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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES:

VETERANS AFFAIRS & EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, CHAIRMAN
COMMERCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CONSUMER AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

DESIGNATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS
STATE ARMORY BOARD
PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 16, 1999

TO: Hon. John E. Barley, Majority Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Paul Semmel, Majority Chairman *PWS*
House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee

SUBJECT: Funding for PA Veterans Memorial at Ft. Indiantown Gap National Cemetery

As you are aware, Act 60 of 1988 established the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial Commission for the purpose of constructing a state memorial to honor all veterans of the Commonwealth.

In terms of the \$3.5 million needed for this project, the Memorial Commission has relied heavily on a grassroots fundraising campaign to bring this project into fruition. Prior to Governor Ridge's Administration, the fund balance stagnated at a mere \$69,000.

Under the Ridge Administration, there was a movement in the veteran community to beseech the legislature to obtain a \$1.00 tax check-off item on the state income tax form. However, they agreed to forego this measure in exchange for the Governor's pledge to fully support the construction of this memorial by the year 2000.

The Governor challenged the veteran community to raise a substantial portion of the project costs through donations from the various veterans service organizations. As well, there was a gentlemen's agreement that state funds could possibly be used to ensure the project would be completed by the end of this millennium.

Thus, this newly revitalized, grassroots campaign has currently raised \$1.4 million to date. However, it has recently become apparent that these efforts are once again beginning to falter. Overall, the veteran community has given an admirable amount of financial support to this project, as well as the countless number of other local projects and causes in their immediate communities.

Therefore, as Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I would like to respectfully request your committee's consideration of a \$2 million budget line

item for the purpose of making this memorial a tangible symbol of our Commonwealth's gratitude to those veterans who have honorably served their country and Commonwealth. Furthermore, I strongly feel the construction of this memorial, prior to the year 2000, is paramount in regard to honoring those 20th Century heroes who have made our country what it is today, as we approach a new millennium.

Thank you for all of your time, efforts and considerations on this important matter.

PWS/prh

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House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

March 9, 1999

COMMITTEES

MAJORITY POLICY COMMITTEE
TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT,
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE
ON TRAVEL PROMOTION
EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

APPOINTMENTS

LEGISLATIVE DATA PROCESSING

The Honorable Bruce Smith, Chairman
Central Pennsylvania Republican Caucus
Room 41A East Wing
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Bruce:

As a military veteran yourself, we know that you are well aware of the ongoing fundraising activities associated with providing for the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery in Lebanon County.

The original estimated cost of the Charles J. Frederick, Jr., designed memorial was put at \$3.5 million. We've been informed that Governor Ridge initially told our veterans organizations if they raised \$1 million, he would come up with the balance. Since then, they've told us that the Governor asked them to raise \$2 million instead, and he'd provide the rest of the necessary funding. Unfortunately, after reaching a \$1.4 million figure in cash and pledges, the private fundraising efforts seem to be stalled.

We are seeking your support and the support of our colleagues in the Central Pennsylvania Republican Caucus for including an amount of \$2.5 million for the construction and completion of the Veterans' Memorial in the proposed capital project legislation.

The timing and the need seem to be most appropriate for a number of reasons. We are fortunate to be living in prosperous economic times that have produced a handsome budget surplus, and our request would only require a one time expenditure to complete the project. At \$1.4 million, the veterans of our Commonwealth have raised an amount equal to approximately one half of the difference between the Governor's original goal and his most recent request (\$1 million - \$2 million).

Another major factor in moving for the state funding at this time is the additional funding demands of other veterans projects that are being directed to the state and our independent veterans groups. Any possibility for a United States Army Museum in Carlisle would require that it be funded 100% by our veterans, the Commonwealth, and Cumberland County government. Requests for the financial support needed to construct the proposed World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. are being directed to the same sources.



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We believe that the creation and construction of the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial is important to all Pennsylvanians so that we might give our veterans who so proudly served their country the recognition they deserve. We also strongly believe that this project needs to be completed in a timely manner if it is to become a reality.

Because of all of the aforementioned, we respectfully request your consideration and support for obtaining the necessary funding to complete this very important Veterans' Memorial.

Sincerely,



C. Allan Egolf, Vice Chairman
Veterans Affairs & Emergency
Preparedness Committee
Franklin, Perry and Cumberland Counties



Peter J. Zug
Dauphin & Lebanon Counties



Jerry L. Nailor
Cumberland County

Column for Immediate Consideration

Helping To Complete State Veterans' Memorial

By Rep. Paul W. Semmel (R-187)

As Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I applaud and support recent colleague action calling for the state to kick in the funding needed to complete a long-awaited memorial for Pennsylvania veterans.

Just last month House colleagues from Central Pennsylvania called attention to the financial status of the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial – a project that dates back to 1988. At that time, the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial Commission was established to construct and fund a state memorial to honor all Pennsylvania veterans.

True to their spirit and selflessness, veteran groups statewide immediately launched into what is now an 11-year fund-raising effort that has peaked out at \$1.4 million.

“We’ve reached a point now where everyone has given a multitude of times, and we’re reaching just about the pinnacle of our fund-raising efforts,” Commission Vice-Chairman John Neeves told House members and others attending the March press conference.

As further noted, despite the tremendous amount of effort and hard work that went into the bingo games and pin and print sales, the money raised represents only 40 percent of the estimated \$3.5 million project cost.

That is where members of the House Majority Central Pennsylvania Delegation stepped in. Together, they are urging the state to provide the additional funds needed to take the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial project from blueprint to reality.

The memorial will be located at the Fort Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, where it would stand as a public and time-honored remembrance and tribute to Pennsylvania's 1.3 million veterans.

As one of my colleagues noted, Fort Indiantown Gap's National Cemetery is Pennsylvania's "Little Arlington." I think it is only fitting that we include at this national site in our midst a memorial that specifically honors the commonwealth's veterans.

Our veteran population often comes to the forefront in raising money. Presently, they not only face financial tasks with the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial, but also the National World War II Monument, and several community memorial projects.

Let's face it, their resources can only stretch so far.

I would be very pleased if the state can find the means to make up the shortfall in this long-overdue tribute to Pennsylvania men and women who faithfully and selflessly answered the call to duty.

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Memorial Day Column For Consideration

PA Veterans' Memorial Funding Now In Place

By Rep. Paul W. Semmel (R-187)

Memorial Day, 1999 – a perfect time to announce some terrific news for Pennsylvania's 1.3 million veterans. And as Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I am extremely pleased to be the bearer of this news.

Thanks to a \$2 million appropriation contained in the state budget approved earlier this month, the long-awaited Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial soon will be a reality.

It is understandable if some of you have forgotten the details about the project, after all, it dates back to 1988. Act 60 of 1988 established the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial Commission to design, construct, and fund a state memorial to honor all Pennsylvania veterans.

Designs were solicited with the final design completed by Charles J. Frederick, Jr., of West Chester. The drawing shows an aesthetic, spacious and functional memorial almost two football fields in size. This is not simply a granite symbol, but rather a solemn place that will accommodate many activities complete with an amphitheater with seating for large groups.

Measuring 85 feet wide by 260 feet long, the memorial combines the elements of air, land, and water – representative of the battlefields where our veterans fought for our freedom. A tomb for soldiers, known and unknown, is strategically located to allow visitors to peacefully reflect upon the sacrifices made by the Pennsylvania men and women to be honored at the site.

The design, however, never got beyond the blueprint status due to funding. Initial funding-raising efforts brought in about \$69,000, far off the mark of the estimated project cost of \$3.5 million. Gov. Ridge challenged the veteran community to continue their efforts, and to raise a substantial portion of the funding before looking toward the state for assistance.

Veteran groups statewide launched into a revitalized grassroots fund-raising effort that brought in an impressive \$1.4 million before peaking out. These men and women more than met the challenge. I am extremely pleased the General Assembly and the Governor's office came through with the \$2 million needed to lift this project from paper to posterity. With funding now in place, who knows? We could see ground-breaking sometime yet this year.

The memorial will be located at the Fort Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, the only fully active national veterans cemetery in Pennsylvania and one of 114 located nationwide.

It also is worth noting that the \$2 million appropriation for this project is part of a \$19 billion spending plan that includes \$400 million in tax cuts, the largest tax reduction package in modern state history ... and the sixth consecutive year for tax relief for Pennsylvanians.

With the 1999-2000 budget, we continue to build a better Pennsylvania, and at the same time, bring to reality a memorial to honor all commonwealth veterans ... on Memorial Day and every day in the upcoming millennium.

####

NOTE TO EDITOR: *architectural rendering enclosed to run with the column.*

PETER J. ZUG, MEMBER

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ELIZABETHVILLE, PA 17023
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

September 15, 1999

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
ON HOUSING
STATE GOVERNMENT
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
MAJORITY POLICY
CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION

Mr. Mark Campbell
Deputy Chief of Staff
Governor's Office
225 Capitol Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Mark:

Recently it has come to my attention that additional funds are required to construct the memorial at Ft. Indiantown Gap National Cemetery.

At our meeting on June 7th, it was my impression that all the funding for the monument was secured. It was also my impression that a contingency fund was not needed for this project. We also chose not to begin additional fundraising activities for a perpetual maintenance fund.

In light of our last meeting I was, to say the least, surprised to hear at a speaking engagement at the national cemetery that an additional \$300,000 to \$400,000 needs to be acquired to construct the monument. I was also surprised to learn that at least part of this money was needed for a contingency fund.

It would be appreciated if you would provide clarification to me on the status of the monument. It would also be appreciated if you would comment on the need for additional funding and its purpose. Also, when will the funds come from to provide future maintenance to the memorial? Additionally, could you provide an update on Mr. Gleason's fundraising activities as discussed at our original meeting of April 14th.

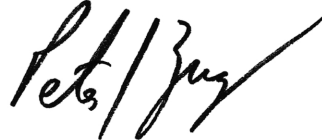
SEP 17 1999



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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your reply.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter J. Zug". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

PETER J. ZUG, Member
102nd Legislative District

PZ:bls

cc: Sen. Robert Robbins
Sen. David Brightbill
Rep. Jerry Nailor
General William Lynch
Sec. Gary Crowell
Stan Reinhard
Paul Hastings

PETER J. ZUG, MEMBER

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House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

February 2, 2000

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
ON HOUSING
STATE GOVERNMENT
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
MAJORITY POLICY

CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION

Kathy Eakin
Secretary for Legislative Affairs
Room 238, MC
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Ms. Eakin:

We are coming to a critical point in the construction of the Veterans Memorial at Ft. Indiantown Gap.

There has been approximately \$3.8 million raised for the memorial. A great deal of this money has come from veterans throughout the Commonwealth. Their efforts have kept this dream alive.

With recent construction estimates escalating well beyond the original project costs, there is a shortfall of funds needed to complete the memorial. The veteran community is still raising money to complete this project, but it will take them considerable time to amass the millions of dollars necessary to complete our task.

As an alternative, the General Assembly and the Governor had the foresight to include \$2.5 million in the Capital Budget for the Memorial. It is my opinion that if this funding is released, the Veterans Memorial at Ft. Indiantown Gap National Cemetery could be completed in a timely fashion.

I, therefore, request that Governor Ridge consider releasing funding from the Capital Budget for the completion of the Veterans Memorial at the Gap.



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Page 2
Ms. Eakin
February 2, 2000

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Very truly yours,



PETER J. ZUG, MEMBER
102nd Legislative District

PJZ/kc

cc: General Lynch
Rep. Semmel
Rep Nailor
Sen. Robbins
Stanley Reinhart

PAUL W. SEMMEL, MEMBER

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES:

VETERANS AFFAIRS & EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, CHAIRMAN
COMMERCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CONSUMER AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

DESIGNATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS
STATE ARMORY BOARD
PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

March 9, 2000

TO: Representative John E. Barley, Majority Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Paul W. Semmel, Majority Chairman
House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee

SUBJECT: Funding for PA Veterans Memorial at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery

P.W.S.

As you are aware, Act 60 of 1988 established the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial Commission for the purpose of raising funds to construct a state memorial to honor all veterans of the Commonwealth.

In your capacity as Majority Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, you were indeed very instrumental in securing a \$2 million line item in last year's state budget for this memorial project.

At this point in time though, the total funds needed for completion of this noble project have not been fully realized, due in part to the rising costs of building materials. Therefore, as Majority Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I would like to respectfully request your support for another \$2 million line item for this project in the 2000-01 state budget.

Overall, I firmly believe that the timeline for the completion of this memorial is indeed very crucial. Without the support of the legislature, the construction phase of this memorial project may linger on for several more years. If this were to happen, the project will be brought into fruition well after the life span of a generation of veterans whom the memorial will, in part, honor, ... a generation that has indeed been the driving force behind this tangible symbol of our Commonwealth's gratitude to those veterans who have faithfully served their Country and Commonwealth.

On behalf of myself and the entire veteran community, I would like to thank you for all of your time, efforts and considerations on this important request.

PWS/prh

Rep. Paul Semmel
187th District
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2000

Semmel Helps Secure Veteran Memorial, Fire Grant Funding
Taxpayers, Education, Job-Creating Business Also Big Budget Winners

HARRISBURG — Even lawmakers engage in letter writing and, yes, it can and often does pay off. Through letters and additional efforts, Rep. Paul W. Semmel (R-187) helped secure a \$2 million veterans memorial appropriation in the \$20 billion state budget passed this week.

The spending plan also boasts a historic \$774 million in tax cuts for working families and job-creating businesses as well as over \$6 billion in investments in public education.

As chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, Semmel was a driving force behind the \$2 million funding allocated in the budget to help with the construction of the long-awaited Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial.

The project dates back to 1988, when the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial Commission was created to construct and fund a memorial at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. Veteran groups statewide raised about \$1.6 million, almost half of the original price tag of \$3.5 million. Semmel and his colleagues successfully obtained state funding to make up that shortfall. This year, however, the Commission learned that construction costs shot up to \$5.9 million, leaving the Commission to consider the option of scaling back the design.

Semmel fought hard to keep the public-friendly, amphitheater-style design intact. His successful efforts included writing letters to the House Appropriations Committee chairman. The anticipated memorial dedication date is Memorial Day, 2001.

The Lehigh and Berks county lawmaker also played a key role in the \$25 million allocated in the budget for Pennsylvania's first-ever direct grant program for volunteer fire companies.

"I am confident that every taxpayer in the Commonwealth believes as I do, that both our veterans and volunteer firefighters deserve all the help we can provide them," said Semmel. "These are the people who literally place their lives on the line for the safety of country and community."

Page 2

Included in the \$774 million tax-cutting package – the largest tax-cutting package in state history – are the following:

- \$330 million to be distributed to an estimated 3.3 million homeowners this fall in the form of a \$100 property tax rebate check;
- a \$78 million reduction in the inheritance tax. Similar to legislation introduced by Semmel in the House, the plan calls for a decrease from 6 percent to 4.5 percent for direct descendants and from 15 percent to 12 percent for siblings;
- expansion of the personal income tax exemption, which will mean that two-adult working families of four earning \$28,000 or less will pay no state income tax;
- and a two-mill reduction and eventual phase-out of the capital stock and franchise tax, a savings of over \$300 million for Pennsylvania's job-creating businesses.

The budget provides more than \$6 billion in total support for public schools, including an additional \$115 million in school subsidies and \$64 million more for special education.

Once signed into law, the new budget will take effect July 1.

“This budget retains the solid financial footing of previous budgets, while at the same time setting in motion new budgetary inroads needed for continued success in the 21st century,” said Semmel.

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ND:ccb



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL VETERANS AFFAIRS
FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, ANNVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA 17003-5002

May 25, 2000

Honorable Paul Semmel, Chairman
House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
47 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120

JUN 01 2000

Dear Representative Semmel:

Today I received a copy of the Department's funding appropriation for the FY 2000-2001. Included in there were funds earmarked for the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial to be constructed at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. On behalf of the 1.3 million veterans in the Commonwealth please accept our deep appreciation and gratitude for providing the resources to bring this magnificent project to fruition.

Memorial Commission President Reinhard and I have met with the architect and officials in the Department of General Services to finalize design specifications attendant to bidding the project. We are optimistic that these necessary preliminary steps will be completed on a time schedule to permit actual construction to begin by September 1, 2000. Projected completion time will be specified to not exceed 365 days and this schedule will accommodate a formal dedication at an appropriate ceremony and date after Labor Day of 2001.

As Executive Secretary of the Commission, I will ensure that you are provided update information on a recurring basis and stand ready to answer any questions you may have. Again, thank you and the members of your committee for your commitment to the well being of our veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John L. Patten".

John L. Patten
Deputy Adjutant General
for Veterans' Affairs

MEMORANDUM

January 31, 2005

TO: Representative Brian Ellis

FROM: Rick O'Leary, Executive Director
House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee

SUBJECT: Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial Commission

Congratulations on your appointment by the Speaker to serve on the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial Commission. In regard to this appointment, Chairman Semmel asked that I provide you with the history on this Pennsylvania Memorial Commission, and update you with current affairs of the Pennsylvania Veterans Commission on which you serve.

The Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial is located on the grounds of the Indiantown Gap National Cemetery (approximately 20 minutes north of Harrisburg), and was dedicated in October 2001 after approximately 14 years of fundraising efforts. This \$6.4 million memorial was funded by Veteran Service Organization (VSO) fundraisers and \$4.5 million in monies appropriated by the General Assembly.

The role of the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial Commission, established in 1988, was to design and construct a Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial on the grounds of the Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. As well, this Commission was tasked with raising the funds to bring this project into fruition. Since the memorial was constructed and officially dedicated on Oct 7, 2001, there was the question of the need for the Memorial Commission to remain an existing body upon the June 2003 "sunset" date established in law. Act 8 of 2003 extended this Commission until June 30, 2005. The rationale was that there continues to be the need for an oversight body in regard to the "maintenance and perpetual care" decisions for this Memorial.

Act 8 of 2003 deems that the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial Commission will sunset on June 30, 2005, at which time this Memorial "maintenance" oversight will be transferred to the already existing Pennsylvania Veterans Commission, which is an advisory body to the Governor and the General Assembly on legislative matters on veterans' issues.

In regard to current matters before the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial Commission, a body which will officially be out of existence in five months, there is a movement afoot by some influential Commission members to erect a \$150,000 (estimated) eagle sculpture with a plaque to denote the members of the Commission that made this Memorial come into being. Not all members agree to this new construction project, and the issue was thought to be dead in view of discussions that emphasized that the Memorial was constructed thus, the remaining funds (\$ 362,296.23) must be used for the perpetual care of this "outdoor" living Memorial. Using funds to begin further construction would not be a prudent financial decision, in view of the already exorbitant maintenance costs that are being incurred by this body.

With that said, Representative Egolf (your predecessor on this Commission), and a "majority" of the voting members on this Commission had a pact to not entertain this new spending initiative. Over the past several months, little was mentioned on this dead issue and a quorum to vote on this issue was not obtained.

At the January 26, 2005 Memorial Commission meeting, John Patten (former Commission member) and Commission Chairman Stan Reinhard brought up discussion to vote on the authorization of funds to have an architect begin the design phase of this "Eagle" project. A quorum was not present, thus a vote could not be obtained (the four members of the General Assembly were not present, nor were three other members of the Commission).

As a new member of this Memorial Commission, and from a "political" standpoint, if you were to vote to authorize funds to be used for this new construction project, rather than keep these limited/dwindling funds in reserve for maintenance, this could be problematic for you in the future. Case in point: If/when these maintenance funds are depleted, we expect the veteran community to once again beseech the General Assembly to provide emergency funding to "save the Pennsylvania Memorial from falling into disrepair." When the General Assembly is made aware of the fact that this body voted to squander a large portion of their reserve funds to construct an Eagle monument, rather than plan ahead for maintenance/repair matters, it won't look good if the House Senate members on this Commission were in agreement to this error in judgment. In fact, it would probably be implied that the Commission members from the General Assembly were remiss in reminding the Commission that money does not grow on trees in state government, thus, these funds should be used solely for maintenance, and they should not expect state government to financially step in to fill the void of this looted maintenance fund.

Overall, if the Pennsylvania Memorial Commission continues to not have a quorum at their meetings, this issue is a moot point since their duties dissolve on June 30, 2005. However, if a quorum is likely to shape up for the March 9, 2005 meeting, you must give thought to your position prior to the meeting. If you would like, I can provide further detail to you in regard to my perception of where each members' vote may be cast. As well, I would offer to be your proxy, as I was for Representative Egolf, should you be unable to attend future meetings of this Commission.

If you would like to discuss this matter in further detail, please contact me at 7-1534.