

REPORT TO THE 120TH DISTRICT FROM Rep. Phyllis Mundy


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Mundy maintains commitment to property tax reform

Nobody needs to convince me that the way we fund our public schools is both outdated and unfair to taxpayers. I recognize the heavy burden property taxes place on our citizens, particularly in these tough economic times. I have consistently advocated and voted for responsible plans to reduce or eliminate property taxes, even before my time in the legislature. In 1989, I served as co-chair of the local tax reform campaign – Vote Yes Committee – in Luzerne County before I was elected as your state Representative. Now, more than 20 years later, Pennsylvanians are still wondering: where's my property tax relief? Though we have made great strides in providing assistance to homeowners in recent years, I know that there is still much work to be done. Local tax reform has not been easy to accomplish – if it were, it would have been done already. True reform is challenging, but it is something I am committed to.

I have heard repeated calls asking for my support of House Bill 1275 which calls for replacing school property taxes with an expanded state sales tax, thinking that this concept would somehow fix the system. As recently as 2008, the content of HB 1275 was overwhelmingly voted down by both House Democrats and Republicans – as many felt it unfairly taxed individuals for items such as legal, funeral, and daycare services; created a multibillion funding gap by modifying how schools are funded; and eliminated property taxes on large businesses as well as on second homes. Another provision

in House Bill 1275 provided that the state would absorb the debt of all school districts, meaning, all taxpayers would end up assuming a massive debt for wealthy school districts that have invested heavily in state-of-the-art facilities. That is simply not fair.

House Bill 1275 has been reintroduced this session. Though I am pleased to see that many goods and services it once taxed are now excluded, I am still very concerned. In fact, now that the language has been revised to exclude even more goods and services from taxation, the legislation creates an even bigger funding gap than it did before. I have not seen any concrete evidence that this plan can generate enough revenue to maintain school funding at the current level.

Even further, the bill requires a referendum vote by school districts in order to increase either the Personal Income Tax (PIT) or the Earned Income Tax (EIT) to fill the multibillion funding gap and supplement the other taxes necessary to fund public education. I have always supported replacing property taxes with a combination of Sales Tax, PIT, and gaming revenue. However, voters have overwhelmingly rejected raising the PIT or the EIT to reduce property taxes in the past. Every time voters have had the opportunity to reduce property taxes in this manner, they have voted not to do so. This includes voters in all four of my school districts.

So, where does this leave us? There is no magic formula to pay for schools without shifting to or raising other taxes. Voters have been heard loud and clear through previous referenda. So, until voters support raising other taxes in order to

Past Property Tax Referenda

Act 145 of 1988 – At the end of session in 1988, Governor Casey signed a bipartisan bill to increase the Personal Income Tax (PIT) in order to reduce property taxes. It required a statewide referendum – which took place on May 16, 1989. It was defeated by approximately 75% of the public's vote.

Act 50 of 1998 – This act offered school districts the opportunity via referendum to shift the local tax burden away from the property tax and toward the Earned Income Tax (EIT). Dallas, Lake Lehman, Wyoming Area, and Wyoming Valley West School Districts all voted against this action. Voters in only 4 out of 498 school districts approved it.

Act 1 of 2006 – This act also gave school districts the opportunity via referendum to increase or implement their own EIT or PIT to reduce their property taxes. Again, Dallas, Lake Lehman, Wyoming Area, and Wyoming Valley West School Districts all voted against this action, and voters in only 8 out of 498 school districts approved it.

deliver property tax relief, I will continue my efforts on behalf of my constituents and work with my colleagues to provide a reasonable and realistic plan that is fair to all. To that end, I have co-sponsored legislation this session aimed to help alleviate the property tax burden: House Bill 1965, which I believe is less convoluted than House Bill 1275, as it aims to provide homeowners with additional property tax relief without complicating or compromising our education system; and House Bill 2484 which amends the Pennsylvania Constitution to allow a 100 percent homestead exemption rather than what the constitution currently provides – half of the median, or 25 percent. Without this enabling language, all other efforts to fully relieve Pennsylvanians of school property taxes would prove futile.

All in all, while the proposals to provide property tax relief are varied, the underlying goal is clear – homeowners carry too heavy a burden, and we must eliminate this burden by the fairest and most responsible means possible. I pledge to continue working hard to make this a reality.



Photo courtesy of the Citizens' Voice – Rep. Mundy (3rd from right, front row) is shown at an April 12, 1989, meeting of the Luzerne County "Vote Yes Committee" for tax reform. Mundy served as co-chair of the bipartisan committee, which urged voter approval of a referendum to reduce property taxes.

2010-2011 State Budget & Legislative Structuring

The 2010-2011 state budget is a good news/bad news budget. The budget was on time and contains no tax increase. State workers and nonprofits will be paid on time, and there is no need for school taxes to increase due to enhanced public education funding. The bad news is that this budget contains painful cuts that could have been mitigated by new revenue streams, such as a tax on cigars and smokeless tobacco, a tax on natural gas drilling, and closure of the Delaware loophole. (The Delaware loophole refers to an accounting scheme large corporations use by establishing a skeleton corporation in Delaware to avoid paying their full share of Pennsylvania's Corporate Net Income Tax.)

Without an influx of new revenue, difficult decisions had to be made because our state resources only go so far. Governor Rendell has already announced that many state workers will lose their jobs due to budget cuts. Many services for children, the disabled, senior citizens, library patrons, and others will be eliminated, and families will be harder pressed to pay for college. That is the reality of this budget.

This is not the budget I would have preferred – one that reflects the wants and needs of my district. But this is a budget with cuts that the Senate Majority insisted upon. I voted for this budget to prevent last year's stalemate and even more carnage.

On the topic of the budget, I hear frequent calls to save money by reducing the size of the General Assembly or to make it a part-time body, or a citizen legislature. I wholeheartedly agree that the legislature can do more to cut costs and increase efficiency. I support ideas like switching from a per-diem system to one where legislators are reimbursed for actual expenses with proof of receipts. In addition, I support a Constitutional Convention so that delegates may debate and act on altering the structure of our state

government, including reducing the size of the legislature.

One suggestion on how to do so is for the Pennsylvania General Assembly to become a unicameral legislature by abolishing the state Senate. This would eliminate nearly \$92 million in annual expenditures for the Commonwealth. Nebraska is an example of a unicameral legislature that operates with only one legislative body. Perhaps this is something we should consider in Pennsylvania. While all options are on the table, I do think that some calls for a part-time legislature are made without careful consideration of what it may actually mean for constituents.

Making the legislature part-time would mean that most legislators would need to work a private sector job in order to make a living. I do not necessarily find anything wrong with that; however, I do see it as an opportunity for conflicts of interests to arise. The possibility exists that the president of a major oil company, the CEO of a public utility, or the president of a large insurance company could simultaneously serve in the General Assembly, influencing legislation that affects their bottom line. I attended a national conference years ago where a legislator from Arizona told me that the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives was the CEO of Arizona's largest utility company. Is that what we want for Pennsylvania?

It is also important to consider data gathered by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). According to NCSL, full-time legislatures are those that represent some of the most populous states that have larger districts and longer legislative sessions. Pennsylvania is among them, along with California, Michigan, and New York; Pennsylvania legislators are the lowest paid of these full-time states. States like Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming are considered part-time; they are more rural and have smaller populations. Other states fall somewhere in between traditional full-time legislatures and citizen legislatures.

I agree that there could be some real, definitive cost savings to becoming a part-time legislature. However, district offices would close as a result, and personal constituent assistance as you know it would end. NCSL's data shows that no traditional part-time or citizen legislatures have district offices – none of them.

My questions to you are: how would you feel if the legislative offices in our area closed? Would you be comfortable traveling to Harrisburg if you needed help with paperwork or a state-related matter? What

if you had a hometown issue that you needed help resolving – do you believe that your concerns would be understood if you had to call someone who does not even know where the Back Mountain, Kingston, or West Pittston is on the map? Do you believe that state agencies would get back to you in a timely manner to help you with your needs? To further highlight this point, in North Dakota, special phone lines are installed at the capitol building so constituents can call and leave messages for their legislator, who is only there a few weeks out of the year to attend session. As mentioned earlier, North Dakota only operates on a part-time basis and legislators work at other jobs while not in session.

The fact is that without district offices open to assist you with day-to-day problems, constituents would be forced to rely on unelected bureaucrats, far away from their front porches, to help them. The result would be a larger state government bureaucracy to pick up the slack. That brings me to my next issue – the size of state government.

The U.S. Census Bureau compiles state-by-state comparisons on the number of state employees per capita. Pennsylvania is ranked 49th out of the 50 states, a much coveted spot that the Commonwealth has held for many years. In other words, Pennsylvania is one of the leanest states in the nation when it comes to personnel. I believe the reason is because Pennsylvanians receive personal constituent service through legislative district offices, all while having a smaller state bureaucracy. We go straight to the source of the problem. We advocate for you.

When Republican Governor Tom Ridge was in office, the Commonwealth employed 85,222 people. In 2009, during the Rendell Administration, the state employed 84,775. The biggest shift has been a decrease in the number of salaried employees, or those who tend to command higher salaries. At the end of the Ridge era, there were 79,207. In 2009, by contrast, there were 77,248, and that is before layoffs took effect this year.

Do not get me wrong – plenty of room exists for improvement. I am not saying that our system is perfect, or that change may not be needed. I merely offer food for thought that the grass may not be as green as it seems on the other side. Nevertheless, I emphasize that I have a completely open mind on all of these suggestions and more. I want to know what you think. Please take a moment to fill out a brief survey on the back of this newsletter where one of the questions asks whether Pennsylvania should become a part-time legislature as advocated by one of our local newspapers.



Reverend John Franklin Hartman of Grace Episcopal Church, Kingston, offered the opening prayer at a recent session of the House of Representatives. He is shown in the House chamber with Rep. Mundy.

Protecting the Environment and Public Health during Marcellus Shale Drilling

As a representative of the people and a steward of our environment, I am deeply concerned about the potential for harm from the exploration and extraction of natural gas from the Marcellus Shale deposit in our state. I certainly recognize the possible economic benefits that Marcellus Shale drilling could bring to landowners, to our local businesses, and to those who are seeking work. However, I also recognize the threat of irreparable harm that this drilling poses in the absence of appropriate laws and regulations as safeguards. We must ask ourselves: will this economic boon come at the expense of our infrastructure, our quality of life, our water supplies, and our health and safety?

The recent incidents across Pennsylvania, such as those in Clearfield and Susquehanna Counties (see chart), have clearly revealed that accidents from Marcellus Shale drilling can and do occur despite the empty promises and even the best of intentions of the oil and natural gas industry. Since news outlets have begun reporting on these incidents, I have received hundreds of calls, e-mails, and letters from constituents echoing my own grave concerns. The Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), John Hanger, recently said that the disaster in Clearfield County revealed a massive disregard for safety procedures by gas well operators. The most recent incident in Susquehanna County reinforced this blatant disregard for safety when a fire broke out at a separator tank at a site operated by Chesapeake Energy.



Rep. Mundy stands in front of the Huntsville Dam in Lehman Township during a June press conference announcing her legislative package to help protect public health and safety from the fast-growing Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling industry. The Huntsville Reservoir, along with the nearby Ceasetown Reservoir, provides water for drinking and household use to thousands of Mundy's constituents. Twenty years ago, Mundy stood in the same spot to declare her commitment to protecting our land, water and air when she was recognized by the Northeastern Chapter of the Sierra Club before she became a state Representative.

I would like to emphasize that I am in no way impugning the actions of the good people in my district who have entered into natural gas leases. I simply believe they and all the rest of us need better protections. Since January 2009, well over 3,100 Marcellus Shale drilling permits have been issued, and there is simply no end in sight.

I have recently introduced three pieces of legislation to better protect public health and safety during Marcellus Shale drilling and to allow our state to catch up with the fast-moving oil and natural gas industry. While each piece only addresses some of my many concerns regarding Marcellus Shale drilling, successful passage of one or all would allow us to recover ground lost while the industry has gathered more momentum.

One of the bills I introduced, House Bill 2608, would prohibit Marcellus Shale wells from being drilled within 2,500 feet of a primary source of supply for a community water system, such as the Huntsville and Ceasetown Reservoirs. Under current law, drilling could occur within 100 feet of these bodies of water. House Bill 2608 would also prohibit drilling underneath these water sources and prohibit DEP from waiving these restrictions.

The Huntsville and Ceasetown Reservoirs provide water for drinking and household use to approximately 100,000 people in the Wyoming Valley, including residents in Courtdale, Kingston Township, Pringle, Swoyersville, Wyoming, and West Wyoming. Much of the land surrounding these reservoirs is already leased for gas drilling. The cost and the effect on human health if either or both of these reservoirs were to become contaminated during the drilling process is unimaginable. We must do all in our power to

make sure that does not happen.

Another piece of legislation I introduced, House Resolution 864, would urge the United States Congress to pass the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act. This act would close the Halliburton loophole by repealing the exemptions for the oil and gas industry that were placed in the Safe Drinking Water Act. The FRAC Act would also require oil and gas industries to disclose all hydraulic fracturing chemicals and chemical constituents currently considered proprietary rights of the company.

Finally, House Bill 2609 would establish a one-year moratorium on the issuance of new drilling permits for the Marcellus Shale deposit in Pennsylvania. This moratorium would provide us with the time we need to better understand and address scores of unresolved issues before allowing further expansion of Marcellus Shale drilling.

The House has adjourned session for the summer without putting any legislative protections into place. Since the Senate has refused to come back after the November election, we have very few session days left before all the existing bills die, meaning we must start from scratch in January. In the meantime, permits are being issued, and plans to drill are moving forward. We need to take a step back and give ourselves the necessary time to do this right. The risks of doing it wrong are simply too great and long-lasting. It is my hope that enacting a one-year moratorium will allow us the time to pass legislation such as House Bill 2608 to better protect our water and public health, as well as implement safeguards to protect private water wells and state and local roads.

In addition, we must ensure that the companies reaping the benefits from ***Continued on next page***

| Marcellus Shale Drilling Disasters | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| January 2009 | A well in Dimock Township, Susquehanna County, exploded and surrounding wells were found to contain methane. Many residents now cannot drink their water. |
| September 2009 | The 38-mile Dunkard Creek in Greene County suffered a complete fish kill. DEP and the EPA believe golden algae to be the cause of the fish kill. Signs point to the possibility of the algae migrating there on drilling equipment used in Texas for gas drilling activities. |
| March 2010 | 8,000-12,000 gallons of mud were spilled in Sproul State Forest in Clinton County. |
| June 2010 | Explosion at a gas well in Penfield, Clearfield County, allowed natural gas and wastewater to escape for 16 hours. |
| July 2010 | The state Department of Agriculture announced that it quarantined cattle on a Tioga County farm after it was discovered the cattle might have ingested drilling wastewater from a nearby Marcellus Shale wastewater pit. |
| July 2010 | A fire broke out at a separator tank at a site operated by Chesapeake Energy in Auburn Township, Susquehanna County. |

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Marcellus Shale drilling provide the Commonwealth with portions of their profits to compensate for potential environmental damage. As companies are providing landowners with large, often life-changing amounts of money to lease their land – there have been reports of \$5,750 per acre – these companies also have the means with which to pay a severance tax. Such a tax is badly needed to beef up DEP's efforts to protect our environment from Marcellus Shale drilling among other

things. While I am pleased that the House and Senate have agreed to vote on a severance tax bill this fall, any agreement reached must be done responsibly and without giving in to the demands of the drilling industry for forced pooling and preemption of local ordinances. Such a quid pro quo would be a slap in the face to the health and safety of the Commonwealth.

Clearly, there are many challenges and obstacles confronting the appropriate regulation of Marcellus Shale drilling. Our worst enemy is time, which is why

we need to immediately hit the pause button on any new drilling. The drilling incidents in Susquehanna County and across the state make it abundantly clear that we are not prepared to either prevent or react to such disasters. I fear for the health and safety of my constituents, which is why I will continue fighting until adequate protections are in place. As the coal industry has taught us, we must not leave the health and welfare of our citizens to the winds of chance. No amount of economic prosperity is worth it.

Mundy pushes for reforms to benefit seniors, caregivers & endangered persons

The following is a recap of some of the bills I sponsored and introduced this session to aid caregivers and protect seniors and the most vulnerable among us.

Improving efficiency of caregiver program

One of my top legislative priorities as chairman of the House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee has been the passage of legislation removing barriers to families keeping their older relatives at home as long as possible.

Since 1990, the Pennsylvania Family Caregiver Support Program has provided financial assistance for those caring for an older relative at home. The federal Family Caregiver Support Program, established in 2000, was largely modeled on Pennsylvania's law with the exception that it does not require the caregiver and care recipient to be related or live together. Due to Pennsylvania's outdated restrictions, our area agencies on aging have been unable to fully utilize the state funding they receive despite having a waiting list.

My House Bill 245 recognizes that today's informal, unpaid caregivers are not limited to traditional family members. The bill would provide the first rate adjustment to the reimbursement limit for caregiving expenses from \$200 to \$500 and the lifetime grant limit for home modification and assistive devices from \$2,000 to \$6,000.

The economic value of Pennsylvania's caregivers has been estimated at more than \$15 billion a year. Passage of House Bill 245 is a win not only for caregivers and seniors but also for the Commonwealth's taxpayers as allowing older residents to age at home is far less costly than institutional care. Without the support of caregivers, Pennsylvania would face even greater fiscal challenges.

This legislation unanimously passed the House of Representatives both this session and last. Unfortunately, the Senate has failed to take action. House Bill 245 is currently before the Senate Aging and Youth Committee where it was referred on April 2, 2009. Please join me in calling on the Senate to stand up for caregivers – our unsung heroes – and pass this bill before the close of the 2009-2010 Legislative Session. We are not asking for additional funding, but to be able to fully use the current appropriation.

Protecting long-term care insurance policyholders

I recently introduced legislation (House Bill 2538) to enact stronger consumer protections for long-term care insurance policyholders. With the high costs of long-term care, many insurance companies have begun marketing long-term care insurance as an attractive option for individuals to purchase. However, this is still a relatively unknown insurance product, and we must make sure that our laws adequately protect the purchaser. I have become concerned with what seems to be a trend where purchasers pay for these policies for many years and then high rate increases make them unaffordable to continue – with all the money invested in the policy lost.

House Bill 2538 would:

- Prohibit long-term care insurance companies from setting premium rates based solely on the age of the insured or duration of the policy;
- Ensure a certain level of benefits are available to policyholders even when rate increases no longer make the product affordable; and
- Prohibit practices that unfairly induce policyholders to purchase coverage that will significantly increase in cost in the short term.

A public hearing on the bill is planned this fall at Luzerne County Community College. Stay tuned for further details.

Advisory system for missing endangered persons

Legislation (House Bill 726) that originated in my committee to establish a statewide Missing Endangered Person Advisory System (MEPAS) unanimously passed the House of Representatives in June. The bill affords needed protections to citizens who might become lost or wander, particularly seniors with Alzheimer's disease or other disorders.

Specifically, House Bill 726 – which utilizes the proven framework of the Amber Alert System for abducted children – provides notification to the public, law enforcement, and other agencies when endangered children or adults go missing. The Pennsylvania State Police would be responsible for establishing appropriate protocols and procedures for operating the MEPAS, as well as educating and informing local law enforcement agencies and the public about its availability. Law enforcement agencies would be able to request activation of the system when public assistance is considered expedient to the recovery of missing, at-risk individuals.

House Bill 726 awaits further consideration by the Senate, as does Senate Bill 976, a companion bill.

Interbranch Commission Issues Final Report & Recommendations

This past May, the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice issued its final report and recommendations on ways to strengthen Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system and to better protect the rights of children. The commission had been created by Act 32 of 2009 in response to the collapse of the juvenile justice system in Luzerne County. Over the past year, the commission held numerous hearings to investigate the fundamental problems that led to the devastating corruption charges brought against former President Judge Michael Conahan and Juvenile Delinquency Court Judge Mark Ciavarella. The commission heard testimony from many during the course of the year, including Luzerne County court officials, youth brought before Judge Ciavarella, and the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. It was the

executive director of the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, James Anderson, who testified that I had contacted him back in 2005 to inquire about Luzerne County's high juvenile detention placement rates.

I have recently co-sponsored legislation to adopt key commission recommendations, such as House Bills 2571 and 2572, which would require the Office of Victim Advocate to represent victims of juvenile crime and establish a Special Juvenile Victim Compensation Fund. In addition, I introduced House Bill 1384 last year to require the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission to provide statistical data and other information regarding evidence-based programs on its website in order to achieve fair and reasonable administration in juvenile courts. I am also a co-sponsor of House

Bill 1211, which would require all children to have legal representation at all stages of any proceeding and would not allow this right to be waived.

I cannot fully express how disappointed I am in those who engaged in the illegal and unjust actions that resulted in the collapse of the juvenile justice system in Luzerne County. Officials we entrusted to protect the public welfare failed us and our children. However, it is my hope we can learn from these mistakes and rebuild our juvenile justice system to ensure that such a travesty and abuse of power never again happens. Be assured that I will continue to advocate for passage of reformative legislation and to look for new ways to improve Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system.

Mundy bills awaiting action by Pennsylvania Senate

The following is legislation I introduced this session that passed the House of Representatives and awaits action by the Senate:

■ **House Bill 245** – Removes barriers to Pennsylvania's Family Caregiver Support Program – which provides financial support for informal, unpaid caregivers – by removing the relative and residency requirements, as discussed on page 4 of the newsletter.

Status: Before the Senate Aging and Youth Committee where it was referred on April 2, 2009.

■ **House Bill 352** – Closes a legal loophole that makes it advantageous to a drunk driver to flee the scene of a traffic accident rather than stop and render aid. Current state law classifies a drunken driving accident that results in serious bodily injury or death as a second degree felony. The second degree felony designation provides for a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine. A hit and run where death or serious bodily injury occurs, on the other hand, is classified as a third degree felony, with a mandatory minimum sentence of 90 days or one year in prison and a fine of \$1,000 or \$2,500 based on whether the victim suffered serious bodily injury or death. The maximum sentence for a third degree felony is seven years in prison and a \$15,000 fine.

House Bill 352 closes this loophole by increasing the maximum sentence for a hit and run accident where death or serious bodily injury occurs by reclassifying such a crime as a second degree felony.

Status: Before the Senate Transportation Committee where it was referred on June 11, 2009.

■ **House Bill 2338** – Establishes the Children in Foster Care Act to ensure that upon a child's placement with a foster family, the involved county or private agency would provide both the foster child and foster parents with an easy-to-understand list of the child's rights and fully explain them. The bill specifies basic rights that should automatically be afforded to foster children, including the right to live in a safe, healthy home; to receive proper routine medical treatment; to receive life skills training and services to prepare for the transition to adulthood; and freedom from harassment, corporal punishment, unreasonable restraint, and physical, sexual, emotional, and other abuse. By obtaining a clear understanding of their rights, foster children and families are better able to advocate for themselves, allowing them to achieve better outcomes in the process.

Status: Before the Senate Aging and Youth Committee where it was referred on June 1, 2010.

Share the Road: Play it Safe

With the return of the school year comes increased bicycle and foot traffic on our streets. This also continues to be a popular time of year for motorcycle riding. Unfortunately, drivers too often forget that the road is not theirs alone but must be shared.

I was recently reminded of this fact by a constituent who voiced concerns with the irresponsible behavior some drivers exhibit toward pedestrians and bike riders. The right-turn-on-red law has made us very careless as a driving public. When that is combined with distracted driving practices, such as cell phone use, you have a recipe for disaster. I for one no longer ride my own bicycle in traffic because I fear for my safety.

Please exercise caution on the roadways and remember that you have the ability to injure someone or worse by failing to be attentive. **Below are a few simple rules to keep in mind.**

■ Motorists must yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and sidewalks across driveway entrances.

- Keep a sharp eye out and treat bicycles and motorcycles with the same respect as other vehicles.
- Slow down and allow as much clearance as possible when passing a bicycle or motorcycle. By law, bicycles must travel in the same direction as other traffic.
- When making turns, watch carefully for bicycles and motorcycles entering your lane, as well as pedestrians crossing the roadway.

Always devote your full attention when driving – and expect the unexpected!

For more information on traffic safety, visit www.dmv.state.pa.us.



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Fall 2010

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LEGISLATIVE ISSUES SURVEY

Please take a moment to answer the following questions. You can mail the response to my office or save a stamp and complete it online at www.pahouse.com/Mundy.

Marcellus Shale Drilling Moratorium

Over the past year, I have received numerous phone calls, letters, and e-mails from constituents concerned with the lack of legislative and regulatory safeguards during the exploration and drilling of the Marcellus Shale deposit. However, I have also heard from those eager to reap the potential economic benefits that Marcellus Shale drilling could bring to landowners, our local businesses, and those who are seeking work. While the enactment of a one-year moratorium would give our state more time to implement environmental safeguards, it would also delay potential job creation and the generation of more state revenue.

Should the legislature enact a one-year moratorium on the issuance of new drilling permits for the Marcellus Shale deposit in Pennsylvania?

Yes

No

Comments: _____

Legislative Structuring

I have heard from constituents who are concerned with the cost of state government, especially at a time when the Commonwealth's coffers are running low. One suggestion on saving money is to make Pennsylvania a part-time legislature. Some argue that doing so would result in a savings to taxpayers as legislators would receive lower salaries and fewer benefits. Opponents, on the other hand, contend that a

full-time body allows for less state bureaucracy and more time for legislators to focus on constituent services and important legislative issues.

Do you believe the Pennsylvania General Assembly should become a part-time legislature?

Yes

No

Comments: _____

Another suggestion on saving money is for Pennsylvania to become a unicameral legislature. Those who support this idea contend that the General Assembly could more efficiently operate with only one legislative body and that the Commonwealth would save nearly \$92 million in annual expenses if the state Senate was abolished. Opponents say that the state Senate is necessary as it serves as a deliberative body and a means of checks and balances on the House of Representatives.

Do you think becoming a unicameral legislature is a good way to control state spending?

Yes

No

Comments: _____