

Grand Jury Report on General Assembly

- 1.) The Grand Jury recommends that taxpayer funded political caucuses be eliminated.**

Yes. During the 1977-78 session, and again in the 1979-80 session, I introduced legislation with the intent to abolish legislative leadership positions, i.e. caucuses.

With regard to a more equal distribution of power between the rank-and-file members and Leadership members in the House of Representatives, the Grand Jury recommends the following:

- 2.) That the “Special Leadership Accounts” be eliminated or, at the minimum, the disbursements from such accounts should be a matter of public record and open to public inspection.**

Yes. I would support such accounts be open to the public.

- 3.) That a routine full, independent audit of all legislative expenses be conducted with the results of such an audit available to the public.**

Yes.

- 4.) That each state representative should have one taxpayer funded district office and equal staff for that district office.**

Yes. I have always operated a single district office. However, considerations must be made for some districts, such as those in rural areas, where the population is spread over large areas and multiple offices are needed to be available to all constituents.

- 5.) A “Rank-and-File Member’s Bill of Rights” that explicitly states what each state representative should receive, including but not limited to equal staffing and office resources for the member’s district office.**

Yes.

- 6.) The Grand Jury recommends that legislative members’ per diem payments should be eliminated or, at the minimum reduced to actual expenses per day (verified by receipts) with a relatively low cap on the total reimbursement allowed per day.**

Yes. Actual expenditures with receipts attached.

- 7.) The Grand Jury recommends that the General Assembly become a true part-time legislature, with commensurate reductions in legislative salaries, staff, and staff salaries.**

Yes. The job dictates the time you put into it. A legislator must be readily available to address the needs of constituents and effectively deal with legislative matters whether you call it a full or part time legislature.

8.) The Grand Jury recommends a limited constitutional convention to increase the length of a state representative's term from 2 years to 4 years.

Yes. The terms for Senators should be increased as well.

9.) The Grand Jury recommends a limited constitutional convention to provide term limits for all elected members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

No. There are already de-facto term limits. Since 2000, there have been 31 new Senators (3/5 of the Senate). If there were term limits, many new members who have little or no experience, combined with a lack of institutional memory, would allow staff and lobbyists to take control.

10.) The Grand Jury recommends that legislative hiring and staffing be performed by a bipartisan Human Resources Department based upon standardized, published job descriptions.

Yes. As any supervisor, I would like to have some input into who is on my staff.

11.) The Grand Jury recommends that the HOC and HRC print shops be combined.

Yes.

12.) The Grand Jury recommends that the HOC and HRC print shops, IT departments, and Human Resources departments be made bipartisan with commensurate reductions in staffing.

Yes.

With respect to staffing practices, the Grand Jury recommends the following:

13.) All "compensatory time" Comp time. in connection with the Pennsylvania General Assembly should be eliminated. If an hourly staffer is required to work extra time, the staffer should be compensated with overtime pay.

Yes.

- 14.) The Grand Jury recommends that if a legislative staffer takes leave to work on a campaign, that staffer receives absolutely no legislative money, including but not limited to pay, any benefits (including but not limited to medical benefits), and no contribution to any retirement plans.**

Yes.

- 15.) The Grand Jury recommends that there should be standardized written ethics policies for the entire General Assembly and annual updates to the initial ethics training administered by a bipartisan ethics oversight committee (at least until partisan political caucuses are eliminated).**

Yes. Also, there should be a legal counsel office where legislators can go to obtain advice on potential conflicts.

With respect to the state budget, the Grand Jury recommends the following:

- 16.) The budget planning process must be open and transparent.**

Yes.

- 17.) The budget must contain, to the extent possible, all line item expenditures. For example, a line item for “operation of the House [Democratic or Republican] Caucus” would be unacceptable.**

Yes.

- 18.) All votes related to budget or appropriations matters must be by roll call vote; voice votes on such important matters rob the taxpayers of representative democracy and foster the maintenance and growth of the “time warp” culture.**

Yes.

- 19.) If the budget is not passed by the constitutionally mandated deadline, all state legislators and the governor must forfeit all pay and per diems until the budget is passed. Any forfeited pay and/or per diems cannot be recouped in any way.**

Yes.

- 20.) At the end of a budget year, all unused budget money must be returned to the state treasury. Any such unused budget money could then be used for the next budget cycle or for emergency public works projects.**

Yes.

- 21.) The Grand Jury recommends a ban on using the same vendors for both legislative and campaign purposes.**

Yes.

- 22.) The Grand Jury recommends that all campaign entities (including but not limited to the HDCC and HRCC) should ban any legislative staffer from the campaign entity's premises during the normal legislative work day, including during the "lunch hour."**

Yes.