

Other voices

Before you write your letter...

Other Voices is a forum for readers to express their opinions on issues of the day.

This column is not intended for thank-you letters, letters of appreciation, or letters of a strictly personal nature.

Be brief and to the point, no more than 350 words. Longer letters will be returned for editing or shortened by the editor.

Each letter must be signed with the correct full name, address and phone number of the writer. The writer's name will appear in print with the letter.

Frequent letter writers will be limited to one submission per month. Letters of a controversial nature are reviewed by an attorney for libel. Letters should be addressed to Other Voices, not a third party.

The Era reserves the right to edit letters to meet these guidelines.

It is time for a new era in Harrisburg

I am honored to have the Governor's office, through Mr. Rendell's new press secretary, Gary Tuma, respond to my comments on the recent state budget deal. I am gratified to know that the Governor has finally chosen to listen to my point of view, and to learn that the Governor, after almost seven years in office, is finally aware that Pennsylvania is a bit larger than the city limits of Philadelphia.

First, I would like to congratulate Mr. Tuma on his new position in the Rendell Administration. After his former boss, state Sen. Vincent J. Fumo, was convicted on 137 charges of corruption, I can imagine that finding a new job was a daunting task.

Let's be honest. There is no difference

between legislative "walking around money" and the Governor's so-called "constitutional right" to hand out grant money.

"Walking around money" occurs when a legislator gives money to one of Mr. Rendell's friends in Philadelphia.

Executive Branch grants are when the Governor gives money to one of his friends in Philadelphia.

Any difference?

Gov. Rendell and his allies like to point fingers at us because we refused to sink to their Philadelphia-style politics by agreeing to their demands of higher taxes and uncontrolled spending. Agreeing to these demands was the price of admission to their budget discussions. By insisting on standing for honest government that lives within its means, we affected the outcome much more dramatically than anyone could have from a position inside their smoke-filled rooms.

Leading their discussions was Rendell's top big-city legislative cohort, who started a non-profit and secured over \$23 million in WAM funding, enabling it to purchase and operate a night club that owed \$300,000 in back taxes, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer (8/7/2009).

It is time for a new era in Harrisburg - one marked by openness and transparency. While the Governor may think that my refusal to do business his way is a liability, I think it's something worth being proud of.

Matt Gabler

Member, 75th District (Elk & Clearfield Counties)

Pennsylvania House of Representatives