

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL, MEMBER
414 WEST CHELTEN AVENUE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19144
PHONE: 215-843-1700



COMMITTEES
MINORITY CHAIRMAN
SUB-COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
JUDICIARY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact Jon Macks at 843-1700 or 649-5734

O'DONNELL SUCCESSFUL IN FIGHT TO SAVE ETHICS LAW

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell, D-Philadelphia, successfully fought against efforts to weaken the current state ethics law.

House Bill 26 would have made financial disclosure requirements for public officials less stringent. It would have eliminated the requirement that public officials wait one year after leaving their posts before doing business with the agency or government on which they served. In addition, it would have allowed persons to conduct limited business with the governments which they served. Opponents of the bill said that in effect, it would have gutted the ethics law.

"We must keep the ethics law strong because public confidence in government must be restored," O'Donnell said. "The current ethics law will clean house and more importantly, will keep it clean at all levels."

House Bill 26 was defeated by a vote of 123 to 75. However, some capital observers have commented that the ethics issue will be a continuing item on the legislative agenda.

-more-

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL, MEMBER
414 WEST CHELTEN AVENUE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19144
PHONE: 215-843-1700



COMMITTEES
MINORITY CHAIRMAN
SUB-COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
JUDICIARY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

O'Donnell
add 1

In addition to fighting to keep the ethics law strong, during House floor debate, O'Donnell argued that the Philadelphia School Board be brought under the current ethics law. Last year's ethics bill provided an exemption for the Philadelphia School Board.

O'Donnell has consistently supported strong ethics legislation. He was one of the moving forces behind last year's ethics bill and earlier this year, he and other reform-minded legislators lobbied extensively for funding of the Ethics Commission.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jon Macks 843-1700 or 649-5734

REFORM-MINDED LEGISLATORS PASS ETHICS FUNDING

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell, D-East Falls/Wissahickon, and a coalition of reform-minded legislators pushed through the State House of Representatives funding for the recently created Ethics Commission.

O'Donnell, author of previous ethics code provisions, lobbied extensively for passage of House Bill 56, which provided \$100,000 in operating funds for the Ethics Commission.

"Without the appropriation of these funds, the Commission would not be able to enforce the provisions of the ethics code," O'Donnell said. "It is imperative that the Commission be funded before the May primary."

Upon receipt of the appropriation, the Ethics Commission will provide financial disclosure forms and formulate guidelines for candidates and public officials covered by the law.

"I'm hoping that the Senate approves this appropriation in the next few days," O'Donnell said. "The only way that the abuses of the past will end is if the Commission sets adequate guidelines and has the operating funds to insure that the guidelines are adhered to."

Chances for passage of the bill in the Senate are considered extremely good.

#####

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL
THE MAJORITY WHIP



3425 CONRAD STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19129
(215) 843-1700

120 MAIN CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120
(717) 787-5860

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

August 15, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

O'DONNELL MEETS WITH COMMON CAUSE

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-Germantown), met today with officials of Common Cause, the public-interest lobbying organization, to prepare a legislative strategy for reforming political campaign and lobbying laws in Pennsylvania.

O'Donnell, the House Majority Whip, met with Mark Lichty, the Chairman of Common Cause-Pennsylvania, and Randy Brubaker, a member of the Common Cause State Governing Board, to discuss Common Cause's proposals for limited public financing of state elections and for reforms in the state's loophole-ridden lobby disclosure regulations.

"Common Cause's major concern is that individual voters have as much access to their Governor as monied interests do," Lichty said. "Our partial public financing bill will help ensure that that basic principle will be restored."

Representative O'Donnell, a longtime advocate of good government legislation, called the meeting "useful and productive. These measures are important reforms in our statewide electoral process and have a good chance for passage."

O'Donnell has in the past sponsored bills to strengthen state ethics regulations, and amendments to require candidates to disclose their campaign contributions before election day. He is currently a sponsor of two bills to require lobbyists to disclose what they are paid and how much money they spend trying to influence public officials.

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL
THE MAJORITY WHIP



3425 CONRAD STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19129
(215) 843-1700

120 MAIN CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120
(717) 787-5860

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

December 5, 1984

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

O'DONNELL APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-East Falls) has been appointed Chairman of the Legislative Organization and Management Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

NCSL President John T. Bregg, Deputy Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives, said "it is an honor for me to appoint Bob O'Donnell to chair this important national committee which in the next year will examine ways to promote the understanding and effectiveness of America's state legislatures."

O'Donnell, the Majority Whip in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, in accepting the appointment, said "this chairmanship presents a challenging and exciting opportunity to take a look at how legislatures in the other 49 states work, and to find new ways for Pennsylvania's legislature to become more efficient, more effective, and more responsive to our state's needs."

The National Conference of State Legislatures is the preeminent professional organization dedicated to improving the quality of legislatures across the country. O'Donnell has served for the past year as Vice Chairman of the organization's legislative management committee.

* * * 30 * * *

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL
THE MAJORITY WHIP



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

3425 CONRAD STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19129
(215) 843-1700

120 MAIN CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120
(717) 787-5860

June 20, 1985

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ben Schuster 843-1700

HOUSE PASSES PLAIN LANGUAGE BILL

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-Germantown) praised this week's House passage of a bill that requires consumer contracts to be written in plain language that would make them easier to understand.

O'Donnell said, "When people borrow money, when they rent or lease an apartment, or when they enter into any contract that affects their credit, the possibility of being confused by complex language is very great. This bill will make it less likely that consumers will end up paying more than they intended to because the contracts they sign are not written clearly."

Under the bill consumer contracts would have to follow certain guidelines. Some examples of these guidelines are that the contract must use short words, sentences, and paragraphs. Also, they should avoid technical legal terms as well as Latin or foreign words. And in addition, contracts should be printed in typesize and ink color that makes them easy to read and to find particular sections.

"The consumer will have additional protection against unfair business practices through this bill," O'Donnell pointed out. "Plain language in contracts makes good sense for consumers and for businesses who want to retain the confidence of their customers."

Legislative Report
State Representative
Robert W. O'Donnell



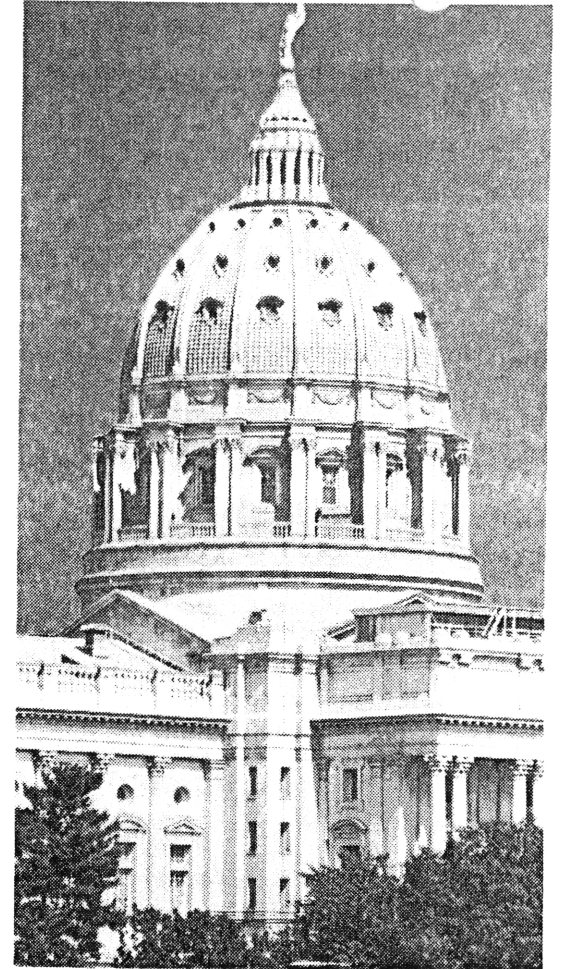
The legislature returned to Harrisburg last week and one of the first items on our agenda was the resolution of a dispute between reporters and legislators about media access to House Member's financial documents.

Last summer, reporters from the Allentown Morning Call wanted to take a look at certain expense documents of the state representatives from Lehigh County. The newspaper asked the House Bipartisan Management Committee of which I am a member to interpret the House Rules on this issue. The committee, not realizing how strongly the newspapers felt about their investigative access to these records, issued a narrow legalistic ruling that the documents requested by the newspaper could not be made available under the existing rules.

The newspapers and a number of legislators criticized this restriction and suggested modifying the rules to permit access to actual receipts as well as to expense vouchers. We discussed the proposed change in our caucus meeting and found that the legislators widely supported further opening their financial records.

The Rules Committee reviewed the proposal and introduced a Resolution which I cosponsored that would change the rule in question. This Resolution passed unanimously.

Prepared by the office of:
State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell,
Majority Whip



THIS WEEK IN
HARRISBURG

January 27, 1986

Legislative Report
State Representative
Robert W. O'Donnell



The nature of a State Representative's responsibilities is in part determined by what happens in Washington. The vastly changing nature of federal support for cities and states has literally redefined our job descriptions and has required me to be active in a different way.

I have recently assumed the Chairmanship of the Law and Justice Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures, the association of this country's state legislatures that is working to protect the quality and integrity of vital social programs. As chairman of this committee, I will testify before Congress and participate in the national policy debate on issues such as funding for consumer protection, law enforcement, and crime victim's programs.

In the last month, I have met with the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation to discuss the Gramm-Rudman "deficit reduction" cuts and other aspects of federal funding for our state. I also met with Senator Gary Hart to discuss the political nature of these problems and the likely response in the U.S. Senate.

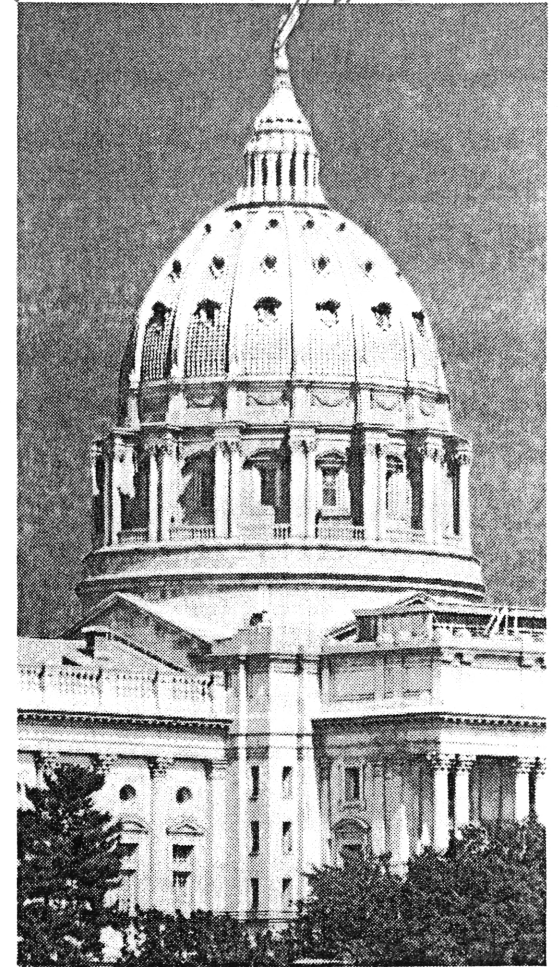
While in the past, a State Representative could limit his or her involvement to local or Harrisburg activities and still be effective, the nature of government in the 1980's now requires involvement in all levels of government - including the national level. As the role Washington decides to take in addressing our problems continues to change, it is clear that

the way in which government in the year 2000 handles our problems will be much different than it is today. We have to act now to shape the future face of government or we will face continuing crises as those changes progressively limit our opportunities to respond.

N O T I C E

The rules of the State House prohibit representatives from mailing publications such as "This Week in Harrisburg" in the two-month period preceding the Primary Election. As a result, this will be the last issue I can send you until after the May 20th election.

Legis. House Report



THIS WEEK IN
HARRISBURG

March 10, 1986