

State Senator

Jane Clare Orie

40th Legislative District

Capitol Report



2007

Orie Introduces Reform Legislation

I recently introduced a package of legislation designed to increase public access to state government and prevent conflicts of interest. Citizens have sent elected officials a clear message that secrecy and conflicts of interest will not be tolerated, and that state government must be more open and accountable.

My bills would:

- prohibit elected state officials from accepting a paid position with a Commonwealth agency for two years after they leave state service.
- require the consent of the Senate for any appointee of the Gaming Board.
- prohibit elected state officials from lending their name or likeness to any

event designed to raise funds for a registered lobbyist.

- prohibit state agencies from hiring a lobbyist to access another state agency.

All of the measures are intended to reduce conflicts of interest and restore public confidence in the legislative process.

Governor's Budget Proposal Calls for Tax Increases

Governor Rendell's budget for Fiscal Year 2007-08 includes numerous proposed tax increases – including a one percent hike in Pennsylvania's Sales and Use Tax – totaling more than \$2.5 billion on an annual basis. The plan calls for major new programs to fund health, transportation and environmental initiatives. However, there are serious concerns about the costs involved.

The Governor's budget includes things that are important to residents of my district. Property tax relief, access to affordable health care and funding for our schools, roads and bridges are all issues that need to be addressed. However, I do not believe our budget should be based on more

taxes, more spending, and more borrowing. This is a time when I think we need to focus on fiscal restraint.

For more information on the budget, please visit my webpage at senatororie.com.

New Taxes and Fees in the Governor's Proposed Budget

- Sales Tax \$1.42 billion
- Transportation Tax \$760 million
- Payroll Tax \$120.8 million
- Energy Use Tax \$75 million
- Trash Fees \$61.4 million
- Cigarette Tax \$61 million
- Tobacco Products Tax \$30.3 million

Total New and Increased Taxes over \$2.52 Billion

Senator Jane Orie joins new Republican leadership. The Senator was elected by her colleagues to serve as Majority Whip – the third highest position in leadership. She is the first woman elected to leadership in the Senate.

Bottom left: Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi, President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati and Senator Jane Orie.

Top: Caucus Chairman Mike Waugh, Caucus Secretary Bob Robbins and Appropriations Chairman Gib Armstrong.



Reforms to Open Senate Proceedings

When I was sworn in to my third term in the Senate, one of the first things I did was to vote for new rules that are designed to make the Senate process more open to the public.

The reforms are crucial to making the Senate more accountable and visible and restoring public confidence in the legislative process.

Under the new rules:

- Session times will be limited to between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m.
- Amendments will be posted on the Internet before being offered on the Senate floor.
- All roll call votes will be posted on the Internet as soon as possible, but always within 24 hours of a vote.

- Committee votes on bills will be posted on the Internet within 48 hours of the vote.
- The Legislative Journal – which includes the full text of all floor debates – will be posted on the Internet.

I'm also supporting legislation to include the legislature's financial records under Pennsylvania's Open Records Law. This bill will dramatically strengthen the Open Records Law by covering the judiciary's financial records, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency and the state-related universities.

I think it represents a great start to this session, and is only the beginning of a comprehensive movement to reform state government.

Orie Pushes For PHEAA Reforms

Following news reports of lavish and unregulated spending at the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA), I recently introduced a legislative plan to restructure the current appointment, reporting, and accounting procedures at the agency.

This legislation will require PHEAA to contract with a third party accounting firm to conduct an annual audit of the PHEAA Board. PHEAA would also be required to submit a report to the Senate and House Finance Committees which contains all expenses and revenues associated with the operations of the PHEAA Board.

This legislation also requires that all appointees to the PHEAA Board selected by the House and the Senate be approved by a majority vote in their respective chambers. It would prohibit standing legislators from serving more than two consecutive terms on the PHEAA Board.

The goal is to bring greater accountability and fiscal responsibility to PHEAA and ensure that funds are not spent in a wasteful or unnecessary manner. The legislation will make sure that PHEAA revenue is used for the purpose it was intended – to provide grants and low-interest loans to students.

Pennsylvania: Piling on the Debt

PROPOSED BORROWING IN GOVERNOR RENDELL'S BUDGET

- Capital Budget (customary item) \$752 million
- Energy Bonds \$850 million
- Jonas Salk Legacy Fund \$500 million
- Pennvest \$40 million
- Water & Waste Water Referendum \$81 million
- Growing Greener II \$105 million
- Persian Gulf Veterans' Comp \$3 million

TOTAL NEW DEBT

\$2.33 BILLION

Governor Signs Orie's Jessica's Law Bills to Protect Children, Rape Victims from Abuse

Late last year, the Governor signed into law two bills I sponsored that will double the penalty for rape of children under 16 and establish standardized rape kits for all hospitals and health care facilities in Pennsylvania.

Both measures will help law enforcement agencies identify and prosecute more sex offenders and protect women and children from abuse.

Jessica's Law is named for Jessica Lunsford, a 9-year old Florida girl who was kidnapped and murdered by a convicted sex offender.

It will impose a minimum of 10 years in prison for anyone over 18 years old who is convicted of sexually assaulting a child under 16, permit parole and probation officials to use GPS monitoring on offenders, impose a 25-year term of imprison-

ment for a second offense, and mandate a life sentence for anyone convicted of a third offense.

The Governor also signed into law a bill I sponsored which would establish a statewide evidence collection program to facilitate the prosecution of cases of rape and sexual assault.

Several states, including Connecticut, California, Arkansas and Illinois, have passed standardized rape kit laws to assure all necessary samples and evidence are collected following a sexual assault.

These evidence-gathering kits are vital for the prosecution of rapists, and the legislation would ensure the necessary information is available in these kits. The measure will also provide a means to update and revise sexual assault kits to cope with emerging problems, such as new date rape drugs.



Senator Orie is joined by Mark Lunsford to introduce Jessica's Law. The law is named for his daughter who was killed by a sex offender.

Questionnaire

Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire and return it to me. You can also fill it out online by visiting my website at senatororie.com. Your views are important to me and will help me to better represent you. Thank you very much.

PLEASE NOTE: Each response has two circles so that two members of a household can complete the survey. Please fill in the circle completely with black pen or marker.

Property Taxes

Legislation was introduced last year that would give taxpayers the opportunity to decide, in a statewide referendum, to reduce real estate property taxes by raising the state sales tax by 1% and the state income tax by .43%.

a) Would you support a 1% increase in the state sales tax if all the proceeds were used only for property tax reductions?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

b) To reduce or eliminate property taxes would you support expanding the base of the state sales tax to include all goods and services like food, clothing, legal fees, etc., with the only exception being doctor fees and medical expenses?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

State Budget

In February Governor Ed Rendell announced his proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The plan calls for a number of new programs, but also includes more than seven new tax increases totaling \$2.5 billion annually which would be paid by businesses and consumers.

a) Do you support Governor Rendell's proposal to establish the Jonas Salk Legacy Fund, using \$500 million in borrowing for state bonds, to help drive the expansion of the state's biotechnology research industry?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

b) Do you support the Governor's plan to incur more than \$2 billion in new debt for environmental programs?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

c) Do you support Governor Rendell's plan to provide health care coverage to more uninsured adults in Pennsylvania by imposing a 3 percent payroll tax on businesses that do not currently provide health coverage, increasing the cigarette tax, and imposing a new tax on smokeless tobacco products?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

d) Do you support the Governor's proposal to impose a 6.17 percent tax on profits that oil companies earn on sales in Pennsylvania to help fund transportation needs in the Commonwealth, including mass transit?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

Size of the General Assembly

Currently, each of the 50 State Senators represents 248,000 people while each of the 203 Representatives of the House represents approximately 61,000 people. The Senate has scheduled a hearing to explore the feasibility of decreasing the size of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

a) Do you support reducing the size of the Senate and the House of Representatives?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

b) If so, which option do you support:

- Option #1: Reduce by 20%: Senate to 40 members and House to 163 members.
 Option #2: Reduce by 40%: Senate to 30 members and House to 121 members.

c) Do you favor having a study commissioned to make recommendations on the size of the Legislature?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

Transportation

a) Would you support merging the PA Turnpike into PennDOT?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

b) Would you support selling the PA Turnpike or creating a public/private partnership to manage it?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

c) Do you support tolling PA Interstate highways?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

Public Smoking

Legislation has been introduced that would prohibit smoking in public places and workplaces. "Public place" would be defined as any enclosed area, including taverns or bars, retail stores, theatres and arenas.

a) Do you support totally prohibiting smoking in public places?

- Yes
 No
 Undecided

Would you like to receive future newsletters and updates via email? If so, please provide your

Name:

Address:

Email Address:

Mark Your Calendar!

In the upcoming months, I will be hosting a number of events for my constituents and for various groups.

Please stop by and take part if you have a chance. It's a great way to learn more about state government programs and services and to have a good time with others.

11TH ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO VETERANS

Thursday, May 3 – 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Knights of Columbus Hall
Columbian Room

Swinderman Road, Wexford

RSVP – Seating limited to first 250 veterans

Contact: Kathy Campbell
(412) 630-9466

kcampbell@pasen.gov

11TH ANNUAL SENIOR EXPO

Friday, May 18 – 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Community College of
Allegheny County, North Campus

8701 Perry Highway

McCandless Township

Contact: Audrey Rasmussen

(412) 630-9466

arasmussen@pasen.gov

3RD ANNUAL KIDS EXPO

Friday, June 22 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Butler County Airport

473 Airport Road

Butler, PA

Contact: Lindsay Campbell

(724) 776-3500

lcampbell@pasen.gov

7TH ANNUAL STUDENTS TOGETHER ORGANIZING PREVENTION (STOP) CONVENTION

Thursday, November 15

8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Soldiers & Sailors

Memorial Hall & Museum

Contact: Maribeth Moore

(412) 630-9466

mmoore@pasen.gov

7TH ANNUAL SENIOR EXPO

Friday, October 5

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Butler County Airport

475 Airport Road, Penn Township

Contact: Lindsay Campbell

(724) 776-3500

lcampbell@pasen.gov



Senator Orié joins two students who attended her STOP Violence Convention.



Senator Orié meets with two participants at her annual Kids' Expo.



Kids' Expo

For more information on these events, please visit my website at senatororie.com

SENATOR ORIE'S OFFICE LOCATIONS

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