

The Pennsylvania State Association of Jury Commissioners—Louise Hildebrand, President

May 19, 2008

Dear Sir:

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this letter in support of this hearing to discuss a change in the pay awarded to jurors in Pennsylvania. House Bills 601 and 1356 address this issue using two different approaches. It is obvious to anyone that the present pay of \$9 per day and \$25 per day after 3 days of service is no longer acceptable. The cost of mileage at 17 cents a mile is even more unacceptable considering the drastic rise in the cost of gasoline. However, we as Jury Commissioners, do recognize the impact an increase in jurors' pay would have on the already heavily encumbered budgets of counties throughout Pennsylvania and the budget of Pennsylvania itself. As far as the interest we as Jury Commissioners in 58 counties have in this issue, it is only the impact that any increase in compensation for jurors would make in our jobs of selecting jurors. Without question, enough of the citizens of Pennsylvania who are ultimately summoned to court, react positively and serve admirably. However, there are many others who are truly inconvenienced by the lost wages when they are self employed or they do not have the benefit of their employers who continue to pay their wages as they serve. Anymore, \$9 a day barely covers the cost of lunch or dinner, if required. Written on the tens of thousands of affidavits completed by potential jurors, which we as Jury Commissioners read each year, the question of pay surfaces on many of them. Many indicate that only retirees, unemployed individuals, or public assistance recipients should serve. Of course, that is unrealistic and unacceptable. Of those people who comment, many serve out of duty with little further question. However, it does cause real financial hardship in other instances. These are real questions that have to be dealt with when it comes to choosing jurors whether for one day, several days, or in much rarer situations for a week or even longer.

The Pennsylvania State Association of Jury Commissioners supports an increase in jurors' pay that is fair and reasonable. We do understand the budgetary restraints of the entities involved, and the efforts they are making to resolve this issue. Pennsylvanians are civic minded individuals who recognize their duty when called, but deserve some form of fair compensation for their time and expenses.

Sincerely,

Louise Hildebrand, President, PA State Association of Jury Commissioners, Indiana Co. Jury Commissioner

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