

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL
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DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS



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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

For Immediate Release

April 24, 1981

Contact: Loretta Witt - 843-1700

State Representative Robert O'Donnell (D-Germantown) announced that the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L & I) has completed work on abandoned houses at 5342-44 Wayne Avenue. The houses had been a source of neighbors' complaints since March, 1974.

These two houses were part of the list which community group representatives and O'Donnell had agreed were the major problem houses in Germantown. Vandalism, fires, wild animals and breaking in by delinquents were the major complaints from the neighbors.

The group had convened last year to discuss the failure of L & I to clean and seal these houses. The group subsequently began strong lobbying efforts with the Department and the Managing Director's office to begin work on these houses. In addition, plans were prepared to bring suit against the city to force L & I to do the repair work, in the event the lobbying effort was unsuccessful.

The threat of the suit and the continuing lobbying efforts of the community groups prompted the city to agree to begin work on the houses. The city began work on the houses over the winter, with the last two "major problem" houses, 5342-44 Wayne Avenue, being completed on April 22nd.

Democratic committeepersons Ron Brown and Dennis Blunt were joined by neighbors to watch the Wayne Avenue repair work. Work was completed on the houses that day.

Although, minor repairs still need to be made on a few houses on the community groups' list, O'Donnell said that plans to begin suit have been dropped. This decision was based on compliance with the agreement to clean and seal the houses.

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MINORITY CHAIRMAN
SUB-COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
JUDICIARY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information contact: Jon Macks (649-5734 or 843-1700)

O'DONNELL ASKS FOR CONTINUED PROSECUTION OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell, D-Philadelphia, recently sponsored a resolution which called for the extension of the German Republic statute of limitations regarding Nazi War Criminals. A similar version, which had been introduced in the State Senate, was the version that was eventually transmitted to the U. S. Congress and President Carter.

"These crimes against humanity should not go unpunished," O'Donnell said. "The passage of time doesn't eradicate their enormity. Mankind must not be allowed to forget the victims of the Holocaust. If we allow these crimes to go unpunished, if we allow the victims to be forgotten, then we will have failed in our duty to do everything we can to prevent this from happening again."

O'Donnell said that he hopes that the Pennsylvania resolution

more

add one/O'Donnell

and ones from other states will pressure the German Federal Republic into extending the statute of limitations.

The resolution passed unanimously in the House and the Senate.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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For Immediate Release

January 7, 1982

Contact: Jon Macks at 843-1700

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-Germantown) introduced a bill which would prevent real estate speculators and tax delinquent landlords from hiding behind fictitious registrations of their property.

Under current law, there is no requirement that real property deeds list the actual name and address of the purchaser. As a result, it is difficult for the city to find the owner in a tax collection effort. Additionally, it allows real estate speculators to neglect a property, then sell it if neighborhood property values increase.

"Perhaps more important than the delinquent tax aspect is the fact that area residents will be able to find the owner of an abandoned house and hold the owner accountable," O'Donnell said. "As a result, the community can put pressure on individuals to solve the problems of abandoned houses, which are of great concern in our neighborhoods."

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

FOR RELEASE MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1982
10 A.M., CAPITOL MEDIA CENTER

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM (717) 783-1593 or (215) 843-1700

O'DONNELL INTRODUCES NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREEZE REFERENDUM

HARRISBURG -- State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell, D-Philadelphia, today announced the introduction of a bill placing a nuclear weapons freeze referendum on the November ballot.

O'Donnell said "there is wide-spread opposition in Pennsylvania to any nuclear arms build-up. This referendum provides a mechanism through which the people of Pennsylvania can express their concerns to our national policy makers."

The referendum would ask for an advisory opinion from the voters of Pennsylvania on the question: "Shall the United States propose to the Soviet Union that both governments immediately agree to a mutually verifiable freeze of all further development, testing, production, and deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles, and delivery systems?"

O'Donnell, who is Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, called the nuclear arms race "extremely dangerous and morally indefensible. More than 140 million Americans would die in a nuclear war between the superpowers. If both sides can destroy the world already, it doesn't make much sense trying to make your weapons more destructive. An arms freeze, as suggested in this referendum, would significantly reduce the threat of nuclear extermination because it is mutual, not unilateral, because it is verifiable, and because it is realistic."

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NUCLEAR FREEZE REFERENDUM

ADD ONE

O'Donnell said the current nuclear arms budget "has seriously hindered the delivery of human services by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and by its municipalities." He added that continued financing of the arms build-up "would exasperbate this problem and further destabilize both State and National economies."

Representative O'Donnell said he expected bipartisan support for the measure, and he is "hopeful that the referendum will pass and that the voters will have their say."

Also present at O'Donnell's announcement were William Grassie, co-ordinator of the Pennsylvania Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze, and the Rev. Dr. Albert E. Myers of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

March 7, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

MORE FISH FOR WISSAHICKON CREEK

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-Germantown) today announced that the Pennsylvania Fish Commission may increase the state allocation of trout in Wissahickon Creek by as many as 7,000 fish.

"Although the Fish Commission could not promise me that this year's experimental allocation would be increased," O'Donnell said, "I received a firm commitment that Wissahickon Creek would receive very high priority for more fish if they become available. I am impressed by the Commission's concern for the public and their responsiveness on the question of future trout stocks in the Wissahickon."

O'Donnell recently requested that the Fish Commission revise its substantial reduction in Wissahickon Creek trout allocations, calling the Wissahickon "a unique and exceptional urban resource." Based on an experimental formula, the creek is slated to receive 13,100 trout this year, down from last year's stock of 36,500 fish.

In a letter to O'Donnell, Pennsylvania Fish Commission President Calvin J. Kern said, "our new program is in a developmental stage and we're certainly willing to make improvements and adjustments to better serve anglers and manage our resource. I'm optimistic that an opportunity will arise for some positive adjustments in unique urban fisheries."

According to Kern, a previous 20,000 trout stocking allocation "apparently provided satisfactory recreational experience (making the Wissahickon) a good fishery from the viewpoint of both the Commission staff and anglers."

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ADD ONE

WISSAHICKON TROUT

O'Donnell said "as the stocking season progresses, the Fish Commission will recalculate the number of fish at its disposal. It is possible that as many as 125,000 of the state's 5 million trout will be unallocated at that time, and that some of these fish will be released in the Wissahickon this year.

"I am extremely optimistic that we will be looking at increased stocking levels in the coming years," O'Donnell concluded.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

June 13, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

O'DONNELL INTRODUCES ZOO ASSISTANCE BILL

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-East Falls), the House Majority Whip, today introduced legislation that would for the first time provide state operational subsidies to the Philadelphia zoo.

O'Donnell's bill, the "Zoological Gardens Assistance Act," would authorize the Department of Community Affairs to appropriate an estimated \$400,000 to the Philadelphia Zoological Society for the operation, maintenance and improvement of its zoological gardens.

O'Donnell, who has been a long time zoo supporter, called the Philadelphia Zoo "a vitally important cultural, educational, and tourist attraction. Well over a million people, including many thousands from other parts of Pennsylvania, visited the Zoo last year -- more than attended any other cultural institution in the area. 340,000 students participated in formal educational programs at the Zoo. But the Philadelphia Zoo, and the other zoos in Pennsylvania, are not among the institutions receiving state financial support," O'Donnell said.

"This bill will provide badly needed funds to our zoos, allowing them to keep up with the escalating costs of feeding and housing their animals. Pennsylvania's zoos need and deserve our state support."

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG
October 5, 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: MAUREEN KANE, 843-1700

O'DONNELL SUPPORTS COMMUNITY COUNCIL ON SCHUYLKILL FALLS

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-East Falls) today announced he will support the East Falls Community Council position on the Schuylkill Falls Housing Project.

In a letter to the Community Council, O'Donnell said, "I believe the Schuylkill Falls Housing Project represents out-dated thinking. It has not been good for the Project's residents or for the neighborhood. This approach to public housing should never be used again.

"I will support whatever position the Council takes on this matter."

O'Donnell, Philadelphia's highest-ranking member of the State House of Representatives, was in Harrisburg on legislative business during the Council's stormy September 26 meeting at which the Housing Project was discussed. Maureen Kane, O'Donnell's legislative assistant, represented the East Falls legislator at the meeting.

O'Donnell said "it is extremely important not to let issues like this become politicized across party lines because that diverts attention from the real problem, which is what to do about Schuylkill Falls. As always, I am happy to meet with the East Falls Community Council on this or any other matter, and to support the Council's position on the Schuylkill Falls Housing Project."

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

March 11, 1986

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: ROB DUNHAM, 843-1700

O'DONNELL CRITICIZES SOUTH AFRICA VOTES

State Representative Robert W. O'Donnell (D-Germantown), the House Majority Whip, today expressed his strong disappointment at House votes to water down or defeat five bills that would have divested Pennsylvania public investments from companies doing business in South Africa.

O'Donnell, who had met with district anti-apartheid activists following a divestiture rally in Harrisburg on Monday, called the House opposition to divestiture "shocking and divisive. You have to wonder how serious our commitment to justice and simple human dignity is when we talk about the evils of apartheid but do nothing to withdraw our public investments from companies which take advantage of apartheid."

The House voted to defeat or return to committee four bills that would have required the State Employees Retirement Board, state-related colleges and universities, and Pennsylvania city governments to withdraw their investments from companies maintaining financial relationships with South Africa. It did approve a watered down version of a bill that would have divested from businesses with South African ties nearly \$1 billion in stock held by the state Public School Employees Retirement Board. The bill now would limit divestiture only to those companies that fail to adhere to the "Sullivan Principles" on salary and working conditions for the black majority in South Africa.

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SOUTH AFRICA VOTES

Add one

O'Donnell said "critics of divestiture have claimed that disinvestment would be costly to Pennsylvania taxpayers. But the state of Pennsylvania has got no business doing business with a country where discrimination is not merely a pervasive fact but where racism is the law.

"We have a moral obligation not to finance apartheid. The investments we currently ship off to South Africa should be reinvested in companies that will provide jobs here in Philadelphia and across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

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