

**Matt Smith's Government Reform Plan**  
**Making Harrisburg Accountable, Transparent, and Efficient**  
**Matt Smith for State Representative**

In order to move our Commonwealth forward, we must change the way Harrisburg does business by making it more accountable, transparent, and efficient. Matt has heard from thousands of voters in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District and the demand for governmental reform is universal irrespective of party affiliation, background, or economic position. One of Matt's primary objectives upon arrival in Harrisburg will be to reform our State Legislature so that the residents of the 42<sup>nd</sup> District know that Harrisburg is operating in the most cost-effective manner while delivering necessary services.

There are several common sense and bipartisan solutions that Matt believes will lead to a more effective State Legislature. Matt's reform plan encompasses the following measures which Matt will aggressively pursue immediately upon taking office. While Matt is open to discussion of any positive ideas to reform our government structures, he believes that these initial steps can and should be taken and enjoy substantial bipartisan support.

**REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE LEGISLATURE**

Matt supports Senator John Pippy's proposal to reduce the size of the Senate from 50 to 30 and the House from 203 to 121. Given the cost savings involved, this step should be an initial step towards reform, but other steps must also be taken to fully realize a more accountable, transparent, and effective State Legislature. Many respected observers such as the Pennsylvania Economy League have estimated cost savings of up to \$145 million per year from this reduction. Matt will direct every dollar of savings to new property tax relief for citizens of Pennsylvania. Matt also believes that legislative staff should be cut in whatever proportion the Legislature is reduced.

An additional benefit, above and beyond the real and significant cost savings, is the symbolic benefit that this reduction would generate. By cutting the size of the Legislature, Pennsylvania would send a powerful message to businesses considering relocating here that we are indeed serious about bringing our government structures in

line with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Under our current structure, many potential businesses simply view our government institutions, such as the Legislature, as wasteful and bloated. This proposal strikes at the heart of that perception.

Under the plan, the size of a State House District would go from 65,000 to 100,000 and Senate Districts would increase from 265,000 to 400,000. Although the process will take some time, it can be accomplished to coincide with the 2010 census and the redrawn legislative districts at that time. For instance, the constitutional amendment must pass in two successive legislative sessions and then is put on the ballot for voter referendum. Although the process is cumbersome, Matt will go to Harrisburg as an independent voice to enact this initiative.

### **LOBBYIST DISCLOSURE**

It is simply unacceptable that Pennsylvania is the only state without a lobbyist disclosure law on the books. The citizens of Pennsylvania deserve to know the identity of lobbyists in Harrisburg, the activities of the lobbyists, and to know that there are strict and reasonable restrictions on such activities. This common sense measure will lead to greater accountability and transparency in the operation of the Legislature. Matt will aggressively push for the following:

- Lobbyist gift ban;
- Full lobbyist registration and disclosure; and
- Full disclosure of lobbyist activity.

### **TRANSPARENT LEGISLATURE**

The Legislature operates far too infrequently in a transparent and open manner. For instance, it is very difficult for ordinary citizens to look up a piece of legislation and the voting on such legislation by individual legislator. This must change and Matt will fight to accomplish this goal in Harrisburg. Matt will fight to require that all legislators publicly post their expense records, votes on bills, amendments, and votes in committee, and committee hearings attended. To further strengthen the requirement, Matt believes that all of the following should be posted on the Legislature's website and be accessible to people within 48 hours. As an initial step to demonstrate leadership and independence

on this issue, Matt personally pledges to his constituents that he will post his legislative activity on his personal website.

In accordance with the above specified mandates, Matt believes that the Pennsylvania Open Records Law should be applied to the Pennsylvania Legislature. This specifically includes providing access to leadership accounts for citizens of the Commonwealth.

### **REDUCTION OF PERKS**

The vehicle perk provided to legislators has become disconnected from the original purpose and should be discontinued. Matt proposes permitting legislators with an option of using one of the state “fleet” vehicles available or using their own vehicle and submitting mileage reimbursement. Following this two-year program, an analysis should be conducted as to the most cost-effective manner of transportation and that method should be required by law. For instance, if it is determined that the fleet vehicles are cheaper, that should be the requirement.

### **LEGISLATIVE PENSION AND HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM**

In this day and age, most private sector workers contribute to both their health care and their pension benefits and the same rules should apply to the State Legislature. For instance, our Legislators should pay for their health care in the same proportion as those individuals voting them into office. This change should be made immediately.

The pension system in the State Legislature also must be reformed. Currently, it is a defined benefit system while most Pennsylvanians operate in a defined contribution (i.e., 401k) system which is contingent on what we contribute into the system. The Legislature’s defined benefit package is a guaranteed form of pension benefits no matter what an individual contributes into the system and is a recipe for disaster. As public servants, we must recognize that our first obligation is to take the lead and sacrifice when necessary and this is a significant initial step in the right direction. Accordingly, Matt will push for a transition from a defined benefit package to a defined contribution pension system. Both of these measures will result in substantial long-term cost savings for Pennsylvania citizens.

## **LEGISLATIVE PROCESS REFORM**

There are several common sense steps that can be taken to bring our legislative process into the light of day and power more evenly distributed among members of the Legislature. First, Matt will advocate elimination of lame duck sessions of the Legislature. He believes the key to an effective Legislature is responsiveness and lame duck sessions are inherently unresponsive to the citizens of Pennsylvania given their very nature. Second, Matt will push for a ban on all legislative activity during the time period from Midnight to 8:00 a.m. Third, Matt will work to ensure that all legislation is on the Legislature's calendar for a minimum of three days before being voted upon. Fourth, Matt will aggressively push to eliminate the practice of ghost voting where legislators can vote from remote locations while absent in Harrisburg. Finally, Matt will work to impose term limits of four years on committee chairs and vice-chairs so that new ideas are consistently presented, discussed, and voted upon by all members of the State Legislature.

## **CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

The first step toward opening our system for challengers to sitting incumbents is campaign finance reform. The system is currently geared toward well-funded incumbents who are able to raise so much money early in their terms that there is absolutely no hope for a challenger no matter how well-qualified and well-intentioned. The simple truth is that big money must be taken out of our political system before we return to a true form of a citizen-legislature.

Matt will push for caps on both donations and campaign spending. The caps would be imposed on political action committee donations in the amount of \$2,000 and individual donations in the amount of \$1,000 per election cycle. This would require candidates to raise money locally from the individuals who they will be representing in Harrisburg and in smaller amounts than current donations.

Matt will also push for caps on campaign spending so that candidates are not able to simply 'outspend' an opponent to victory. As part of this, Matt will appeal to the local network affiliates and cable stations in each area of Pennsylvania to provide free television time for candidates to communicate their agenda to the voters in an unfiltered

manner. This will take part of the need for television advertisements off the plate of candidates and will allow candidates to focus on the issues of concern to Pennsylvania's citizens.

### **TERM LIMITS**

Matt will push for a voter referendum on the question of term limits. Although Matt believes that the best form of a term limit is the ballot box, he will push to permit the citizens of Pennsylvania to make the decision as to whether they desire term limits.

### **CONCLUSION**

While the above reforms enjoy significant support throughout the Commonwealth, Matt recognizes that enactment of such broad and sweeping changes will not be easy and will require an independent voice in Harrisburg to champion the issues in the Legislature. Matt will be that voice. The next twelve to eighteen months provide a window of opportunity for reform-minded Legislators to join together across party lines and demand that these reforms be instituted. Matt has consistently made the commitment to voters in the 42<sup>nd</sup> District that he will work with Legislators of both parties to ensure that these common-sense reforms are adopted so that Pennsylvania can be a shining example of a State Government changing with the times and the pressures presented in a globally competitive economic context.

To learn more about Matt's campaign to reform Harrisburg, please go to [www.mattsmith2006.com](http://www.mattsmith2006.com) or call Matt at 412.561.3490.