

RockTheCapital.org

Contact:
Eric Epstein, Coordinator

lechambon@comcast.net
(717)-541-1101

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60 Current and Former Legislators Still Refuse to Pay the Money Back

(Harrisburg, Pa) - *RockTheCapital.org* released a review of current and former state legislators who accepted an increase in their pay through “unvouchered expenses,” refused to pay the money back, and retired or were defeated in 2006 and 2008.

Eric Epstein, Coordinator of *RockTheCapital.org*, stated: “Fifty three former and current House members and seven Senators have refused to return ‘unvouchered expenses’ or donated the unconstitutional income to charities. In either instance, the lawmakers have benefitted through increased wages, ‘pension bounces’, or job promotions.”

The numbers have been adjusted since April 2008, but the final analysis indicates that 53 out of 131 House members kept the loot, and eight out of 27 senators profited from the late night caper.

Initially, 131 House members and 27 Senators signed up for “unvouchered expenses.” Payments were received between July 7 and November 16, 2005, ranging from \$1,288 to \$14,553.32 (before taxes). The repealed pay raises would have boosted lawmakers’ salaries from 16 to 54 percent, depending on seniority, rank, title, and “leadership.”

According to the Majority Leader, Todd Eachus, "The pay-raise thing, I think, is finally behind us. I think we're on to other issues now." (*Patriot News*, February 17, 2008)

BACKGROUND

The Pennsylvania House and Senate passed Act 44 at 2 a.m., July 7, 2005 increasing the salaries of officials in all three branches of government without public hearings, public debate or public knowledge.

Governor Edward G. Rendell signed the bill that evening, and told the media the following day, "It's legal ['unvouchered expenses'] and that's all I'm going to say about it."

Base Salaries in July, 2005 for the rank and file excluding, per diems, perks, PSAs, pensions and paid health insurance; prior to the pay raise, was \$69,648 for rank and file.

The pay raise "...increased legislators' base pay to \$81,050 - more than any other state except California - and most lawmakers received more money because of expanded stipends in the bill for leadership or committee posts. Individual members saw raises ranging from 16 to 54 percent." (*The Associated Press*, Peter Jackson, *How Pa. legislators' pay raise was born and how it died*, September 14, 2006.)

As a result of public pressure, the General Assembly passed and Gov. Ed Rendell signed Act 72 of 2005 repealing the raise on November 16, 2005. Act 72 did not require those who had received increased salaries to return the funds.

In total, 158 lawmakers accepted the raise. Numerous legislators have opted not to repay the "unvouchered expenses" or donated the money to charity. These amounts can be applied toward pension calculations and verified through the State Employees Retirement System.

On September 14, 2006, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that "unvouchered-expenses" violated the state constitution, but did not order recipients to pay the money back. The Court also reinstated the pay raises for themselves and approximately 1,200 judges.

Executive Summary

House members who have refused to return “unvouchered expenses” or donated the “unconstitutional” income to charities, have benefitted through increased wages and “pension bounces.” House Democratic members who took “unvouchered expenses” and did not pay the money back, have been rewarded with leadership positions, job promotions, or committee chairmanships including:

Democratic Leadership (6):

- **Keith McCall**, (D-Carbon), Speaker.
- **Todd Eachus**, (Luzerne), Majority Leader.
- **Bill DeWeese**, (D-Greene), Majority Whip.
- **Dwight Evans**, (D-Philadelphia), Appropriations Committee Chair.
- **Mark Cohen**, (D-Philadelphia), Caucus Chair.
- **Mike Sturla**, (D-Lancaster), Chair of Policy & the House Democratic Campaign Committee.

Democratic Committee Chairs (9):

- **Rep. Louise Bishop**, (D-Philadelphia)
Chairwoman of the Children & Youth Committee.
- **Rep. Robert Donatucci**, (D-Philadelphia)
Chairman of the Liquor Control Committee.
- **Rep. Babette Josephs**, (D-Philadelphia)
Chairwoman of the Local Government Committee.
- **Rep. Thaddeus Kirkland** (D-Delaware)
Chairman of Tourism and Recreational Development.
- **Rep. Phyllis Mundy**, (D-Kingston)
Chairwoman of Aging & Older Adult Service Committee.
- **Rep. Frank Oliver**, (D-Philadelphia)
Chairman of Health & Human Services Committee.
- **Rep. Edward Staback**, (D-Lackawanna)
Chairman of the Game & Fisheries Committee.
- **Rep. W. Curtis Thomas** (D-Philadelphia)
Chairman of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee.

***House Republicans** have also rewarded payjackers with important positions (4):*

- **Rep. Rick Geist**, (R-Blair), Minority Chairman of the Transportation Committee and Committee on Committees.
- **Rep. John Taylor**, (R-Philadelphia), Minority Chairman of Liquor Control.

*House members who **repaid the “unvouchered expenses” in 2008** include:*

- **Rep. Peter Daley** (D-Washington & Fayette). On September 20, 2006, Mr. Daley announced that “he would follow the spirit of last week’s state Supreme Court decision on legislative pay raises and repay the ‘unvouchered expenses’ funds he received last fall. The Supreme Court has spoken and I am obliged to uphold the ruling. I voted to repeal the pay raise and I am returning the unvouchered expenses.” Rep. Daley is scheduled to pay off his unconstitutional wages in **August 2008**.
- **Rep. Bob Belfanti** (D-Columbia). After the Supreme Court’s decision in 2006, he committed to repay \$7,708 in gross wages beginning in November after the election. However, House records indicate that Belfanti is currently enrolled in the payroll deduction plan and his pay raise will be paid back in **November 2008**.
- **Rep. Dick Hess** (R-Fulton). Mr. Hess is paying the money back through payroll deductions that will go well beyond December 31, 2006 and be paid off in **November 2008**.
- **Rep. Merle Phillips** (R-Northumberland). "I'm not going to pay back the income taxes they took out," Mr. Phillips said. "I'm paying back what I ended up with." Mr. Phillips said he wanted to repay the money in one lump sum, but House officials told him the repayments had to be made on a schedule because of accounting rules. So he opted for a two-year repayment plan (*The Daily Item*, October 08, 2006.) His pay raise will be paid back in **November 2008**.

Senate Repayment Status

In the Senate repayment is made through salary reduction, and can be verified through a request with the Chief Clerk's office.

The following sitting senators have refused to return the unconstitutional pay raise:

• David Argall (R-Schuylkill)	Owes \$7,000.00 (1)
• Vincent J. Hughes (D-Philadelphia)	Owes \$7,708.54
• Shirley M. Kitchen (D-Philadelphia)	Owes \$7,708.54
• Robert J. Mellow (D-Lackawana)	Owes \$13,380.56 (2)
• Raphael J. Musto (D-Luzerne)	Owes \$7,708.54
• Christine Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia)	Owes \$7,708.54
• Anthony H. Williams (D-Philadelphia)	Owes \$7,708.54

¹ According to Mr. Argall, all \$7,000 of the “unvouchered” cash was donated to the United Way (*Morning Call*, Harrisburg Bureau, November 17, 2005), and he told the *Republican Herald* that he reported the “income and took a deduction on his federal tax for the charitable donation.”

² Senator Robert J. Mellow (D-Lackawanna) voted for the 2005 pay raise and accepted \$13,380.54 in “unvouchered expenses.” “There is no reason legally why I should give it back, so I’m not,” said Senate Minority Leader Robert J. Mellow. “The raises were established law for four months, and similar ones were upheld by the courts, he added.” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 1, 2005)

Senator Mellow agreed to pay the money back when queried by Eric Epstein of *RockTheCapital.Org* on July 5, 2007 during a press conference in the Rotunda.

Epstein: “Did you decide to pay back your raise yet?”

Mellow: “Next week.”

Epstein: “Next week? Great. And we have it on the record.”

The Senate clerk has no record of Mr. Mellow attempting to pay the money back.

The following former and current House members (57) have refused to return the “unvouchered expenses” or donated the “unconstitutional” income to charities.

- **Rep. Linda Bebko-Jones** (D-Erie). Ms. Jones voted for the pay raise, took the money, failed to qualify for the primary, and will receive a pension boost. "If I got the pay raise [\$4,280], it gets built into my pension," Bebko-Jones said. "It wasn't revoked before we got it. And just like in the private sector, if you get a pay raise, obviously your pension is going to go up. All the repeal did is to stop us from getting any continuing pay raises," she said. (*Erie Times*, April 29, 2006)

PSAs 2005: Ms. Bebko-Jones spent \$29,032.50 on I.D. Theft between September 26 and October 20, 2005.

PSAs 2006: Ms. Bebko-Jones spent \$17,010 on I.D. Theft between February 6 and February 26, 2005.

Indictment: Former Rep. Linda Bebko-Jones (D-Erie) was charged on February 28, 2008 for forging her nominating petitions in 2006, and was was arraigned on charges she forged nominating petitions in March 2006.

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal: \$2,581 (\$65,000) (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

- **Rep. Fred Belardi** (D-Lackawana). Mr. Belardi kept the pay raise and voted to increase his salary 35% from \$79,417.61 to \$106,986.

Per diems: Rep. Belardi put in for 216 per diems in 18 months and took home an additional \$29,052 before leaving office. (*Shamrock Times*, November 14, 2006)

PSAs 2006: Mr. Belardi spent \$36,300 on prescription assistance.

Update: Defeated. Rep. Belardi was hired by the House Democrats, and “makes \$116,000 annually -- about 36 percent more than he did as a lawmaker -- managing parking spaces and other personnel matters for his former House colleagues.” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 17, 2007)

• **Rep. Louise Bishop** (D-Philadelphia). Rep. Bishop voted for the raise, then voted to repeal the raise, but still kept the money.

Update: A House member since 1989, Rep. Bishop is a “radio personality” and Chairwoman of the Children & Youth Committee.

• **Rep. Tommie Blackwell** (D-Philadelphia) Mr. Blackwell voted to increase his salary 22% from \$69,648 to \$85,102 and kept the money.

Update: A House members since 2005, Rep. Blackwell is Vice Chairman of the State Government Committee.

Knocked out: State Rep. Thomas W. Blackwell, a two-term lawmaker from the most prominent political family in West Philadelphia, was ordered off the Democratic primary ballot last night. The president judge of Commonwealth Court, Bonnie Brigrance Leadbetter, ruled that Blackwell had fallen short of the 300 voter signatures he needed to secure his spot in the Democratic primary. By Leadbetter's count, the lawmaker had only 184 valid signatures, from registered Democratic voters living inside the legislative district. (*Philadelphia Daily News*, March 19, 2008)

Pension:

• **Rep. Kevin D. Blaum** (D-Luzerne) Mr. Blaum voted for the pay raise, and as minority caucus secretary (the fourth highest-ranking party job) he was flown from Iowa to Harrisburg (\$716) courtesy of Mr. DeWeese’s “leadership account” on November 7 to vote on the pay raise repeal. (*Herald Standard*, May 12, 2006)

Defended perks: “A car is a tool,” said Rep. Kevin Blaum, (D-Wilkes-Barre), who billed the state for a leased Ford Explorer and collected an average of about \$1,500 a month in per-diems. “Certainly, no one is becoming rich off these expenses.” (*Shamrock Times*, November 13, 2006)

Per diems: Rep. Blaum took 215 per diems in 18 months and made an extra **\$26,824**. (*Shamrock Times*, November 14, 2006)

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$4,579 (\$115,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired from the legislature, but works as “Associate director for admissions at a private school (Wyoming Seminary).”
(Sources: *Patriot-News* and *The Associated Press*)

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- **Rep. Gaynor Cawley** (D- Lackawanna). Not only did he vote for and take the “unconstitutional raise,” Mr. Cawley was the largest recipient of per diems from 2004-2005 - **\$53,030!**

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:

\$3,242 (\$113,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce.”

- **Rep. Mark Cohen** (D-Philadelphia) Cohen, a 34 year veteran of the legislature, voted for the raise, voted to repeal the raise, took the money, collected \$46,270 in per diems between 2004-2005, and read 800 books over at a cost to tax payers of \$28,200. (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 2, 2006)

“If you want recent, there was last week's disclosure that he'd turned in bills for \$2,000 for attending the annual Pennsylvania Society blowout in New York in 2004, 2005, and 2006. More about this in a moment.”

“If you want massive, go back to 1990 when the *Daily News'* John Baer reported that Cohen had racked up expenses of \$104,000 in a 20-month period. Put Cohen in a blond wig, hand him a Chihuahua and you've got Paris Hilton.” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 11, 2007)

Credit rating: “Rep. Mark Cohen, (D-Philadelphia), revealed a credit card balance with a 24.99 percent interest rate and that he accepted an interest-free loan from his longtime administrative assistant, Dorothy Kelly. ‘She was aware that I was shopping around for a loan, and she offered to pay, she offered to loan me the money,’ Cohen said. He has since repaid the loan, which was for slightly more than \$6,500,’ he said.” (*Associated Press*, May 4, 2007, Source: Statement of Financial Interests for 2006, State Ethics Commission)

PSAs 2006: Mr. Cohen spent \$53,920 (February 22 to March 7, 2006) and \$26,960 (March 8 to March 14, 2006) on Medicare Part D and PACE.

Update: Majority Chairman of the Democratic Caucus.

• **Rep. Thomas C. Corrigan, Sr.** (D-Bucks). Rep. Corrigan voted for the pay raise and accepted “unvouchered expenses.” Mr. Corrigan attended the four-day National Conference of State Legislatures event Aug. 15-18; which, costs a minimum of \$425 to attend for those who pre-registered, plus hotel and travel costs. (*Herald Standard*, August 1, 2006) “Rep. Thomas C. Corrigan Sr. (D., Bucks) hung up on a reporter when asked whether he would return the money he collected in ‘unvouchered expenses.’” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 16, 2006)

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal: \$2,289 (\$103,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007) Mr. Corrigan retired with an extra \$1,280 after taking the \$3,801 pay raise (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 26, 2006)

Update: Mr. Corrigan retired prior to the 2006 election.

• **Rep. Jacqueline R. Crahalla** (R- Montgomery) after four years of public service, Rep. Crahalla is receiving a pension.

PSAs 2005: Ms. Crahalla spent \$9,078 on a tutoring program.

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal: \$553 (\$22,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired.

• **Rep. Angel Cruz** (D-Philadelphia) voted for the raise, then voted to repeal the raise, and took the money.

“Cake and eat it too”: Rep. Cruz told *RTC* the night of the pay raise repeal vote that he was waiting to collect pension and health benefits before running for a higher paying job on City Council. He was seen eating cake with members from the Philadelphia delegation on the House floor on June 21, 2007, thus proving that you can have your cake and eat it too.

Update: A Member of the House since 2001, Mr. Cruz is Chairman of the Liquor Control Subcommittee on Marketing.

- **Rep. Bill DeWeese** (D-Greene). The Majority Leader supported the pay raise and demoted party members in leadership positions who voted against the pay raise. Mr. DeWeese received over \$13,000 in “unvouchered expenses” with which he sent eight \$1,000 checks to each school district in Greene County, and paid \$5,000 in federal income taxes.

“Among state lawmakers, no one uses the planes more often than Rep. Bill DeWeese, (D-Greene). He flew on them 11 times last year and twice this year -- at a total cost of nearly \$24,000.” (*Tribune Review*, December 1, 2005)

Mr. DeWeese also accessed a \$13 million “special leadership account” to fly to Santa Barbara, California, pay a personal driver, and spend \$149,105 on advertising or \$254,722 on consulting fees. (*Herald-Standard*, May 12, 2006)

PSAs 2006: Mr. DeWeese spent \$20,064 from February 6-26, 2006 for Veterans’ Services, and another \$13,556 in August 2006 for PACE Plus.

Driver’s education fund: DeWeese decided to drive himself to work. “According to media reports, DeWeese spent \$32,000 last year on a driver from Donna Hertig Enterprises. A *Herald-Standard* review of DeWeese’s legislative spending shows that in October 2006 Donna Hertig Enterprises received four payments totaling approximately \$4,074 for driver services.” (*Herald-Standard*, February 17, 2007)

Loyalty update: Mr. DeWeese fired seven of his closest aides. “A shake-up in the state House Democratic caucus on Tuesday has led to the departure of seven senior aides, including the majority leader’s chief of staff.” (*The Associated Press*, November 13, 2007)

Polling for dollars: In 2007, House Majority Leader Bill DeWeese authorized \$289,759 for political polling. (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 25, 2007)

Update: Majority Whip of the House of Representatives.

- **Rep. Robert Donatucci** (D-Philadelphia) voted for the raise, then voted to repeal the raise, and took the money.

Update: Chairman of the Liquor Control Committee.

• **Rep. Todd Eachus** (D-Luzerne). Mr. Eachus voted for the pay raise, kept the money, defended the pay grab, and voted to increase his salary 22% from \$69,648 to \$85,102.

“Man-to-Mann:” In a bizarre twist (even by Harrisburg standards), Mr. Eachus retired the debt of a lobbyist. “The House Democratic Campaign Committee in November and December paid \$40,683 to retire Veon's campaign debt, according to Veon's report filed recently with the state election bureau. Veon could not be reached Wednesday.”

"Mike's contribution as a leader to our collective effort meant a lot to us," said House Majority Policy Chairman Todd Eachus of Luzerne County, who chairs the campaign committee. But the committee's other three leaders -- Reps. Joe Preston, Dan Frankel and Jennifer Mann -- apparently had no knowledge of the two payments. (*Tribune Review*, February 21, 2008)

Outstanding questions: Did anyone (PAC or individual) give a higher than “normal contribution” to the HDCC in the last 90 days? Does Veon have any outstanding personal loans to his Committee(s)? Is this just another way to launder money into his legal defense fund? For lack of more eloquent phrasing, “Is this “hush money”?”

Health care: Mr. Eachus was chief the sponsor of health care reform, i.e. “Eachus Healthcare Amendment,” which passed in the House by a vote of 114-81 on March 12, 2008. The Bill died in the Senate.

Yet, Mr. Eachus contributes nothing to his own health care plan. Unlike the Senate, the House makes no contributions to its health care.

The Senate program was implemented in September, 2006. All senators and the chamber's 1,000+ staff must contribute 1% of their gross pay toward the cost of their taxpayer-funded health insurance.

According to the Chief Clerk of the Senate, the annual savings to taxpayers since the Senate instituted this program in 2006 is, “Just under a half a million per year.” (Chief Clerk of the Senate, May 28, 2009)

Update: Promoted to Majority Leader.

- **Rep. Dwight Evans** (D-Philadelphia). Mr. Evans voted for the raise, then voted to repeal the raise, and still took the money.

Please raise my taxes: “At the news conference, House Appropriations Chairman Dwight Evans (D., Phila.) refused several times to say how many House Democrats he believed supported the tax hike after the governor made his sales pitch.

“It's a process. . . . We are going to keep working on it until we have” the required votes, said Evans, who was among the first to suggest a tax increase was a necessity. (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 23, 2009)

Update: Promoted to Chairman of House Appropriations Committee/

- **Rep. Robert Flick** (R-Chester). Mr. Flick voted for the pay raise and kept the “unvouchered expenses.”

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$3,183 (\$107,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce.”

- **Rep. Teresa Forcier** (R-Crawford). Voted ‘no’ on the pay-raise bill but accepted the “unvouchered expenses.” *RockTheCapital.org* spoke with her staff on May 3, 2006, and is still awaiting staff response on repayment terms. On March 3, 2006, Rep. Forcier stated she would not violate the privacy of the three dozen charities [to which] she gave \$5,400. “This is a reversal of her [previous] decision to release the information.” (*Meadeville Tribune*, March 3, 2006β)

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$2,768 (\$84,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Rep. Forcier was defeated in the primary, retired with a “pension bounce,” but “declined comment” on her current status. (Sources: *Patriot-News* and *The Associated Press*)

• **Rep. Rick Geist** (R-Blair). Mr. Geist voted for the pay raise and accepted “unvouchered expenses.” In a meeting with John McGinnis in Altoona, on February 27, 2006, “Mr. Geist insisted that taking ‘unvouchered expenses’ in anticipation of the pay raise was proper. When asked, ‘Why did you return the money?’”(We’ve been told he has returned the unvouchered expenses), his answer was unclear. He intimated that he gave the money to his church before he had actually taken it from the taxpayers.”

PSAs 2005: Mr. Geist spent \$38,960 from March through September and November on tax forms, web site development, “Capital information,” “Adopt-A-Highway,” tourism, district office, tutoring program, and hunting.

PSAs 2006: Mr. Geist spent \$22,400 from January to February and June and July and November on “Entrepreneurial Guides,” tax forms, military family relief, and ID theft.

Update: Minority Chair of the Transportation and the Committee on Committees.

• **Rep. Michael C. Gruitza** (D-Mercer). Mr. Gruitza voted for the pay raise, accepted “unvouchered expenses,” and spent the raise on chimney work. "It's not worth the aggravation," Gruitza said. "I feel bad that there is a sense out there that you are just trying to take care of yourself, when all these years my main priority has been helping others." (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 1, 2005)

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$3,466 (\$113,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce.”

• **Rep. Gary Haluska** (D-Cambria). Voted “no on the pay raise, ”but took the unconstitutional money. His Capitol office (787-3532) referred *RTC* to the district office at 814-674-8939. On May 3, 2006, Mr. Haluska told *RockTheCapital.org* that he donated the entire amount to local food banks as he did in 1995 when he first arrived in the House.

Update: Mr. Haluska is vice-chairman of the Game and Fisheries Committee, and chairs the Subcommittee on Travel Promotion.

• **Rep. George C. Hasay** (R-Luzerne). Mr. Hasay voted for the pay raise and accepted “unvouchered expenses.”

PSAs 2005: Mr. Hasay spent \$12,824 in June and November on sportsmen information and hunting.

PSAs 2006: Mr. Hasay spent \$12,824 on unspecified PSAs.

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$6,587 (\$329,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce.” Mr. Hasay confessed: “I spent 34 years in public service, and when I first ran for the job, I never even thought about the pension plan or anything like that,” said former state Rep. George C. Hasay, (R-Luzerne), whose annual pension is \$79,000 and lump-sum withdrawal was \$329,000. (*Morning Call*, Bill White Blog, February 9, 2007)

• **Rep. Harold James** (D-Philadelphia). Mr. James voted for the pay hike, voted to repeal the raise, and took the money. “The only lawmaker who appeared conflicted [after the Supreme Court decision] about what to do was Rep. Harold James (D., Phila.) James said yesterday that he would seek the advice of House leadership and counsel before making a decision. Still, he stressed: ‘I earned it and I worked for it.’” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Inquirer September 16, 2006)

Second thoughts: Apparently Mr. James was “advised” to keep the money.

Close call: “State Rep. Harold James has survived the first round in a challenge to his re-election petitions, but his opponent says he's appealing to the state Supreme Court. James had collected more than 2,800 voter signatures on petitions for an 11th term in Harrisburg, which is nearly 10 times the number - 300 - required by state law. But his opponent in the April 22 Democratic primary, Kenyatta Johnson, contends that James had identified himself as the circulator for a number of petitions that were actually handled by other people. Johnson's campaign found 14 people who acknowledged signing James's petitions but identified someone else as the circulator.” (*Philadelphia Daily News*, March 29, 2008)

Update: Mr. James was defeated in the 2008 primary by Kenyatta Johnson.

• **Rep. Babette Josephs** (D-Philadelphia). Ms. Joseph's voted for the raise, voted to repeal the raise, and donated the money to charity.

PSAs 2006: Ms. Josephs spent \$34,320 and \$5,100 on PACE ads from February 6-26, 2006.

Update: Rep. Joseph's, the "reform mortician," chairs the Local Government Committee where all reform legislation goes to die.

• **Rep. Bill Keller** (D-Philadelphia). Mr. Keller voted for the raise, voted to repeal the raise, and took the money. "For six years, local interests have treated state lawmakers from across Pennsylvania to a 'legislative weekend' in Philadelphia, offering free hotels, meals and sports tickets to them and their families. But Keller had insisted on continuing with plans for this year, until after he met with Perzel this week. 'I thought part of my job was to bring people to Philadelphia, and to show them what they were voting on was not only good for Philadelphia but also good for the entire commonwealth,' said Keller, adding that he is committed to organizing the event next year." (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 8, 2006)

Update: Mr. Keller is Vice Chairman of Appropriations, and a member of Aging & Older Adult Services where he is the Subcommittee Chairman on Programs and Benefits.

• **Rep. George Kenney** (R-Philadelphia). Mr. Kenney voted for the raise, voted to repeal the raise, and took the money.

PSAs 2005: Mr. Kenney spent \$64,736 from April through September on his web site, TAP, PACE, district office, and CHIP.

PSAs 2006: Mr. Kenney spent \$59,806 from January to February on property tax-rent rebates and PACE, and from June through August, the PSAs were on mammograms, his district office, and the property tax-rent rebate.

Update: Mr. Kenney vacated his seat.

Pension: ?

• **Rep. Thaddeus Kirkland** (D-Delaware). Mr. Kirkland voted to increase his salary 22% from \$69,648 to \$85,102, and kept the money.

Update: Mr. Kirkland is Chairman of Tourism and Recreational Development.
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• **Rep. Frank LaGrotta** (D-Lawrence). Mr. LaGrotta claims his “unvouchered expenses” were used to buy a new computer for his office and pay some mileage to his employees. (*Vindy.com*, November 20, 2005)

Expenses: Mr. LaGrotta billed tax payers for \$87,256 in expenses in 2005 including \$17,611 on commercial transportation and \$10,920 on vehicle related costs” (*Beaver County Times*, June 28, 2006)

PSAs 2006: Topic: Senior Services Air Dates: 02/13/06-02/26/06
Money Spent: \$36,345.

Topic: Senior Services Air Dates: 02/27/06-03/12/06
Money Spent: \$36,902.

Employment history: Mr. LaGrotta was defeated in the 2006 primary, and was then hired as an “internal adviser” to the House Democratic caucus “assisting other members as necessary,” (*Herald Standard*, February 16, 2007).

Travel: “On top of car leases, House lawmakers also are allowed to fly to Harrisburg once each session week, as some lawmakers, including former Beaver County Reps. Mike Veon and Frank LaGrotta, routinely did.” (*Calkins Media*, January 30, 2007)

LaGrotta on reformers: “I see a very good Supreme Court justice who was targeted by people who were trying to prove a point. And that's sad. Even the mafia has a code of ethics where innocents are not targeted.”

Guilty conviction: “LaGrotta, of Lawrence County, pleaded guilty in Dauphin County Court Monday to conflict of interest charges for creating “no-work” jobs for two relatives in his Ellwood City district office. He was sentenced by Dauphin County President Judge Richard Lewis to six months of in-home confinement Monday. LaGrotta was also given 30 additional months of probation, fined \$10,000, ordered to repay \$27,092 to the state, and required to do 500 hours of community service.” (*Patriot News*, February 5, 2008)

Update: Despite a felony conviction, Mr. LaGrotta will receive a state pension when he turns 50. “Mr. LaGrotta, who is serving six months' house arrest, is still eligible for a state pension that's nearly triple the per capita income in Lawrence County, where he served as state representative for two decades. The Ellwood City Democrat is eligible for roughly \$48,000 per year beginning in November, when he turns 50, according to calculations based on employment records provided by the State Employees' Retirement System.” (*Post-Gazette Harrisburg Bureau*, February 28, 2008)

• **Rep. Frank LaGrotta** (Continued)

Crime does pay: LaGrotta took an extra \$4,414 from the illegal pay raise. “After losing the primary in 2006, I decided to stop having the amount of the pay raise deducted from my salary. I also was reimbursed for the months I did pay back. It was perfectly legal, according to House Comptroller Alexis Brown,” Mr. LaGrotta said yesterday. Earnings from the 2005 pay raise will help boost Mr. LaGrotta's annual pension by roughly \$740 a year, according to estimates by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.” (Clerk’s Office, February 21, 2008 and *Post Gazette*, February 29, 2008.)

Mr. LaGrotta will also receive a one-time lump sum payment of \$102,000 when he reaches age 59.5.

• **Rep. Marie A. Lederer** (D- Philadelphia). Ms. Lederer voted for the pay raise, kept the money, and retired after 14 years.

Monthly pension: \$3,052. (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce.”

• **Rep. Victor John Lescovitz** (D-Washington & Allegheny) voted for the pay raise and accepted “unvouchered expenses.”

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal: \$3,897 (\$118,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce,” and took a mission trip to Central America. (Sources: *Patriot-News* and *The Associated Press*)

• **Rep. Stephen Maitland** (R-Adams) voted for the pay raise, accepted “unvouchered expenses,” and used the \$5,148 raise to attend law school. Even though Maitland voted to repeal the raise, he said keeping the money is not hypocritical. “I think it would [be] if the money were merely extra salary. Again, in my case it's actual reimbursement for actual expenses,” Maitland said. (WGAL-Channel 8, January 11, 2006)

Mr. Maitland was defeated in the primary, and even after the Supreme Court declared “unvouchered expenses” were unconstitutional, said he had no plans to repay the money because he used the money for law school tuition which he termed a “legitimate reimbursement.” (*York Daily Record*, September 15, 2006)

PSAs 2005: Mr. Maitland spent \$24,260 on sportsmen spots, TAP, and his web site April through June and in November.

PSAs 2006: Mr. Maitland spent \$14,084 in January and February on PACE and his district office.

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$1,445 (\$65,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Lost election, retired with a “pension bounce”, and claimed \$11,368 in per diems, much of it retroactive, before he left office (*York Daily Record*, January 30, 2007). Mr. Maitland completed law school, and took the bar exam. (Sources: *Patriot-News* and *The Associated Press*)

• **Rep. Keith McCall** (D-Carbon): AS Whip he voted for the pay raise and accepted “unvouchered expenses.” Mr. McCall failed to respond to a request for information left at (717)-783-1375 on May 3, 2006 by RTC. However, *RockTheCapital.org* did receive an invitation to a \$500 a plate breakfast fundraiser held in November 2007 and in April 2008.

Moral leadership: “In the high-flying world of the Pennsylvania Legislature, \$17,000 is a drop in the bucket. It is nothing, trust me, even though for the average Pennsylvania family it would cover car payments and the mortgage... The Bibles cost \$30 to \$90 each, and for an additional \$15 a lawmaker could have his or her name added to the book, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported. The McCall pen sets -- fashioned from a hunk of coal to commemorate the historic industry in his district -- cost almost \$4,000.” (*Pittsburgh Tribune*, March 8, 2009)

Update: Promoted to Majority Whip.
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• **Rep. Sheila Miller** (R-Berks) voted for the pay raise and accepted “unvouchered expenses.”

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:

\$2,743 with a \$99,000 lump sum. (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce”, and returned to her full-time, family farm business. (Sources: *Patriot-News* and *The Associated Press*)

• **Rep. Phyllis Mundy** (D-Kingston). Rep. Mundy voted for the pay raise, voted to repeal pay raise, but is keeping the “unvouchered expenses” she collected. “At the time the vote was cast there had been three court decisions upholding the constitutionality of ‘unvouchered expenses,’ Mundy said. “There was nothing unconstitutional about what we did. Now the Supreme Court is reversing itself. That does not mean at the time the vote was cast it was improper.” (*Times-Leader*, September 16, 2006)

Per diems: Rep. Mundy captured 207 per diems in one 18 month period and netted \$27,952. (*Shamrock Times*, November 14, 2006)

Update: Ms. Mundy is Chairwoman of [Aging & Older Adult Services](#).

• **Rep. John Myers** (D-Philadelphia). Mr. Myers voted ‘no’ on the pay-raise bill, but accepted “unvouchered expenses.”

Update: Mr. Myers is a member of the Health & Human Services Committee, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Services.

• **Rep. Frank Oliver** (D-Philadelphia). Mr. Oliver voted for the raise, voted to repeal the raise, and took the money.

“Oliver said he voted for the raise, he took the money, he deserved the money, he worked hard for it, his constituents knew he worked hard for it, and he wasn't in any way ashamed of voting for the raise or taking it. ‘If that pay-raise issue came up tomorrow, I would support it,’ he said. ‘I know I deserve it. Most members deserve it. We're underpaid as it is.’”

Humility update: Mr. Oliver remains “underpaid.”

Update: A member of the House since 1973, Mr. Myers is Majority Chairman of Health & Human Services Committee.

• **Rep. John Perzel** (R-Philadelphia). The former Speaker of the House who defended the pay raise scheme based on his belief that farm workers in Lancaster County and tattoo artists in Philadelphia made comparable wage to state legislators.

Mr. Perzel, who owns a vacation residence in Palm Beach County, Florida, also receives \$20,000 for serving on the Board of the GEO Group based in Florida (formerly Wackenhut Correction Corporation).

Credit rating: “Last year Perzel said there were ‘roughly 30-some members who can't apply for a credit card because their credit's so bad.’ His spokeswoman later said Perzel was repeating anecdotal information.” (AP, May 4, 2007, Source: Statement of Financial Interests for 2006, State Ethics Commission)

PSAs 2005: Mr. Perzel spent \$55,454 from June through September on his web site, district office, and CHIP.

PSAs 2006: Mr. Perzel spent \$61,098 from January to February and June to August on PACE, Medicare, mobile office, drug abuse prevention, family night, and Senior Expo.

Update: Minority Chairman of Urban Affairs.

• **Rep. William W. Rieger** (D-Philadelphia). Mr. Rieger voted against the pay raise but took the money.

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal: \$9,575 (\$369,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce.”

• **Rep. Lawrence Roberts** (D-Fayette). Mr. Roberts voted for the pay raise and kept the money.

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal: \$1,680 (\$65,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a pension boost, working as a self-employed arbitrator, and running against Rep. Timothy Mahoney in the 51st district for his old seat. (Sources: *Patriot-News* and *The Associated Press*)

• **Rep. T.J. Rooney** (D-Northampton). The head of the Democratic Party took the money, and will not pay the “unvouchered expenses” back unless the Supreme Court deems the measure unconstitutional. “The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has taken another view on several occasions. Until the Supreme Court tells me differently, I will follow the law of Pennsylvania.” (*Morning Call*, Harrisburg Bureau, November 17, 2005) As of January 22, 2008, the House Clerk reported that Mr. had not returned the money.

PSAs 2005: Topic: Growing Greener from May 5-17, 2005
Money Spent: \$36,080.

Promise-breaker: After the “Supreme Court told Mr. Rooney differently,” he went back on his word and kept the cash.

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$1,264.42 (\$66,135.46). (SERS response to RTC’s Right-to-Know Request, October 15, 2008)

Update: Mr. Rooney is a founding partner and Managing Director in the government-relations firm Tri-State Strategies, head of the Democratic Party of Pennsylvania, and he is enjoying a “pension bounce.”

• **Rep. Ken Ruffing** (D-Allegheny). Mr. Ruffing voted for the raise, took the money and did not pay it back. *RockTheCapital.org* called his office on May 3, 2006. Ruffing, who was on the House floor, did not return the call. Mr. Ruffing refused to disclose the autistic charities to which he donated the “unvouchered expenses” after the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* contacted several organizations and claimed they had not received any money from Rep. Ruffing.

Road trip: Mr. Ruffing was defeated in the primary but traveled to a legislator conference in Nashville from August 15-18. “I want to go to Nashville,” he said. “I am a big country music fan and I want to go to Graceland.” (*Herald Standard*, August 1, 2006)

PSAs 2006: Topic: Heating assistance; Air Dates: 01/09/06-01/22/06.
Money Spent: \$13,468.

Update: After loosing an election, Mr. Ruffing was appointed to a temporary advisory role for three months by democratic leadership. “Kenneth Ruffing received an \$18,120 contract to serve as a ‘special assistant’ in the caucus.” (*Shamrock-Times*, March 11, 2007)

- **Rep. Chris Sainato** (D-Lawrence.) Mr. Sainato voted ‘no’ but took the raise, kept the money, and was removed from his subcommittee chair. Sainato said he initially promised the money to the New Castle Playhouse for a scholarship fund. (*Vindy.com*, Sunday, November 20, 2005)

Rep. Sainato collected \$49,140 in per diems from 2004-2005 for 369 work days (*Pittsburgh Tribune*, April 30, 2006. Mr. Sainato attended the four-day National Conference of State Legislatures event from August 15-18, which cost a minimum of \$425 to attend for those who pre-registered, plus hotel and travel costs. (*Herald Standard*, August 1, 2006)

Update: Member of the Tourism & Recreational Development Committee, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Arts and Entertainment

- **Rep. Larry O. Sather** (R-Blair & Huntingdon). Mr. Sather voted for the pay raise and kept the money. “You would have to call the district office at 814-643-9633.” Response from district office: “Representative Sather is not even running for reelection and I would not even dignify you by responding.” (May 3, 2006)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce”, and a monthly pension of \$2,285. (*The Associated Press* February 8, 2007)

- **Rep. James Shaner** (D-Fayette) voted ‘no’ on the pay-raise bill but accepted "unvouchered expenses" so that he could collect the extra money immediately. He donated the pay to charity.

Road trip: Mr. Shaner, who is retiring after 12 years in office, attended the four-day National Conference of State Legislatures event, Aug. 15-18, which costs a minimum of \$425 to attend for those who pre-registered, plus hotel and travel costs. “I’m entitled to go to it,” Shaner said. “And I’m on the (finance) committee and I’m still going to fulfill my obligations to the committee.” (*Herald Standard*, August 1, 2006)

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal: \$4,257 (\$153,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired with a “pension bounce.”

• **Rep. Edward Staback** (D-Lackawanna). Mr. Staback voted to increase his salary from \$69,647.64 to \$89,154.

Perks: “I do not take advantage of any of this,” said Rep. Ed Staback. “I don’t consider myself a spendthrift. I spend money as I need to spend it, when I need to spend it.” He collected \$26,745 in per-diems during the 18 months reviewed and bills the House \$585 a month for a private lease on a 2005 Dodge Durango. (*Shamrock Times*, November 13, 2006)

Update: Chairman of the Game & Fisheries Committee.

• **Rep. Stephen Stetler** (D-York) collected \$9,189 and said that he had no plans to pay it back. He was not in his Capitol office Thursday and did not return two calls to his district office. (*York Dispatch* December 2, 2005)

“Stetler confirmed that he will step down on Sept. 29 to take over as executive director of the Pennsylvania Economy League, a nonprofit think tank with the mission of bringing civic and business interests together for the betterment of the state.” (*Daily Record/ Sunday News*, July 19, 2006.)

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$3,499 (\$75,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Bonusgate: “At the time he chaired the state House Democratic campaign committee, then State Rep. Steve Stetler rejected a plan that would have shifted the job of opposition research from state employees to private firms, a onetime top campaign aide told a state grand jury.

“It was more or less shot down,” Dan Wiedemer, now an aide to another House member, told grand jurors in July, just days after a dozen former House members and their staff were charged with diverting tax dollars to pay for political campaign work. He said Mr. Stetler, who at that time chaired the House Democratic Campaign Committee, suggested “we have a perfectly good system in place already.” (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 22, 2009)

Update: Governor Rendell appointed Mr. Stetler to a cabinet position as Secretary of Revenue.

• **Rep. Mike Sturla** (D-Lancaster). Mr. Sturla voted for the pay raise, kept the cash, and then donated the money to “undisclosed charities.” His raise cost taxpayers more than \$5,100. “Not being an independently wealthy person,” he wrote to us, “it is unrealistic to believe that I would be able to donate all the money to local charities AND also send an equivalent amount to the state.” Asked to expand on that point, Sturla wrote, “... I would have to go to a bank and take out a personal loan for an additional 4000 dollars in order to send money to the state.” (*Lancaster New Era*, September 29, 2006)

The new kid on the leadership block is poised to make sure things don’t change. Mike Sturla garnered infamy for having a golf tournament on the very day 24,000 state workers were laid off. Sturla’s response? “Well, I would have laid off more people had we not gone through with the event, the people that were running the event.” (WGAL Channel 8, July 11, 2007)

Local Lawmaker Golfs As State Workers Laid Off

Ben Simmoneau said, “Some folks say on a day when state government was shut down, 24,000 workers laid off, it was inappropriate. What do you say to that?”

Mike Sturla responded, “Well, I would have laid off more people had we not gone through with the event, the people that were running the event,” said Sturla. (WGAL Channel 8, July 11, 2007)

PSAs 2005: Spent \$23,520 on Act 72 with ads that ran from May 5-17, 2005.

PSAs 2006: Spent \$39,360 on property tax reform during August, 2006.

Summer break: In September 2007, Sturla joined Bill DeWeese on a junket to Taiwan. “His office says it’s something to do with ‘economic development.’” Rep.

Hollywood-Mike: Mr. Sturla sponsored legislation creating a \$75 million tax credit for TV and filmmakers (July 2007) which is the subject of a Senate investigation surrounding potential lobbying irregularities.” (*Philadelphia Daily News*, September 21, 2007)

Update: Promoted to Chair of Policy & the House Democratic Campaign Committee.

• **Rep. John Taylor** (R-Philadelphia) voted for the raise, voted to repeal the raise, and took the money.

PSAs 2005: \$8,840 spent on Oxycontin addiction awareness.

PSAs 2006: Spent \$62,798 in January, February and June through August on ID theft, Medicare, HEMAP, PACE and drug abuse prevention.

Update: A member since 1985, Mr. Taylor is Minority Chair of Liquor Control.

• **Rep. W. Curtis Thomas** (D-Philadelphia). Mr. Thomas voted for the raise, voted to repeal the raise, and took the money.

Update: Mr. Thomas is Chairman of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee.

• **Rep. Thomas M. Tigue** (D-Luzerne). Mr. Tigue voted for the pay raise, took the money, voted to repeal the pay raise, and will retire with an annual pension of \$61,572.

Update: “I think you have to be careful how you spend and what you spend it on,” said Rep. Tom Tigue, D-Hughestown, who collected \$21,322 in per-diems during the 18-month period reviewed by the newspaper.” (*Shamrock Times*, November 13, 2006)

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal: Retired and received a “pension bounce.” Monthly pension of \$3,864 (\$113,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

• **Rep. Mike Veon** (D-Beaver). The unrepentant, former Minority Whip, voted for the pay raise and opposed the repeal. Mr. Veon cashed in with \$45,595 in per diem reimbursements for 2004-05, (*Pittsburgh Tribune*, April 30, 2006), billed tax payers for \$122,563 in expenses; including, \$24,904 on commercial transportation, \$14,527 on vehicle related costs, and \$7,800 to lease a vehicle. (*Beaver County Times*, June 28, 2006)

BIG: “A small Beaver County development agency has spun into a \$10.6 million outfit controlled by a powerful Democratic lawmaker and financed exclusively by Pennsylvania taxpayers. In the case of the Beaver Initiative for Growth, the power lies exclusively with state Rep. Michael Veon, of Beaver Falls -- the second-ranking Democrat in the House -- and state Sen. Gerald LaValle, of Rochester, another veteran Democrat.” (*Tribune Review*, February 26, 2006)

Travel: “On top of car leases, House lawmakers also are allowed to fly to Harrisburg once each session week, as some lawmakers, including former Beaver County Reps. Mike Veon and Frank LaGrotta, routinely did.” (*Calkins Media*, January 30, 2007)

Debt free: “The House Democratic Campaign Committee in November and December paid \$40,683 to retire Veon's campaign debt, according to Veon's report filed recently with the state election bureau. Veon could not be reached Wednesday.”

“Mike's contribution as a leader to our collective effort meant a lot to us,” said House Majority Policy Chairman Todd Eachus of Luzerne County, who chairs the campaign committee. But the committee's other three leaders -- Reps. Joe Preston, Dan Frankel and Jennifer Mann -- apparently had no knowledge of the two payments.” (*Tribune Review*, February 21, 2008)

Bonusgate: State lawmakers and legislative staffers on Thursday were subpoenaed by former House Democratic Whip Mike Veon and other defendants in a legislative corruption scandal, an attorney involved in the case said. At least 39 subpoenas were served at the Capitol offices of lawmakers of both parties. (*Tribune-Review Friday*, July 3, 2009)

Update: Mr. Veon cashed out with a \$126,614 pension pay out, and receives an annual pension of \$50,340. (*Post-Gazette*, April 07, 2007)

• **Rep. Ronald Waters** (D-Philadelphia). Mr. Waters voted for the raise, voted to repeal the raise, and then took the money. "From what I understand the legislation doesn't ask for that, but if my constituents want me to give the money back that's what I'll do," said state Rep. Ronald Waters, D-191..." *Delco Times*, November 11, 2005)

Update: Mr. Waters is a member of Health & Human Services Committee and Chairs the, Subcommittee on Health.

• **Rep. Jewell Williams** (D-Philadelphia). Rep. Williams voted for the raise and kept the cash. "I'm going to give it back when a bill is passed that says we have to give it back." (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 1, 2005)

Update: Rep. Williams is chairman of the Children and Youth Subcommittee on Programs and Benefits and Chairs the Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Cities, Counties, First Class.

• **Rep. Rosita Youngblood** (D-Philadelphia). Rep. Youngblood voted for the raise and took it. "I work almost seven days a week," Youngblood said. She says she dips into her own pocket to help constituents when they do not have money for such necessities as food or air conditioners and will continue to do so." (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 2, 2005)

Summer vacation: Rep. Youngblood joined Rep. DeWeese, Rep. Sturla, and several of her colleagues on a free junket to Taiwan in September, 2007.

Update: Rep. Youngblood is Chairwoman of the Commerce Subcommittee on Financial Services and Banking, and Vice Chair of the Finance Committee

• **Rep. Elinor Z. Taylor** (R-Chester). Ms. Taylor voted for the pay raise and donated her expenses of approximately \$12,000 to charity. "That's the way the system works," said Taylor, 84. "I worked hard for my pension." (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 26, 2006)

Naming: The PHEAA building is named after "E.Z. Taylor."

PSAs 2005: \$20,749 on WW II event.

Monthly pension & approximate lump-sum withdrawal:
\$10,908 (\$187,000). (*The Associated Press*, February 8, 2007)

Update: Retired, living in Florida, and Chairwoman of the PHEAA Foundation.
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