

- PAUL W. SEMMEL, MEMBER

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*House of Representatives*  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

February 4, 2002

COMMITTEES:

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VETERANS AFFAIRS  
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MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. Paul F. Hastings, Chairman  
PA State Veterans Commission  
Bldg P-0-47  
Fort Indiantown Gap  
Annville, PA 17003-5002

Dear Chairman Hastings:

I am writing to you in response to the State Veterans Commission's recent letter concerning funding for the Delaware Valley Veterans' Home. As always, it was a pleasure to hear from this important decision making body.

As you pointed out, there have been a multitude of problems, which have led to the delayed opening of our sixth state veterans home. These delays, in part, are somewhat reminiscent of the delays associated with the opening of our fifth state veterans home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I too, am disheartened to learn that this facility will not be ready to accommodate the southeastern Pennsylvania veteran community before the legislature recesses for the summer months. Nonetheless, I assure you and your colleagues that I do indeed take great personal interest in the timely completion of this home. In my capacity as Majority Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I will work on your behalf to ensure that the necessary funding levels for this veterans' home are included in this years upcoming state budget. As well, I will apprise my House and Senate colleagues of this budgetary issue, thereby establishing a coalition of support for this long overdue facility.

Thank you for contacting my office on this important matter. As always, I remain extremely impressed with the State Veterans Commission's ability to speak as "one voice" for the veteran community of this great Commonwealth. Together, you and your colleagues have been able to accomplish many legislative initiatives, which have greatly benefited the veterans you serve. As the Majority Chairman of our standing committee in the House of Representatives, I stand shoulder to shoulder with each and every one of you on this crucial funding matter, and look forward to assisting the State Veterans Commission on future legislative matters of concern.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul W. Semmel".

PAUL W. SEMMEL, Majority Chairman  
Veterans Affairs & Emergency  
Preparedness Committee

PWS/prh

MATTHEW N. WRIGHT, MEMBER  
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*House of Representatives*  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

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SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN  
ON ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT  
RECYCLING FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 5, 2002

Honorable Mark S. Schweiker  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
225, Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Schweiker,

It has come to my attention that construction on the new Philadelphia Veterans Nursing Home will be completed in May. However, it has been relayed to me that the opening and operation of the facility will not commence until November. I have been told this is due to a delay in funding for the staffing and supplies of this new facility.

I am opposed to any budget "gimmicks" that will delay the opening of the Veterans Nursing Home! It is a disgrace to all of the hard work our veterans did to get the new facility completed and then to have it sit idle due to funding delays. Please do everything in your power to get this new facility opened at the time construction is completed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt".

Representative Matt Wright

MW/ah

C: David Sanko, Senior Counselor to the Governor  
Senator Robert M. Tomlinson, Chairman,  
Senate Military & Veterans Affairs Committee  
Representative Paul Semmel, Chairman,  
House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee  
Representative John M. Perzel, House Majority Leader  
Representative John E. Barley, Chairman, House Appropriation Committee  
Major General William B. Lynch, Adjutant General ✓



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
HARRISBURG

ROBERT A. BITTENBENDER  
SECRETARY  
OFFICE OF THE BUDGET

February 12, 2002

Honorable Matt Wright  
House of Representatives  
House Post Office Box 202020  
Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Representative Wright:

Thank you for your February 5, 2002 letter to Governor Schweiker regarding the scheduled opening of the Delaware Valley Veterans Home.

As you know, the Governor presented his 2002-03 Executive Budget to the General Assembly on February 5, 2002. Given the current national economic slowdown and its impact on the Commonwealth's General Fund revenues, difficult decisions were necessary to develop a budget that is balanced and realistic. Every effort was made to ensure that funding levels for essential programs and services are adequate to continue effective operations, and we believe this budget accomplishes that goal. The budget proposes to increase spending by only 0.6%. Also, the budget continues the Administration's commitment to tax reductions by proposing to cut taxes for the eighth straight year. In addition to the funding provided for education, health, economic development and the environment, the budget proposes critical new investments in a Homeland Security Initiative designed to strengthen Pennsylvania's emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

The proposed 2002-03 funding amount for the Delaware Valley Veterans Home is more than \$8.5 million. This funding level will provide for the phased opening of the new veterans home. It is expected the home will accept its first residents in the fall of 2002. The Administration remains committed to providing our veterans with the best facilities and care possible.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write and express your thoughts on funding for the Delaware Valley Veterans Home and please do not hesitate to bring other matters of concern or interest to our attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert A. Bittenbender".

Robert A. Bittenbender