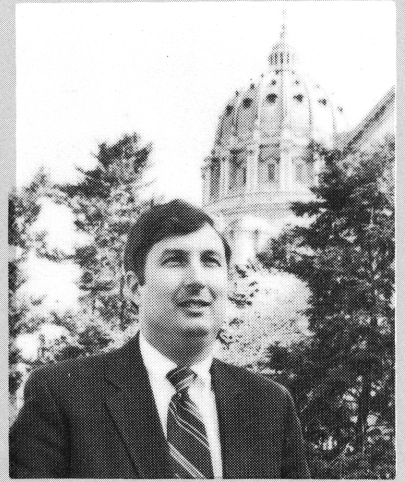


# QUESTIONNAIRE

from

## Rep. PAUL SEMMEL

Harrisburg Office:  
Box 162,  
Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
Paula Shadle, Administrative Assistant



Dear Friend,

I'm sending this NEWSLETTER/QUESTIONNAIRE in an effort to encourage open communications between my office and my constituents.

In order for me to properly represent the residents of the 187th District, I need to know your views on the issues that come before me.

The months ahead will be crucial for Pennsylvania, as the General Assembly considers various tax proposals, decides on appropriations and enacts a spending plan for the 1983-84 fiscal year. The legislature will also have to consider measures affecting the state's unemployment compensation debt and local tax reform.

Questions I've listed on the other side of this mailing are designed to obtain your views on such important legislative issues. Please take a few seconds to answer them. Your opinions are invaluable to me in making decisions on the floor of the House.

I've designed this newsletter so that you can separate the questionnaire from the top portion which includes information on my offices, their telephone numbers, hours and addresses. Save that section. Separate, fold and mail the questionnaire back to me.

I look forward to hearing from you. If I can be of service, please call, drop me a line or drop in one of my district offices listed on the other side.

Thanks for your interest in state government!

Sincerely,

*Paul Semmel*  
Rep. Paul Semmel  
187th District



### BEING YOUR LAWMAKER.....

While my participation in debate and votes on the floor of the House of Representatives is certainly important, it represents only a portion of my role in the lawmaking process. Another essential task involves serving on two House committees.

Before any House or Senate bill is considered, it must be reviewed by a committee. The panels review the content of bills, amend them and finally approve or reject them before they are debated by the full House.

I've been appointed to the House State Government Committee and the House Mines and Energy Management Committee. The State Government Committee considers legislation effecting elections, lobbyists, land grants and many other aspects of the operation of state government. Mines and Energy Management studies proposals affecting energy development, mining regulations and the production of coal, gas and petroleum products in Pennsylvania.

My involvement in these committees won't narrow my participation in state government, but will enable me to have an even greater influence in these important areas. I also plan to stay very active in legislation considered by the Agriculture, Transportation and Appropriation committees as well as other panels.

### AT YOUR SERVICE.....

Please contact me if I can help with problems in State Government, or:

- Status **REPORTS** regarding bills under consideration by the General Assembly...
- obtaining **COPIES** of birth and death certificates...
- securing **TECHNICAL DATA** and material regarding state problems.
- **PROBLEMS** involving motor vehicle registrations, driver's licenses, special tags, and permits...
- **INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL**, publications, and copies of state statutes...
- **COMMUNITY PROBLEMS** that involve state agencies...
- providing **INFORMATION** on available senior citizen programs...
- **ARRANGING MEETINGS** with state officials and tours of the State Capitol...

**SPECIAL NOTE:** I'm especially pleased that so many groups have asked me to speak at special events around the district. Please help me to continue this activity by providing advance notice (at least a month) before such occasions.

**REP. SEMMEL'S DISTRICT OFFICES:**

**SCHNECKSVILLE**

2420 Main Street  
P.O.Box 235  
Schnecksville, Pa 18078  
(215) 799-0187  
Hours: Monday - Friday  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. or by appt.

District Aide:  
JoAnn Heiney

**HAMBURG**

31 North 3rd Street  
Hamburg, Pa 19526  
(215) 562-3411  
Hours: Monday - Thursday  
8 a.m. - 12 noon  
Mon. Eve. 6-8

District Aide:  
Sandra Christman

**KUTZTOWN**

178 West Main Street  
Kutztown, Pa 19530  
(215) 683-9199  
Hours: Monday - Friday  
2 p.m. - 6 p.m.

District Aide:  
Doris Schlenker

(ALL THREE OF THESE OFFICES ARE SHARED WITH SENATOR DAVID BRIGHTBILL.)

(cut along this line, save upper portion and mail questionnaire.)

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

(This questionnaire is designed to allow two members of a household to answer each question.)

1. Should Pennsylvania state liquor stores be turned over to private enterprise?

YES   NO

2. Should major oil corporations be prohibited from operating retail service stations?

YES   NO

3. In order to reduce the number of motorists driving without insurance, should proof of insurance be required for motor vehicle inspections?

YES   NO

4. Should school districts and local governments be allowed to enact limited income taxes as an alternative to property taxes?

YES   NO

5.A Should teachers continue to have the right to strike?

YES   NO

B Should other public employees have the right to strike?

YES   NO

6. Should terms of office for state lawmakers be extended from two to four years for House members and four to six years for Senators?

YES   NO

7. Should capital punishment be legal in Pennsylvania?

YES   NO

8. Should government funded family planning centers be prohibited from referring or counseling women on abortions?

YES   NO

9. Pennsylvania is expected to finish the current fiscal year with a deficit of at least \$235 million. What is the best alternative to fill that gap?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Cut back state programs and services.

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Increase the state income tax.

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Extend the state sales tax to cover such items

as cigarettes, arcade games, cable TV service, entertainment tickets, paper products, non-prescription drugs and alcoholic beverages sold in bars.

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. Should casino gambling be legalized in any section of Pennsylvania?

YES   NO

11. The state's unemployment compensation fund is nearly \$3 billion in debt to the federal government. What do you think is the best way to correct that problem?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Reduce unemployment benefits and/or limit those eligible for such benefits.

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Increase unemployment compensation taxes paid by employers.

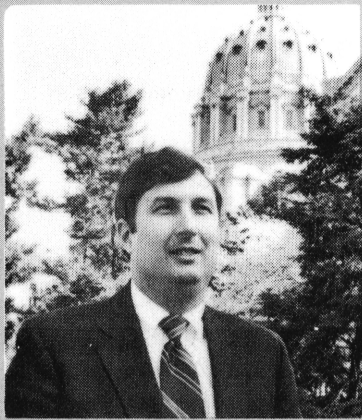
\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Have all employees pay into the unemployment compensation fund.

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please fold along line to conform with postal regulations.)

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

Rep. Paul Semmel  
Box 162  
Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, Pa 17120



# CAPITOL REPORT

from

## Rep. PAUL SEMMEL

BULK RATE  
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Harrisburg, PA

**Harrisburg Office:**  
Box 162, Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
Paula Shadle, Administrative Assistant

## Issues Confronting Local Government

Pennsylvania's local officials, the individuals who manage the 2,750 cities, townships and boroughs in the commonwealth, are facing pressing problems which call for serious consideration by the General Assembly.

Those problems include underfunded pension funds, insufficient tax revenues and inequitable foreign fire tax distribution. A number of measures in the legislature address these problems and are aimed at assisting local governments to gain financial security.

In the House, House Bill 857 has been proposed to correct pension deficiencies which reportedly amount to \$2.5 million statewide. Some of the provisions would require full actuarial funding of all municipal systems; propose criteria to determine financial health of individual pension systems; restructure current state aid to pension systems; and enact a series of specific remedies for distressed pension systems. The bill was referred to the House Finance Committee for consideration. An identical measure (Senate Bill 546) has been referred to the Senate Local Government Committee.

Legislators are also preparing to confront a variety of problems related to local taxes around the state. Property taxes and

occupational assessment levies are seen by many as unfair and unrelated to ability to pay. Others, such as a per capita tax of \$10, are too costly to collect.

Specific measures have been introduced to create a "Local Tax Reform Code." They would eliminate many "nuisance taxes", reduce property taxes and replace the lost revenues by allowing school districts, counties and other municipalities to impose more equitable personal income taxes, sales taxes and use taxes.

One important service provided by local governments, that of fire protection, would benefit significantly from legislation designed to correct inequities in the distribution of foreign fire insurance tax revenues. The two-percent levy on insurance premiums paid by out-of-state fire insurance companies benefits pension funds and relief associations for local firefighters. A package of bills under consideration this session would address local officials' concerns that the tax's distribution formula is unmanageable and unfair.

These and other problems facing local officials and community leaders are pressing priorities for legislators as well.

## Helping Communities Fight Crime

Serious crime in Pennsylvania is at its lowest level in several years, according to recent reports, but don't expect the General Assembly to relax efforts to crackdown on crime.

Legislation pending in the General Assembly this session would emphasize local crime prevention, mandatory minimum sentencing, the rights of victims and the importance of criminals serving longer sentences.

A measure now in the House would give the state Commission on Crime and Delinquency additional power to oversee crime prevention programs throughout the state. Funds would be provided for the formation and supervision of Crime Watch programs at the local level. Studies indicate that such local effort and community involvement can have a real impact on reducing crime.

Various measures have been proposed to require mandatory minimum jail sentences to deter the criminal element. Such minimums have been proposed for those who are convicted of child molestation, sales of drugs to children, crimes against the handicapped and repeated rapes.

The victims of crime would receive additional relief through a measure introduced this session. The legislation would establish a "bill of rights" for victims, expand eligibility for victims' compensation and require that restitution to victims be a condition of parole for criminals.

Another crime-related measure would, for the first time, allow judges to impose a minimum sentence that is more than half the maximum jail sentence. The judge could, for instance, sentence a criminal to seven-to-ten years, rather than the five-to-ten now required by law.

Other legislation would call for the investigation of our state corrections facilities to see how we can better meet needs for additional space.

All of these measures are aimed at making Pennsylvania safer for law-abiding citizens and less safe for those who have no regard for the law.



## Improving Education in Pennsylvania

In response to national reports of a decline in education in America, the General Assembly has taken several steps to help improve Pennsylvania schools.

To ensure that school districts were adequately funded, the legislature increased basic subsidy payments to school districts by as much as nine percent.

Here's a look at Basic Instructional Subsidies to school districts in the 187th Legislative District:

School District	1982-83	1983-84	INCREASE
Hamburg Area	\$1,793,636	\$1,955,063	\$161,427
Kutztown Area	1,371,539	1,494,977	123,438
Northern Lehigh	2,085,108	2,272,768	187,660
Northwestern Lehigh	1,773,951	1,933,607	159,656
Parkland	2,965,463	3,232,355	266,892
Whitehall Coplay	1,695,534	1,848,132	152,598

The subsidies were based on school enrollment, tax structures, the number of low-income children and population density.

In addition to increasing state support of our schools, the legislature is now attempting to improve education through a move "back to basics."

A measure to revise curriculum standards and standardize achievement tests is now being considered by the state House. It requires all elementary schools to teach English, reading, writing, spelling math, science, history, geography and other academic subjects. High schools would be required to teach four years of English, three years of math, science and social studies, two years of a foreign language and a half-year of computer science.

## Assisting Firefighters and Ambulance Squads

The General Assembly has a special sense of appreciation for those who risk their lives at all hours of the day and night to rescue citizens from fire, accidents and other threats, often without pay.

The legislature has, and will continue to push for programs and assistance for volunteer and other firefighters as well as emergency medical assistance groups.

During its last session the General Assembly enacted the Volunteer Loan Assistance Program to provide low interest (2%) loans to volunteer associations for the purchase of vehicles, equipment and facilities necessary to operate. Other legislation provided for the payment of death benefits for volunteer firefighters killed in the line of duty. Another measure legalized bingo for specific non-profit groups, including fire companies and ambulance crews.

This session is no exception to the rule of the legislature's interest in volunteer firefighters and medical squads. Here are some examples of legislation introduced this session to benefit firefighters and emergency medical squads:

- **House Bill 600** — would amend the Emergency and Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act to include volun-

teer ambulance and rescue squad members.

- **House Bill 509** — would require the state to reimburse volunteer fire, ambulance and rescue companies responding to emergencies on state-owned properties.

- **House Bill 211** — would exempt purchases made by volunteer fire companies from the state sales tax.

- **House Bill 276** — would permit the unemployed to attend volunteer firefighter instruction and training courses without losing eligibility for unemployment compensation.

- **House Bill 442** — would make special fire police eligible for workers' compensation when they are injured in the performance of their duties.

- **House Bill 535** — would prohibit an employer from firing a part-time, auxiliary or special police officer for lateness when caused by performance of his duty.

These and other measures display the legislature's concern for emergency service groups and the vital tasks they perform.

## Local Transportation Projects

As we've seen in recent decades, Pennsylvania motorists can take the 45,000 miles of state roads and 27,000 state bridges for granted, but state and municipal officials can't.

Good roads and bridges are vital to public safety and the revitalization of Pennsylvania's economy. The state Transportation Department recognizes that fact and is working toward improvement of roads in the 187th Legislative District.

In addition to the dozen or more road projects underway or recently completed, there are a number of projects planned for the near future:

Project	Location	Contract Award	Construction Cost
Route 178 Bridge Rehabilitation	Schuylkill River Hamburg Boro/Tilden Twp.	12/30/83	\$3,850,000
Route 873 Bridge Rehabilitation	Lehigh River Washington Twp./(north of Slatington)	12/30/83	\$3,310,000
Route 22 4 Bridges Rehabilitated	Whitehall Twp/ South Whitehall Twp.	3/14/84	\$2,540,000
Route 145 Road Surfacing	Whitehall Twp.	4/9/84	\$106,000
Eagle Point Road Bridge Replacement	Mill Creek Maxatawny Twp. (N.E. of Kutztown)	4/26/84	\$360,000