

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your recent correspondence stating your opposition to any new or increased taxes being enacted in response to the significant budget deficit we are currently experiencing.

I wholly agree with your sentiments and will continue to oppose any new taxes. In support of my strong historical position against new taxes, I would note that my Republican Senate colleagues and I passed our budget plan, contained in Senate Bill 850, on May 6, 2009. SB 850 represents a rational response to the \$3.2 billion shortfall and does not include any forms of new or increased taxes. In fact, SB 850 would close our revenue gap by reducing expenditures to approximately \$27.3 billion.

Unlike Governor Rendell, House Appropriations Chairman Evans, and other officials who have suggested that an increase in Pennsylvania's personal income, sales, business, or other taxes is necessary to balance our budget, my colleagues and I fully comprehend the extremely detrimental effect such actions would have on taxpayers who are already stressed by the worst recession of our generation. Namely, tax increases are tantamount a pay cut to working families who are already struggling to meet their basic needs.

More importantly, I steadfastly believe that cutting costs is the only reasonable solution to our current economic circumstances. Like many Pennsylvanians who face stagnant or dwindling incomes, fiscal responsibility demands that we reduce expenses to weather this economic downturn. Though some of the cuts contained in SB 850 are painful, they are absolutely necessary insomuch as next year's revenues could likely be equal to or less than the \$25 billion our state will collect during the current year.

It is unfortunate and unacceptable that for the seventh year in a row, the Governor has failed to pass a budget on time. If getting this budget done on time were truly a priority of the Governor's, he should have been meeting to go over the line items within the budget for the last several weeks – not the day before the budget deadline. The House Democratic Leadership has failed to provide an alternative budget or state what they specifically are in favor of adopting. The Governor would rather have the departments and agencies under his control issue scare tactic press releases and have a bus tour across the state trying to drum up support for his expanded spending rather than provide concrete alternatives to SB 850.

Once again, thank you for your contacting me and voicing your thoughts about this significant issue. Your comments will remain foremost in my mind as I work with my peers to pass a sensible 2009-10 state budget that includes no new harmful tax burdens on our residents. Please feel free to continue to contact me whenever you have additional concerns and be sure to check out my website at www.senatororie.com for the most up to date statewide information.

Sincerely,



JANE C. ORIE
Majority Whip
40th Senatorial District

JCO/dgm