trained mental health counselors that is offered to consumers by HB 670 and SB 619 is important to the citizens of Pennsylvania. According to the House Professional Licensure Committee, this legislative session will be one of cooperation by mental health counselors and therapists, as well as, associations representing psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and other mental health professionals who support legislation which in the long run benefits the mental health of the Commonwealth's citizens.

Insight from professionals like yourself, in conjunction with the information gathered from informational hearings is instrumental in the formation of my opinion. Please be assured that your support and suggestions will be remembered should HB 607, SB 619 or subsequent legislation be brought before the House of Representatives. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

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

Thomas J. Scrimenti
State Representative

COPY

APR 17 1997

Keith D. Eller

██████████
Erie, PA 16511

April 9, 1997

Representative Thomas J. Scrimenti
c/o House Box 202020
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Representative Scrimenti,

I am writing regarding House Bill 670, the Professional Counselors and Therapist Licensure Bill. I contacted your Northeast office and was told that you had not reached a decision on whether you support this bill. I would like to briefly review the reasons I think you should support it and then respond to some issues that have been raised that may make it difficult for you to support its passage. I understand that you are one of the committee members on the House Professional Licensure Committee and therefore I am all the more interested in discussing this legislation with you in an effort to know your position.

I believe the Professional Counselors and Therapist Licensure Bill is very important for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most important issue at stake is that the licensure of counselors is needed to protect all consumers of mental health services from inadequately trained counselors as well as a means by which to restrict any counselor who acts in an unprofessional or unethical manner. The licensure of counselors would provide consumers a tool to adequately identify counselors and therapists who have sufficient training, education, and experience to provide the requested services.

Licensure is also needed to provide an adequate number of Master's level licensed professionals for Pennsylvania consumers. There is a rapid increase in managed care providers that are requiring a state license for counselors and as a consequence, fewer counselors are able to provide the needed services due to the lack of a state license. Of course you are probably aware that Pennsylvania is one of only a few states that does not provide licensure for Master's level counselors.

As a result of the hearings that were held on this bill in the last legislative session, several changes were made that have made this legislation better, such as the reduction of the number of disciplines from four to two, and the change from this being a practice act to a lower level of practice protection. I realize psychiatrists as a group are opposed to this bill although it is very interesting that at Saint Vincent Health Center where I am employed as a counselor, most of the psychiatrists are supportive of it and at least one psychiatrist has offered to testify in support of this legislation. If psychiatrists are concerned to treat the whole person with its biological as well as the psychosocial dimensions, then they will want to cooperate with counselors in their treatment of patients. I wonder if psychiatrists who oppose this bill are not more concerned about having another group close to their "turf" than any real concern about counselors skills. I understand that the

Insurance Federation of Pennsylvania, Inc. is also opposed to this bill, although that should not be a surprise, since profit is their main concern. I hope you are aware that research from Throckmorton (1992), for example, showed that there was no evidence that adding licensed mental health counselors to a benefit plan increased costs in any manner. It would appear that even the insurance companies do not need to fear this bill. The fact that almost all the other states in the country have similar licensing laws is a powerful indicator that this bill is a help to consumers and providers or else we would see these laws being repealed.

I would like to urge you once again to support this licensure bill. I would like to know what your thoughts are regarding it, both pro and con, and look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith D. Eller".

Keith D. Eller