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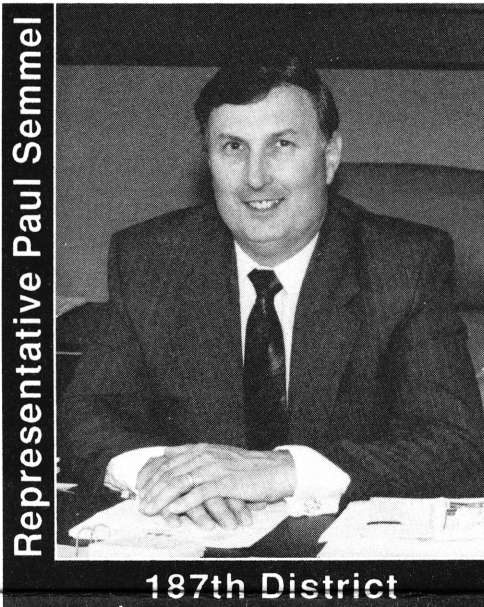
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**STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
PAUL SEMMEL'S**

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**Report To The  
187th Legislative  
District**

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Representative Paul Semmel

187th District

*We are walking our talk. Last fall, my colleagues and I unveiled a plan of action for the first 100 days of this legislative session. We have made good on many of those promises and are continuing our work to improve the quality of life for every Pennsylvanian.*

*While this newsletter emphasizes the accomplishments made thus far, it also outlines our work in progress. Much work remains. New crime bills are being considered all of the time. Initiatives to streamline government and reduce taxes is as much a part of our every day consideration as is finding new solutions to end unemployment.*

*This newsletter will be reaching you at about the same time the budget process is underway. Spending priorities are sure to be different with our new governor and the change of guard in the House. I will keep you up-to-date on the headway that is made.*

*In the meantime, I pause to remember the victims of the Oklahoma City blast and ask that you do the same. This Flag Day, as we pay our respect to the country's veterans, I also ask you to reflect on the principles for which these men and women were committed to protect. And while we must all stand vigilant against those who threaten to undermine our Constitutional rights, we must also protect ourselves from those cowards who hide behind those rights.*

*Please have a safe, enjoyable summer.*

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**Offices**

Schnecksville Office:  
Phone: (610) 799-0187  
FAX: (610) 799 0188

Macungie Office:  
Phone: (610) 966-0187

Kutztown Office:  
Phone: (610) 683-9199

**Harrisburg Office:**

Room 147, East Wing  
House Box 202020  
Hbg, PA 17120-2020  
Phone: (717) 787-3017  
FAX: (717) 787-0860

100  
DAYS

***“We are doing what we promised we would do...responding to the needs and the interests of Pennsylvania residents. So far, our record stands strong.”***

Rep. Paul Semmel  
June 1995

## *Creating Jobs*

### **Continuing Tax Relief**

By passing legislation (HB 39) that will enable the state to collect on certain back taxes without the costs of tax collectors, Pennsylvania taxpayers will benefit. Proceeds from the program, after administrative costs are paid, will be deposited into the state's Rainy Day Fund, a surplus account set up to help carry the state through tough financial times.

### **Upgrading Job Training**

Enhancing efforts to train displaced workers, HB 2 restructures existing job training programs utilizing private sector job placement agencies to help welfare recipients. The legislation passed the House 157 - 42.

### **Expanding Exports**

Pennsylvania's exporting potential has barely been tapped. Recognizing the opportunities for economic development, the state House has voted to extend PA's Export Partnership Act.

## *Improving Education*

### **Protect Children and Those Who Teach Them**

A safe learning environment is a high priority in educational reform. By removing students who disrupt the learning process of others, the quantity and quality of learning will improve. HB 8 encourages alternative education for disruptive students while HB 38 requires that previous disciplinary records be transferred with students when they are enrolled in new districts.

## *Reforming Welfare Reducing Bureaucracy*

**House Bill 2, the major welfare reform bill, passed the House by a vote of 157 - 42. The measure includes the following provisions.**

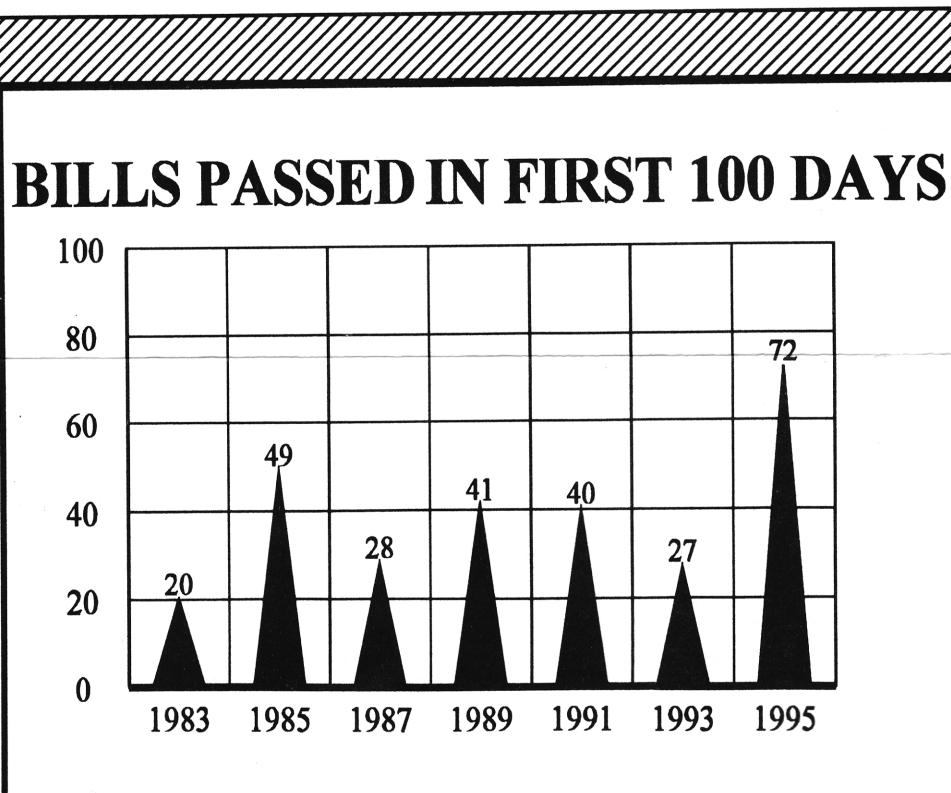
- \* Eliminating automatic cash grant increases to welfare mothers for additional children will help break the cycle of dependency.
- \* Individuals with a criminal record will be prevented from receiving welfare.
- \* By upgrading computer systems, efforts to end duplicate benefit payments and other welfare fraud will be enhanced.
- \* Medical Assistance recipients will use vouchers to purchase private insurance.

### **Consolidating State Government**

HB 1073 will save taxpayer dollars by streamlining government operations through the consolidation and the re-organization of various responsibilities within agencies such as DER, the Department of Health and Human Services, State Police and the Department of Transportation.

### **Establishing a Mini-Grace Commission**

A review of the efficiency of state government is underway. A group of business persons and other professionals are analyzing the management of state government and will make recommendations for improvement.



Source: Chief Clerks Office

# HOPE SUMMIT

## Turning Toward Tomorrow

A special seminar, termed the "Hope Summit" was recently held in Harrisburg. The focus of the two-day program was to develop a plan to help individuals on welfare and trapped in poverty. Grassroots community leaders and legislators came together to discuss pressing issues such as welfare, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, crime, housing, job training and economic development.

In response to recommendations made by Pennsylvania Grassroots for Public Policy (GAPP) -- a coalition of neighborhood leaders who have successfully addressed problems in low-income communities -- a four-point legislative plan was drafted.

The plan includes reforming the state's regulatory process, establishing an open line of communication between legislators and community leaders, funding programs based on results, and allowing programs to expand with limited government interference.

This initiative marks the beginning of a new day. We are going beyond the failed policies of yesteryear and tapping into a new source for solutions in areas of welfare, substance abuse, homelessness, community development and crime prevention. We are forging a new relationship between people at the grassroots level and the General Assembly. There is hope for the future.

*"The only thing  
necessary for the  
triumph of evil is for  
good men to do  
nothing."*

*Edmund Burke,  
British politician/  
philosopher*

## Addressing Elder Abuse

Pennsylvania's senior citizens in nursing homes, hospitals and other care facilities will receive greater protection and better care as a result of legislation requiring:

- \* Criminal record checks of all prospective employees;
- \* Reporting of abuse or neglect to the responsible state agency;
- \* Reporting any evidence of homicide, sexual abuse or serious bodily injury to law enforcement officials;
- \* Licensing agencies to bar persons who have committed abusive acts;
- \* Creation of a registry of perpetrators of elder abuse;
- \* Barring the hiring of abusers;
- \* Training of nurses aides on the prevention of abuse.

# Semmel Says

## *Repeal Widow's Tax Immediately*

*The state's archaic 6 percent inheritance tax will be repealed sooner than planned if HB 1 is approved. The tax, levied on an estate not jointly owned at the time of death, is currently scheduled to be abolished on Jan. 1, 1998. The proposed measure would end the tax on July 1, 1995.*

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## *Establish Longer Residency Requirement for Welfare Recipients*

*With the state's lenient requirements, too many outsiders have found a friend in Pennsylvania's welfare system. Legislation requiring that individuals be a year-long resident before they are eligible to receive benefits will cut back on the number of people who cross state lines to collect public assistance checks.*

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## *Promote Tourism*

*America starts here! Tourism -- the state's second largest industry -- receives a big boost from HB 1077, legislation creating a Travel and Tourism Partnership Board. The board will coordinate public and private efforts to promote tourism, which generates more than \$514 million in state and local tax dollars, not to mention 308,000 Pennsylvania jobs.*

## LEADERSHIP Appointments

Agriculture and Rural Affairs  
Appropriations  
Commerce and Economic Development  
Consumer Affairs  
*Majority Subcommittee Chairman  
on Telecommunications*  
Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs  
Commission

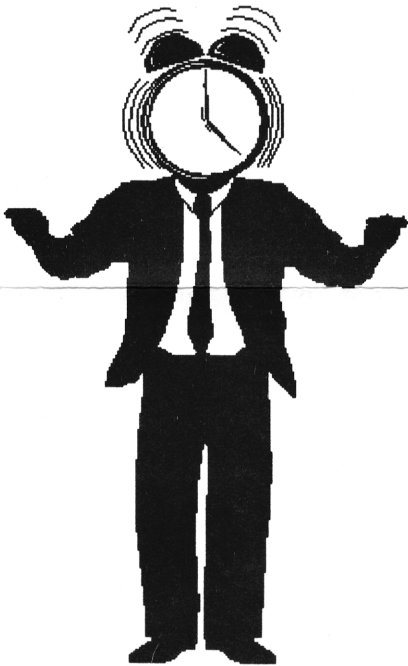
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# 13 CRIME

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Governor Signs 13 Bills into Law

Death warrants must be signed within 90 days/ "No means no" in sexual assault cases/ Juvenile fingerprints will be disseminated between law-enforcement entities/ Office of Victims Advocate created/ Victims of personal injury crimes will be notified of an offender's release/ The maximum sentence for third-degree murder increased/ Penalties for attempted murder stiffened/ Automatic expungement of juvenile records eliminated/ Jurisdiction of juvenile court expanded/ Judges allowed to use juvenile records in setting bail, providing a significant tool to ensure suspects will not flee/ Juvenile court proceedings open to the public for juveniles age 14 or older charged with a felony, and any juvenile, regardless of age, charged with a violent crime/ Automatic restitution for damage for victims of serious crimes/ A juvenile's previous convictions may be used in subsequent delinquency or adult criminal proceedings

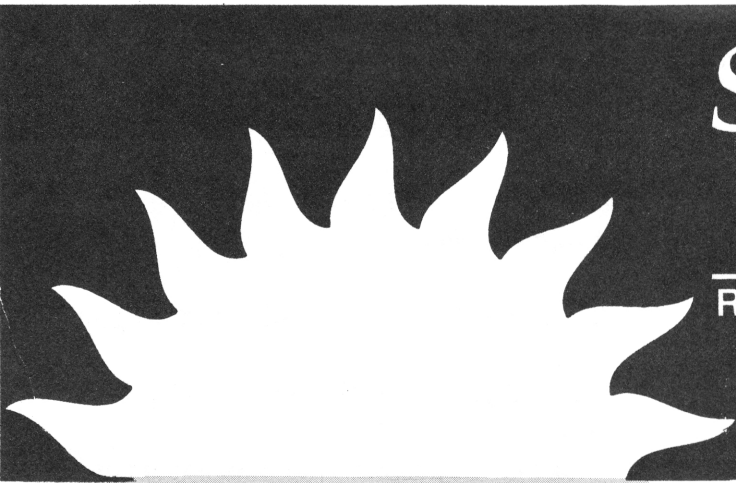


**We're  
fighting  
back...it's  
about  
time.**

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**It's past time. . . . . ● Criminals get the point!**

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# Silver Linings

Rep. Paul W. Semmel's  
Special Report

## *Sun Sets on Widow's Tax!*

**Six Percent Inheritance Tax Repealed Ahead of Time**

*The sun is shining on the state's retirement community.*

Last year, I campaigned for the repeal of the widow's tax, a six percent levy on inherited assets not jointly owned at the time of a spouse's death. The tax, which is currently three percent, was not scheduled to be totally eliminated until January 1998.

That schedule has changed, thanks to the timely passage of the 1995-96 state budget. Provisions contained within the budget allows the tax to be repealed retroactively to January 1, 1995. The repeal of the Widow's Tax within the first year will save surviving spouses an estimated \$28 million!

According to the Joint State Government Commission, the Widow's Tax fell mostly on the state's aging population. Prior to the recent enactment of the phase-out, Pennsylvania was the only state to impose a tax on inheritance transfers. The imposition of this tax was not only a hardship, but also discriminatory toward the state's older residents.

Too many people had to sell their family business, farm or even home to pay the Widow's Tax. I'm pleased -- and relieved -- to announce its demise.

### S.O.S.

***The Scoop On Services...***

Pennsylvania residents 55 and older may be eligible for special services. Please contact one of Rep. Semmel's offices as listed below.

4525 Spring Hill Drive  
Schnecksville, PA 18078  
Phone: (610) 799-0187

or

Macungie Borough Hall  
26 South Church Street  
Macungie, PA 18062  
Phone: (610) 966-0187

or

Kutztown - (610) 683-9199

# *Two Percent Annuities Tax Bites the Dust!*

## *Retirees Tax Eliminated*

The Annuity Tax, like the widow's tax, hit the state's older population. With the average age being 63, most individuals who purchase annuities are between 54 and 71 years old and earn less than \$20,000. (Annuities are life insurance contracts which provide guaranteed benefits to investors for a lifetime or a certain number of years. Annuities are retirement-planning tools for middle-income consumers.)

The way the tax worked is this: a widow or widower who received an insurance settlement and who put that money into an annuity to guarantee a monthly income, was taxed at the rate of two percent. Essentially, the tax was a penalty upon individuals who wanted to save for their future.

That's no way to do business. Given the information on who this tax impacted the most,

## **Noteworthyies**

*Americans 65 and older are vitally active.  
Look and see what they're up to.*

1. They play 32 percent of all rounds of golf played.
2. Take 72 percent of all recreational vehicle trips.
3. Make up 60 percent of all passengers on vacation cruises.
4. One in five voters in the 1992 Presidential campaign belonged to the 65+ club.

Source: Study conducted by Judith Treas, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Irvine.

the levy was discriminatory and sent the wrong message to the generation of young people who are now being warned not to rely on supplemental programs for their retirement income.

In other words, the tax delivered a double wallop because it took money from the state's older citizens while sending the message to their grandchildren that it isn't worth their effort to save because they would be penalized.

## **SENIOR CITIZEN INFORMATION FAIR**

Wednesday, October 11, 1995 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Topton Lutheran Home



## **Rep. Paul W. Semmel** **Special Report**

BULK RATE  
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