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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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O'DONNELL, BLACK CAUCUS CRITICIZE BUDGET PROCESS

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell, D-Germantown, and State Representative David Richardson, chairman of the Black Caucus, have criticized the procedure being used to create the 1980-81 state budget.

The attack on the process came in a series of actions in Harrisburg last week. O'Donnell helped draft a statement used by House members as a basis for their attack on the budget procedure: The statement was circulated to all members of the General Assembly. At a later news conference in the capitol building, Richardson announced that the Black Caucus had endorsed the view that the budget-making process was being abused.

Under the usual budget-making process, the House Appropriations Committee introduces a general appropriation bill and the members are given an opportunity to amend it. This session, a joint conference committee of the House and Senate plans to place the general appropriation bill for 1980-81 (the budget) in a deficiency appropriation bill which pertains to last year's budget. House members have commented that this may be the first time this procedure has been used.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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O'Donnell/Black Caucus  
add 1

"The danger in proceeding this way is that the House members will be limited to a 'yes' or 'no' vote on the conference committee report," O'Donnell said. "We will be precluded from having any input on the substance of the budget."

"In practical terms, this effectively silences the individual members and their constituencies from the budget process," he said. "It could result in a situation where only a few people are involved in the preparation of a \$6.8 billion spending plan."

Those who attacked the budget process emphasized that this was not an attack on the conference committee or on any one political party. The attack focused on the use of the procedure.

O'Donnell said that his research indicated that use of this process may violate Article III, Section 1 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. That section of the constitution prohibits passage of a bill where the original purpose of the bill has been changed. O'Donnell said that the insertion of a 1980-81 budget proposal into a bill which was originally a 1979-80 deficiency appropriation bill could be interpreted as a change in the original purpose of a bill. Under this interpretation, there would be a violation of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

O'Donnell and members of the Black Caucus have requested the Appropriations Committee to bring a general appropriation bill to the House floor as soon as possible.

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL  
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

February 13, 1982

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

O'DONNELL BLASTS THORNBURGH BUDGET

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell, Chairman of the Democratic Caucus, today attacked Governor Thornburgh's proposed budget for fiscal year 1982-1983, calling it "disastrous" and "a reflection of the Reagan mentality."

"While the Governor has cleverly side-stepped an endorsement of Reaganomics," O'Donnell charged, "he has transferred the financial burden to local governments without transferring money or responsibility for policy. This is clearly a reflection of the Reagan mentality."

Representative O'Donnell said the proposed budget is "disastrous with respect to jobs, transportation, and education. With Pennsylvania's unemployment rate at depression levels, the Governor hasn't done anything or even seriously addressed the problem," O'Donnell said.

O'Donnell accused Thornburgh of talking around the problems plaguing mass transportation in the state. "On the one hand he has been making public statements in support of mass transit while on the other hand he proposes a cap on state transit subsidies. We worked for years to implement a predictable funding base and now, with our rail lines in danger of abandonment, the Governor implies further cutbacks."

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O'Donnell Blasts Thornburgh Budget

ADD ONE

"The budget is no better in the area of education. The Governor's claim of a \$127 million transfer to school districts simply isn't true," O'Donnell said. "Of that \$127 million, \$31 million represents short-term subsidies that the districts must repay, \$24 million is a court ordered settlement for special education subsidies owed to Philadelphia, and \$24 million is required by law to cover increased costs in school transportation and special education. The remaining \$47 million will actually be a decrease in the percentage of state support for basic instruction subsidies. There are no new monies for education in this budget," O'Donnell concluded.

Noting the current fiscal difficulties and the state of the proposed budget, Representative O'Donnell predicted that "1982-83 will be a very difficult budget year. We are very far apart in our views of the state's needs at this point. Hopefully the needed changes can be made by the budgetary deadline of July 1st."

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ROBERT W. O'DONNELL  
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

February 8, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

O'DONNELL ATTACKS STATE BUDGET

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-East Falls) today attacked the state budget proposed by Governor Thornburgh for fiscal year 1983-1984.

O'Donnell, the House Majority Whip, called the Thornburgh budget "a reflection of the Reagan approach to Pennsylvania's problems. It is an attempt to ignore economic and social realities like unemployment and human needs on the grounds that things will somehow get better by themselves."

O'Donnell said "this budget assumes it is not the role of the government to get involved in these problems, and that is an assumption I reject out of hand."

Representative O'Donnell cited the Governor's failure to adequately fund special education and mass transit as two major deficiencies in the budget proposal. "An inadequate budget for special education will have serious effects on Philadelphia," the East Falls legislator said, "and will make it that much more difficult to turn our schools around."

O'Donnell called the funding for mass transportation "not just a human but a financial error. We are in a position to receive three federal dollars for each state mass transit dollar. Inadequate state funding will cost us triple in lost federal monies."

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BUDGET add one

"Following the Governor's budget address I met with SEPTA General Manager David Gunn and Chairman Louis Gould to discuss this problem, and House Democrats will propose a budget plan to prevent this error," O'Donnell said.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

July 6, 1984

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PHILADELPHIA GAINS FROM STATE BUDGET

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-East Falls), the House Majority Whip, today expressed strong approval of the newly-enacted \$13.2 billion state budget which increases state assistance to the City and School District of Philadelphia by more than \$40 million.

O'Donnell called the tax and spending package "a responsible budget done on time. In past years we've had deficit-ridden budgets filled with phony revenue and expense estimates, or we've had major crises because there was no budget at all by the July 1 deadline. This budget is a good one for the state as a whole and for Philadelphia in particular."

O'Donnell said "this year's budget increases assistance for city services by \$20 million. It also raises state aid for our schools by \$21 million. At the same time, we were able to reduce personal income taxes from 2.45% to 2.35%, lower the corporate income tax, and keep the budget in balance.

"Among the key expenditures in the budget are a \$25.7 million appropriation from the general fund for an emergency mortgage foreclosure relief program, and \$5 million for a statewide computer literacy program in the schools. The legislature also reaffirmed the exclusive use of state lottery funds for senior citizen programs," O'Donnell explained.

"This year we were able to keep partisanship down to a minimum," O'Donnell said. "And, as a result, we have a budget everyone can live with."