

December 3, 2008

RocktheCapital.org

Ten Budget Cutting Proposals

\$313,358,707.34

- 1 Liquidate **non-lapsing, leadership accounts** \$241.5 million
http://www.rockthecapital.org/toons_commentary/DemReformAgenda_EpsteinRes
- 2 **Reduce legislature** spending by 20%: \$57.2 million annually.
<http://www.issuespa.net/articles/1400>
- 3 Eliminate **BIG**: \$10.6 million one-time refund.
http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/cityregion/s_540624.html
- 4 Eliminate **PSAs**: \$1.35 million in annual savings.
http://www.eveningsun.com/ci_10640073
- 5 Reduce **PHEAA** funding by the amount spent on “lobbying fees.” \$1 million.
http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/s_583900.html
- 6 Reduce **judicial office space** spending by 20%: Minimal annual savings: \$684,000.
http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/s_413696.html
- 7 Reduce Penn State University’s annual allocation by the amount of **Graham Spanier’s** annual base salary: \$611, 367.
<http://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/stories/2008/11/17/daily10.html>
- 8 Reduce **Turnpike** funding by amount spent on “lobbying fees.” Minimal annual savings: \$312,000.
<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08022/851139-85.stm>
- 9 Refund from **Senate** members who continue to profit from “unvouchered expenses”: \$67,340.34. <http://www.pasen.gov/>
- 10 **Rep. Mark Cohen’s** refund for using tax payer dollars for his book buying sprees and New York weekends: \$34,000.

http://www.philly.com/dailynews/columnists/john_baer/20070129_John_Baer___A_new_lawmaker_sheds_a_rare_light_.html

Sources:

1 As of July, 2008, \$241.5 million was available in the unaudited "leadership accounts."

This FYI 2008 account appropriations were as follows:

- Senate \$38.5 million for "caucus operations" - same as last year.
- House \$20.1 million for "special leadership account."
- Speaker's office gets \$1.9 M up \$1 million from last year.

2 Reduce the legislature spending by 20%: \$57.2 million

Pennsylvania ranked second in total legislative spending of \$286 million in 2005, according to the NCSL figures. That's a conservative figure that doesn't include an estimated \$25 million spent on boards and commissions under the Legislature, according to Pennsylvania budget documents.

One driver of the cost is the size of Pennsylvania's legislative staff, which was second-largest in the nation in 2003, according to the NCSL. Pennsylvania's legislative staff more than doubled from 1,430 in 1979 to 2,947 in 2003. (*Pittsburgh Tribune*, May 10, 2007)

3 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 [former] 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)

4 "After spending more than \$6 million in the 2005-06 session, legislators spent a combined total of \$1.35 million in the 2007-08 term, according to data provided by the four legislative caucuses." (*Evening Sun Harrisburg Bureau* October 14, 2008)

House Democrats spent about \$1.6 million -- not \$671,000 as they had disclosed earlier -- on taxpayer-financed public service announcements, which critics say are a tool to help lawmakers get reelected.

The change brings the House total to about \$6 million spent on public service ads during the 2005-06 legislative session, according to figures released Friday. (*Pittsburgh Tribune*, March 10, 2007).

Senate maximum PSA = 50 x \$4,800 or \$240,000.

5 Reduce PHEAA funding by amount spent on Board perks (\$860,000) *and* money spent by PHEAA to block release of public accounting (\$409,000). Savings \$1.215 million

Reduce PHEAA funding by amount spent on lobbying fees.” Minimal annual savings: \$1 million

The PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) pays more than \$1 million a year to eight lobbying firms, including \$235,000 to a single lobbyist.

6 Reduce judicial office space spending by 20%: \$684,000.

Pennsylvania taxpayers spend \$3.42 million a year to house 43 appeals judges in personal offices, often at some of the swankiest addresses. (Tribune-Review Sunday, January 15, 2006)

7 ***Public university presidents' compensation is on the rise***

On average, compensation for public school leaders rose 7.6 percent over the past year to top \$420,000, an annual survey by the **Chronicle of Higher Education** found. The survey included 184 public institutions, including **Penn State University** and the **University of Pittsburgh**, which both ranked in the top 50 in terms of total compensation for their top officers.

Penn State University president Graham Spanier's total compensation was \$611,367, making him the 22nd highest compensated leader in the survey, which looked at compensation for the 2007-08 year.

Total compensation in 2007-08 for University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Mark Nordenberg was \$590,200, ranking him 30th in the survey.

The highest-compensated president was **Ohio State University's** E. Gordon Gee, who brought in \$1,346,225.

Fifteen public universities paid their top officials more than \$700,000 in total compensation in 2007-08, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education. Just eight public university leaders made that much the previous year. (*Pittsburgh Business Journal*, Monday, November 17, 2008.)

8 Reduce Turnpike funding by amount spent on lobbying fees : Minimal savings: \$312,000.

The PA Turnpike Commission paid Bravo Group more than \$26,000 *per month* to lobby the legislature and governor not to privatize the Turnpike.

Bravo Group has been supplanted by Commonwealth Strategic Solutions (headed by Mike Long, the former chief of staff to Senate President Pro Tempore

Robert Jubelirer (R-Blair) who bagged \$41,000 in taxpayer-funded bonuses), Eckert, Seamans, Cherion & Mellott, LLC., Rosscommon Consulting International, and Twain Marketing.

The Commission also has former state senator Joseph Loeper, (R-Delaware County), under contract. Remember Joe? Ah, the good old days before “Boungate, Norman Hsu, and funny phone calls. Joe admitted to violating federal tax laws, plead guilty to obstructing an IRS investigation, insisted on staying on at the Senate (even Vince Fumo asked him to step aside), and went to a federal reform school in Fort Dix. He seems like the right guy to argue against leasing anything...other than himself.

9 Senate members who **continue to profit** from pay raise:

Senator	Pre-Act 55 Salary	Act 44 Salary	Expenses collected
Hughes	\$69,648	\$89,155	\$7708.54
Kitchen	\$69,648	\$89,155	\$77,08.54
LaValle	\$69,648	\$89,155	\$77,08.54
Lemmond	\$69,648	\$89,155	\$7708.54
Mellow	\$100,911	\$134,722	\$13,380.56
Musto	\$69,648	\$89,155	\$7708.54
Tartaglione	\$69,648	\$89,155	\$7708.54
Williams, A	\$69,648	\$89,155	\$7708.54
			Total
			\$67, 340.34

Source: Chief Clerk of Senate Salaries collected for 4 months from 7-7-06 until 11-17-06 when repealed by Act 72

* Mr. Lemmond is retiring and will receive a “pension bounce” for keeping the pay raise.

10 Rep. Mark Cohen (D-Philadelphia) a 34 year veteran of the legislature read 800 books over at a cost to tax payers of 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)

Mr. Cohen only spent \$3,800 last year restocking his library at the tax payers' expense.