1 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA 2 3 4 House Bill 1521 5 . يلو. * * * * * 6 7 House Judiciary Subcommittee 8 On Crime and Corrections 9 10 Main Capitol Building Room 140, Majority Caucus Room Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 11 12 13 Wednesday, April 15, 1998 - 1:10 p.m. 14 15 --000--16 17 **BEFORE:** 18 Honorable Jerry Birmelin, Majority Chairperson Honorable Brett Feese 19 Honorable Stephen Maitland Honorable Al Masland 20 Honorable Harold James, Minority Chairperson Honorable Kathy Manderino 21 22 **IN ATTENDANCE:** 23 Honorable Babette Josephs 24 Honorable Joseph Petrarca Honorable Tom Caltagirone 25 Honorable LeAnna Washington **KEY REPORTERS** 1300 Garrison Drive, York, PA 17404 (717) 764-7801 Fax (717) 764-6367 1998 -

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Preski, Esquire Majority Chief Counsel Judy Sedesse Majority Administrative Assistant John Ryan, Esquire Minority Chief Counsel

3 1 CONTENTS 2 3 WITNESSES PAGE 4 5 Honorable Skip Ebert, District Attorney 6 Cumberland County 6 Joel Rosen, Chief Assistant District Attorney 19 7 Major Trials Unit, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office 8 Gary Tennis, Chief Assistant District Attorney 32 9 Legislation Unit, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office 10 Honorable Michael Fisher, Attorney General 78 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 11 Bob Gracie, Senior Deputy Attorney General 12 Legal Appeals Section/Criminal Law Division Larry Frankel, Executive Director 13 96 American Civil Liberties Union of 14 Pennsylvania 15 Mary Achilles, Victim Advocate 115 Office of the Victim Advocate 16 Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole 17 120 Robert Tarman, Esquire Co-chair, Legislative Committee 18 Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers 19 131 Linda Wallach-Miller, Judge 20 Court of Common Pleas (43rd Judicial District) 21 Samuel W. Salus, II, Judge 148 President-elect, Pennsylvania Conference 22 of State Trial Judges 23 (Written testimony submitted by Dr. 24 Charles Kendall, Jr., Co-founder, PA Constitution Watch and by Barbara J. Hart, Director, PA Coalition 25 Against Domestic Violence.)

1 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Good afternoon. I'm 2 Representative Birmelin, Chairman of the 3 Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Crimes and 4 Corrections. We're having a hearing today. 5 The hearing is on House Bill 1521, which is dealing with the issue of putting a referendum 6 7 on the ballot to give the Commonwealth the right 8 to trial by jury. And we have with us several 9 people who are going to be testifying. We have a rather full schedule, 10 actually; and we're going to try to adhere to the 11 12 time frame as much as is possible. And that 13 rarely happens, but we will do the best that we 14 can. And before we have our first testifiers, 15 16 I'm going to ask the Members of the Judiciary 17 Committee if they would introduce themselves, starting with my far left. 18 19 REPRESENTATIVE MANDERINO: Good Kathy Manderino, Philadelphia County. 20 afternoon. 21 **REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS: Babette** 22 Josephs, Philadelphia County. 23 **REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE:** 24 Representative Tom Caltagirone, Democratic Chair, 25 House Judiciary, Berks County.

1 MR. RYAN: John Ryan, Counsel to the 2 Democratic Chair. REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: 3 Al Masland, Cumberland and York Counties. 4 5 REPRESENTATIVE MAITLAND: Steve 6 Maitland, Adams County. 7 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: And because there are some other meetings going on today and the 8 9 Members, of course, belong to more than one 10 Committee at a time, some of our Members will be 11 leaving and coming back. And there may be others coming in who were not here previously. 12 13 As is our general practice, all of those 14 who are testifying who have written testimony with them, we will see to it that the Members who 15 are not present with us today who are on the 16 Committee will receive copies of all that 17 18 testimonv. And with that having been said, I see 19 20 our Chief Counsel, Brian Preski, is in; and he 21 will be joining us here on the Panel. We're going to start with three gentlemen. 22 23 As they are seated to my left is Gary 24 Tennis, who is the Chief Assistant District 25 Attorney of Legislation Unit for Pennsylvania for

1 Philadelphia's District Attorney's office. He's 2 a frequent testifier here on the Capitol and 3 oftentimes before this Committee. Gary, we welcome you. Would you introduce the two 4 5 gentlemen who are with you? 6 This is Skip Ebert, who is MR. TENNIS: a District Attorney of Cumberland County. 7 And on the far side is Joel Rosen, who is Chief of the 8 9 Major Crimes Unit for the District Attorneys of 10 Philadelphia. CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: 11 Okav. Now, all the introductions having been met and hopefully 12 13 recorded, Mr. Tennis, why don't we begin with 14 you? 15 MR. TENNIS: Okay. CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: You're sort of 16 the co-chair. You can determine what order the 17 18 three of you want to go in. If it's okay with you, 19 MR. TENNIS: we're going to have Skip Ebert lead off with the 20 21 testimony. 22 MR. EBERT: Good afternoon. My name is Skip Ebert, and I'm presently the elected 23 24 District Attorney of Cumberland County. 25 Previously, I served as Assistant District

Attorney in Dauphin County, First Assistant
 District Attorney in Cumberland County, Chief of
 Prosecutions in the Attorney General's office,
 and, finally, Executive Deputy Attorney General
 in charge of the AG's Criminal Law Division.
 All totaled, I've been a criminal
 prosecutor for over 16 years. Additionally, from

8 1993 to 1996, I was a member of the Governing
9 Council of the American Bar Association's
10 Criminal Justice Section which represents over
11 8,000 defense attorneys, prosecutors, judges,
12 court personnel, and law professors involved in
13 the criminal justice process nationwide.

14I served as the National Association of15Attorney Generals' representative to the ABA16Criminal Justice Standards Committee which is17responsible for formulating and publishing ABA18policy regarding the criminal justice issues.

Today, again, we're revisiting the right of people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to have a jury trial in criminal cases. On the surface, a simple reading of the Constitution of Pennsylvania clearly states, quote, that trial by jury shall be as heretofore and the right thereof shall remain inviolate, end quote.

1 You will note that there's no 2 distinction between the right of the defendant 3 and the right of the people. It was the right to 4 a jury trial for all people which is guaranteed 5 by our constitution. 6 In fact, this was clearly recognized

by our Supreme Court when it first adopted Rule 1101 of the Rules of Criminal Procedure in 1968. At that time, waiver of jury trial by a defendant 10 required the consent of the prosecutor.

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However, in 1973, the Court chose 11 through its rule-making authority to deny the 12 13 people of the Commonwealth of the right to jury 14 trial by changing Rule 1101 to its present form.

In 1978, the Legislature, realizing the 15 16 inequity of the Supreme Court's Rule, enacted Section 5104(c) of the Judicial Code which 17 18 provided that the people of the Commonwealth, quote, shall have the same right to trial by jury 19 20 as does the accused, end quote.

21 In reaction to this legislative 22 enactment, the Supreme Court by the narrowest 23 of margins, a vote of 4 to 3, declared the 24 legislative enactment unconstitutional in the 25 case of Commonwealth versus Sorrell.

1Justice McDermott dissenting in that2case stated: Upon the thinnest semantic ground3in a usurpation of authority, naked of precedent,4the majority is diluting the right of the people5to trial by jury.

The Court has peremptorily declared unconstitutional an act of the Legislature reaffirming the people's absolute right to a trial by jury.

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Distinguished Members, since 1982, my experience in prosecution has revealed to me that this Supreme Court rule and the declaration contained in <u>Commonwealth versus Sorrell</u> has been used by criminals throughout this state to obtain lenient treatment from judges who are opposed to the Legislature's Mandatory Sentencing Law.

I cannot believe in this day and age under the simplest provision of Section 6 of our constitution that the people and especially crime victims of this state are not entitled to the same type of jury guaranteed to a criminal defendant.

I assure you that this is not just some
big city problem. I once tried a defendant for
driving under the influence, homicide by vehicle,

homicide by vehicle while driving under the
 influence, involuntary manslaughter and a summary
 stop sign violation.
 The defendant in that case went through

a stop sign and crashed into another vehicle on a
Sunday afternoon, killing a 60-year-old
grandmother who was with her family on the way to
her own birthday party. The defendant had .23
blood alcohol at that time.

10 The defendant waived trial by jury and 11 chose a bench trial. The defendant was found 12 guilty of driving under the influence, homicide 13 by vehicle, involuntary manslaughter and failure 14 to stop at the stop sign.

More relevant for our purposes here today, the defendant was found not guilty of homicide by vehicle while driving under the influence, the only charge which carried a mandatory three-year sentence.

Instead, that defendant was sentenced to
a period of four months in the county jail. I
was told by the court, quote, look, I'm not
putting her in jail for three years, end quote.
There was no question in my mind that a
very experienced defense attorney who knew he

1 could gain an advantage by waiving jury trial, 2 knowing there was nothing I could do to prevent 3 it and no way of appealing the result. While winning a jury trial is never a 4 5 certain thing, I am positive that before an 6 impartial jury of that defendant's peers she 7 would have been convicted of all the charges based on the evidence. 8 9 This tactic was simply a way to avoid 10 the mandatory sentence. I ask you to put 11 yourselves in the position of that grandmother's 12 family when I had tried to explain to them that 13 as victims of a crime they weren't entitled to the same right to jury trial as the criminal who 14 15 killed their grandmother had. 16 For this very reason, the Coalition of Pennsylvania Crime Victims Organization supports 17 The problem also occurs in regard to 18 this Bill. 19 mandatory drug cases. 20 I have seen where a defendant charged 21 with possession with intent to deliver or 22 delivery of cocaine take a nonjury trial before a judge in order to have the judge rule that the 23 24 quantity of cocaine that the defendant possessed 25 was less than the amount required for a mandatory

1 sentence.

2 For example, a defendant who possesses 3 15 grams of cocaine would be found guilty of 4 possessing only 7 grams of cocaine because that 5 was the weight the representative, tested sample weighed. 6 7 In short, to meet the standards required 8 by some of these judges, it would be necessary to 9 test every leaf of marijuana or every gram of 10 cocaine to ensure that the total substance was 11 truly all a controlled substance. 12 Bench trials have reached this result 13 even though the reasonable inferences of 14

14 the evidence, common sense, and appellate court 15 decisions would dictate otherwise.

16 To a lesser extent, the problem also 17 surfaces in cases where the Commonwealth is 18 required to take an interlocutory appeal after a 19 defense pretrial motion which results in the 20 suppression of evidence.

If the Commonwealth is successful on appeal and the decision of the Court of Common Pleas is reversed, it's not unusual for the defendant to request waiver of jury trial in order to give a judge the opportunity to render a

1 not quilty verdict which vindicates his or her 2 prior suppression ruling. 3 In such cases, if the Commonwealth 4 receives a not guilty verdict from a judge, the 5 case is absolutely over. There is no further 6 appeal. 7 While I do not maintain that such cases 8 like this are extremely widespread, I do see 9 defense attorneys requesting more nonjury trials 10 in this situation than in other cases where the 11 judge has not decided in the favor of the 12 defendant pretrial. 13 The logic of this tactic is guite 14 Frankly, the defense attorney obvious. recognizes that he already has gotten a 15 16 sympathetic ear from a judge on a case and, 17 therefore, will have an easier time convincing that judge that a not guilty verdict is 18 warranted, thereby vindicating the judge's 19 20 previous decision to suppress. 21 If the Commonwealth had the right to 22 jury trial, such practices could not occur. The 23 current process also impacts upon victims and witnesses in another manner. Often, defendants 24 25 call their cases for jury trial.

1 The Commonwealth then prepares, 2 subpoenas, calls the victims and its witnesses into court and is ready to go. At the last 3 4 minute, the defendant waives his right to jury 5 trial. 6 The case is then taken off the list and moved to be scheduled at a later time. 7 Under many systems in the Commonwealth, this case is 8 9 then continued and rescheduled. 10 The victims and the witnesses are simply 11 told, go home, you'll have to come back again at 12 another time. In short, they're asked again to disrupt their lives, miss more work, and dance to 13 the tune of the criminal defendant who hurt them 14 15 in the first place. And remember, to the prior, 16 17 new-scheduled waiver trial, the defendant can withdraw the waiver and once again demand a jury 18 trial, for he is after all the only person in 19 20 this Commonwealth who has such a right. 21 As I indicated to you previously, I was 22 on the National Association of District 23 Attorneys, representative to the American Bar 24 Association Criminal Justice Standards Committee. 25 In that capacity, I served on the task force for

1 the third edition of the Trial by Jury Standards. 2 I'm holding one of these copies. It's 3 The Criminal Justice Section of about 271 pages. the ABA gave its final approval for this document 4 in 1995. We met for over five years to review 5 these standards. 6 7 As many of you are aware, the American 8 Bar Association is no right-wing, conservative 9 body when it comes to criminal justice issues. 10 Frankly, in the eyes of most prosecutors, the ABA's viewed as a extremely liberal body when it 11 comes to defendants' rights. 12 13 That is why for the purposes of this testimony I think it's important to note that the 14 third edition of ABA Trial By Jury Standards 15 16 states as its first proposition under Standard 17 1.1, Right to Jury Trial, quote, jury trials 18 should be available to a party including the 19 State in criminal prosecutions in which 20 confinement in jail or prison may be imposed. 21 The commentary to that Standard 22 specifically states that, quote, this standard also recognizes that the availability of a jury 23 24 trial is beneficial to the prosecution and to 25 society as a whole, not simply to the accused.

1 Accordingly, Section A provides that the 2 right should be available to both the prosecution 3 and the defense. I would humbly suggest to this Committee that five years of analysis given to 4 5 this topic by criminal justice practitioners of 6 every type, defense attorneys, professors 7 nationwide should not go unheeded. It's kind of ironic because I was on 8 that committee and the ABA and I still get 9 10 recruiting literature from the National 11 Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. And I 12 just got this letter in February 26th of this 13 year. 14 And as one of the benefits, they talk about their Internet web site for members only. 15 16 And this was what they say. Explore the public 17 online offerings and join a private, strategic discussion on the Worldwide Web. 18 19 See for yourself how the National 20 Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers' presence

on the Internet promotes a strong, proud image of
our profession, illustrating to the nation and
the world the need for an open and fair system of
justice predicated on the trial by jury.

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The American Bar Association came to the

conclusion it did in the standards, which is best
 exemplified by Chief Justice Warren of the United
 States Supreme Court in <u>Singer versus the United</u>
 <u>States</u> in 1965.

Chief Justice Warren stated, quote, not 5 6 only must the right of the accused to a trial by 7 a constitutional jury be zealously preserved, but 8 the maintenance of the jury as a fact-finding 9 body in criminal cases is of such importance and 10 has such a place in our tradition that before any 11 waiver can become effective, the consent of 12 government counsel and the sanction of the court 13 must be had in addition to the expressed and 14 intelligent consent of the defendant, end quote.

15 In conclusion, a defendant's only constitutional right concerning his method of 16 17 trial is to an impartial trial by jury. This 18 amendment to the Constitution proposed in this 19 bill corrects our Supreme Court's blatant refusal 20 to accept the plain words of our constitution, 21 the right of both the people and the accused to a 22 jury trial.

In this Commonwealth, no one should
object to conditioning a waiver of the right to
jury trial and the consent of the prosecuting

1 attorney and the trial judge. If either refuses 2 consent, the result is simply that the defendant 3 is subject to an impartial trial by jury, the 4 very thing the Constitution recognizes. 5 The law recognized the adversarial 6 system as the proper method of determining guilt. 7 The people as a party in that determination have a legitimate interest to see that cases which 8 9 they believe warrant a conviction are tried before a tribunal, which the Constitution regards 10 as the most likely to produce a fair result. 11 I truly believe in this Commonwealth 12 13 that tribunal is the jury trial. In conclusion, 14 I urge favorable consideration of this bill for 15 the following reasons: First, it will prevent courts from 16 17 circumventing mandatory sentencing laws by 18 rendering unfair, yet unappealable verdicts. 19 These are the laws you gentlemen and ladies 20 passed with regard to mandatory sentences. 21 Second, it promotes the society's belief 22 in the fairness of our criminal justice system by 23 giving the victim and the people the same right as the defendant. 24 25 And third, it promotes order and

1 efficiency in the conduct of trials by denying 2 the defendant the last-minute vehicle to delay 3 his case and further disrupting the lives of his victims. 4 5 Finally, this action recognizes the five years of study done by the American Bar 6 7 Association, which recognizes the peoples' right to jury trial benefits society as a whole. 8 9 And remember, these bills are here for 10 one purpose, to allow the people of this state to 11 decide whether or not they're entitled to a jury trial. Thank you very much, sir. 12 MR. TENNIS: Next speaker is Joel Rosen. 13 14 MR. ROSEN: Good afternoon. My name is 15 Joel Rosen. I am the Chief of the Major Trials Unit of the Philadelphia District Attorney's 16 office, a unit which prosecutes thousands of 17 robbery, aggravated assault, kidnapping and 18 narcotics cases every year before both juries and 19 20 judges. 21 I am here on behalf of the Philadelphia 22 District Attorney's office in support of House Bill 1521, which would grant the Commonwealth the 23 same right to a jury trial as criminal 24 25 defendants.

1Our criminal justice system has always2provided the fundamental right to a trial by3jury. That right is the single most essential4means of ensuring fairness in a criminal case.5In a jury trial, there is no single fact finder6with any particular prejudices or biases who will7decide the case.

8 The jurors are not friends or associates 9 of the victim or the defendant or the prosecutor 10 or the defense attorney. Twelve independent 11 members of the community decide the case.

For that reason, our justice system has the jury trial as its foundation. And it is a jury trial, not a judge trial, that has always been guaranteed by the Constitution.

16 The necessity of having criminal cases 17 decided by independent juries has been recognized 18 by the American Bar Association, which recommends 19 that the right to a jury trial be guaranteed to 20 both the accused and the prosecution.

It has been recognized by the United
States Supreme Court, which has stated that a
jury trial should not be waived without the
consent of both the defense and the prosecution.
And that fact was Justice -- Chief

1 Justice Earl Warren who stated that in one of the 2 Supreme Court opinions. Our own State Supreme 3 Court has recognized that our constitution 4 guarantees a defendant a jury trial and that 5 there is no constitutional right to a nonjury trial. 6 Yet despite all of this, our Rules of 7 Criminal Procedure deny the right to a jury trial 8 9 to victims of crime and the community at large 10 who are represented by the District Attorney's office. 11 The single most fundamental part of the 12 13 criminal justice system, the right to a jury 14 trial, is currently given only to the criminal This is not just an esoteric 15 defendant. 16 discussion with no practical consequences. 17 The fact is that in every county of this 18 state, from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and from Greensburg to Scranton, there are victims of 19 20 crime who are denied a fair trial because they 21 have no right to a jury trial. 22 There are too many examples of cases 23 that were not decided fairly because a particular 24 judge was biased in favor of a defendant or 25 against a victim.

What makes these cases so extremely
 discouraging is that a prosecutor usually will
 know before a case even begins that a particular
 judge will not render a fair verdict.

5 The Prosecutor may even tell the victim 6 that the chance for justice in that case is slim 7 because of the judge who will decide the case. 8 But there is nothing that the prosecutor or the 9 victim can do because only the defendant and his 10 lawyer get to choose who will hear the case.

I1 I've experienced this personally, ladies and gentlemen. And there's nothing quite like being with a victim and trying to explain to them why they don't have the right to a jury trial. People don't understand why everybody doesn't get to have a jury, and the person out on the street assumes that everybody has that same right.

18 There's nothing like the look on a
19 victim's face when you tell them, I'm sorry, but
20 we have no option here. It's only the defendant
21 who gets to pick a jury trial, not you, not me as
22 your representative or the representative of the
23 community.

24There are several reasons why a25prosecutor would ask for a jury trial. A judge

may personally disagree with a five-year firearms
 sentencing provision.

3 Rather than decide the case fairly and 4 then have to impose a serious state sentence for 5 a violent crime, that judge will always acquit 6 the defendant of the more serious charges so that 7 he can impose a more lenient sentence.

8 This means, for example, that a robbery 9 victim can never get a fair trial in front of 10 that particular judge because the judge will 11 never convict the defendant of the crime that was 12 really committed.

13 Several examples of this are cited in 14 the appendix to the Pennsylvania District 15 Attorneys Association Executive Summary submitted by Mr. Tennis. And I'd like to refer to a few. 16 17 In the case of <u>Commonwealth versus</u> Valeri -- that's Case No. 1 in the appendix. 18 19 It's a Westmoreland County case -- in April of 20 1996, this defendant beat his 7-month-old son 21 within an inch of his life, breaking 17 bones 22 including his skull, damaging his liver and 23 crushing his penis -- he would pick the baby up 24 by the penis.

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Children's Hospital physicians testified

1 to the substantial risk that the child's brain 2 was damaged and his growth permanently stunted. 3 The defendant demanded a trial without a jury. The identity of the assailant was not an issue. 4 5 The judge found the defendant not guilty of aggravated assault -- that is, causing serious 6 7 bodily injury or attempting to cause serious 8 bodily injury -- convicting only of simple 9 assault and other lesser misdemeanor charges. 10 The judge's stated reason was that the baby had 11 not suffered serious bodily injury. The verdict 12 avoided the five-year mandatory. 13 In the case of Commonwealth versus 14 Middleton, which is from our county, Philadelphia 15 County, that would be Case No. 3 in the appendix. 16 The defendant with another approached the victim 17 on the street and shot him twice without warning, 18 paralyzing the victim from the waist down. 19 The defendant waived the jury. The 20 judge found that the defendant did the shooting, 21 but found him not quilty of felony first degree 22 aggravated assault, convicting him of a lesser 23 assault charge. 24 The only legal basis for the F-1 25 acquittal is that the shooter did not cause

25 1 serious bodily injury intentionally, knowingly or 2 recklessly under circumstances manifesting 3 extreme indifference to the value of human life. The practical result was to avoid the 4 5 five-year mandatory sentencing provision. So a 6 man who was shot and paralyzed for the rest his 7 life was not found to have suffered serious bodily injury in order to avoid a five-year 8 9 mandatory sentence. In the case of <u>Commonwealth versus</u> 10 11 Almamack in Philadelphia County, the defendant 12 had been caught red-handed with 25 pounds of 13 marijuana. 14 The court, realizing that the defendant 15 was facing a three-year mandatory, suggested in 16 open court to defense counsel that he argue mere 17 possession for personal use. Even defense 18 counsel initially hesitated, questioning whether he could legitimately tender such an absurd 19 20 argument. 21 The judge convicted the defendant of 22 mere possession, not possession with intent to 23 deliver, implicitly finding that 25 pounds of 24 marijuana was exclusively for the defendant's 25 personal consumption; thereby, he avoided the

1 mandatory sentence.

2 Other judges will give breaks to 3 defendants for choosing a nonjury trial by 4 acquitting that defendant of the most serious 5 charges. This practice was acknowledged in an 6 article in the <u>Philadelphia Inquirer</u>, which is 7 attached.

8 As the chief of the Philadelphia 9 Defenders Association Major Trials Unit stated, 10 We get to know who the judges are who will give 11 us that break. Unfortunately, these breaks can 12 extend to criminals who deal in large amounts of 13 drugs, who rob people at gunpoint, and who murder.

14Examples of this are included in the15attached Pennsylvania DA's Association Executive16Summary. And if I could just refer to a few17cases. First, one case that's cited in the18attached article in the Philadelphia19Inquirer, which was a homicide case where the20defendant's name was Wayne Nesmith.

21 Mr. Nesmith had shot a man six times at 22 close range in the chest, neck, and back with a 23 Glock 9 millimeter handgun. Mr. Nesmith admitted 24 that he was guilty, pled guilty to murder 25 generally, and went before the court arguing that

he shouldn't be convicted of first degree murder but some lesser charge.

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3 After hearing this as a waiver on a degree of guilt, the trial judge decided that 4 six shots to the chest, neck, and back didn't 5 indicate an intent to kill on the part of the 6 7 defendant and instead found the defendant guilty of that lesser third degree murder charge, giving 8 9 him what's known in Philadelphia as his waiver 10 discount, giving him that break and allowing him 11 to avoid a well-deserved life imprisonment sentence for a first degree murder conviction. 12

Another case, a case of <u>Commonwealth</u> <u>versus Melvin Overton</u>, on August 30th of 1995, the defendant executed a 33-year-old robbery victim, shooting him with a rifle twice in the head and once in the abdomen after finishing the robbery.

19This was a nonjury bench trial, not a20jury trial. Instead of finding the defendant21guilty of first degree murder for an intentional22killing or second degree murder for a killing23committed during the commission of the felony,24the trial judge awarded the defendant his waiver25discount and convicted him of third degree

1 murder. 2 Some judges may just have a bias against a particular type of case. An example of this is 3 in the attached Pennsylvania District Attorneys 4 5 Association Executive Summary. It's the case of <u>Commonwealth versus</u> 6 7 Tridento from Montgomery County where a 7-year-old girl was brutally beaten by her 8 9 mother's boyfriend. The defendant was found to have 10 11 committed the crime but was convicted only of 12 misdemeanor charges despite the fact that he had 13 crushed the little girl's pancreas and split 14 several layers of her colon. 15 When a judge does not like child abuse 16 cases, then the prosecutor as a representative of the victim and a representative of the community 17 18 needs to be able to demand a jury so there will 19 be an independent, unbiased fact finder in the 20 case. 21 I would also cite to you two other cases 22 from counties outside Philadelphia. In the case 23 of Commonwealth versus Graham, which is Case No. 24 5 in attachment from Lackawanna County, in 25 January of 1997, the defendant, an off-duty

1 police officer, knocked down the door and broke 2 into the home of an ex-girlfriend who had broken 3 up with him a few weeks earlier. 4 He found her there. And having learned 5 a few weeks earlier that she had a fragile blood vessel in her brain, beat her up and threw her 6 against the wall so hard that her head knocked a 7 8 hole through the drywall. 9 The defendant requested a nonjury trial. 10 As the trial proceeded, the judge pulled the 11 prosecutor aside and initiated plea negotiations 12 to mere misdemeanor charges. 13 Moreover, the judge without any expert testimony to support his opinion indicated that 14 15 the defendant was suffering from an 16 impulse-control problem. The judge also stated to the prosecutor that the defendant's life 17 18 shouldn't be ruined due to one drunk, stupid 19 moment. 20 The prosecutor declined to lower the 21 charges. And the judge responded by acquitting 22 the defendant of burglary and all aggravated 23 assault charges, convicting the abuser only of 24 defiant trespass, a third degree misdemeanor, and

simple assault. He then sentenced the defendant

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1 to 18 months probation, permitting the defendant 2 to remain on the police force. 3 Finally, a case cited as Case No. 7 in 4 the attachment, Commonwealth versus Franchun Hunt 5 from Wyoming County in Pennsylvania, in or about 6 August 1994, the defendant and his two co-defendants planned to murder and rob two 7 8 victims in this double homicide. 9 The motive was ostensibly greed and 10 The three defendants traveled to zealouslv. 11 Wyoming County from Virginia for the express 12 purpose of murder and mayhem loaded with an 13 inter-tech 10, semi-automatic machine pistol. The defendants and the victims all went 14 out in one of the victim's cars. And later in 15 16 the evening, both victims in the front seat were 17 shot execution style, robbed, and left on the 18 highway. Defendant drove the victims' car from 19 20 the crime scene. The first defendant was tried 21 by a jury and was given two life sentences for 22 these heinous crimes. The second defendant 23 pled guilty and received two consecutive 24 10- to 20-year sentences. 25 This defendant, Hunt, waived his right

1 to a jury in this one-judge county. At the time 2 of this trial, the District Attorney was involved 3 in a serious conflict with the judge on another 4 matter.

The Commonwealth in its case in chief 5 used the statement of a witness who had overheard 6 7 the defendant planning the crime. At the close 8 of the Commonwealth's case, the defendant moved to dismiss the charges claiming that he was 9 10 entitled to dismissal because the Commonwealth 11 failed to set forth the theory of accomplice 12 liability in its information.

Despite case law illustrating that the Commonwealth need not do so, the judge dismissed the murder charge and this lucky defendant was convicted only of theft of the victim's car and conspiracy to commit robbery.

He was sentenced to a mere 6 to 12 years for his part in killing two people, a fact duly reported in the county's newspaper, <u>The New Age</u> <u>Examiner</u>. The Commonwealth's right to request a jury was clearly the only way to seek redress for the two victims in this case.

24There are also problems of intentional25delay and judge shopping which are created

because only one side has the right to a jury
 trial. Defendants and their lawyers switch back
 and forth from jury trial to judge trial in order
 to get a more favorable judge or to wear the
 victims and witnesses out.
 This practice would be stopped by giving

7 both sides the right to have a jury trial. The 8 irony of this proposed law is that it takes no 9 constitutionally guaranteed rights away from a 10 defendant.

In fact, when the Commonwealth demands a jury trial, the defendant ends up with exactly what the Constitution provides, a jury trial. His case is heard by 12 independent fact finders. His rights are preserved.

16 But this important fundamental right is 17 given to the victim as well. It may be that a criminal defendant loses his tactical advantage 18 19 over the victim in the criminal justice system; 20 but in the criminal case where a right to a jury 21 is so vital to everyone, this unfair tactical 22 advantage should not exist. The right to a jury 23 is so important and so fundamental it should be 24 guaranteed to everyone by our constitution.

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MR. TENNIS: Mr. Chairman, I understand

1 we're running over; so what I'll do is submit my 2 written remarks and just make a couple of 3 extemporaneous comments, if that's all right. What I'd like to just emphasize is just 4 5 a couple of points. One is that throughout the 6 history of Pennsylvania and indeed 7 since -- throughout the English Commonwealth for 4 or 500 years, the State and the prosecution of 8 9 the people had a right to jury trial in criminal 10 cases. 11 That right was secured in the Magna 12 Carta and over a couple hundred years evolved to 13 the type of jury trial right that we now know 14 In fact, until the Legislature passed the todav. 15 statute in the 1930s, every criminal case involving a sentence up to a year had to be a 16 17 jury trial. 18 There was no other option. All criminal 19 cases were jury trials. When the Legislature 20 passed legislation granting the right to a waiver trial, it made it clear that everybody had to 21 22 agree before a jury was going to be waived. 23 The issue became a matter of rule making 24 after the Constitutional Convention in the late 25 1960s, and rule making was left to the Supreme

1 And they basically followed the Court. 2 Constitution and followed the law up to that point and said, yes, everybody has to agree, both 3 the victim and the defendant are on an equal Δ 5 playing field, that either side can request a jury trial if they feel that that is necessary to 6 7 get a fair trial. The Supreme Court, without any 8 9 explanation in 1973, stripped that right away and 10 basically overruled 500 years of English Common Law and Pennsylvania Common Law jurisprudence. 11 So when we're talking about 12 13 a constitutional amendment here, this one's 14 a little different than any other amendment 15 that's been presented to you because what we're really talking about is not amending the 16 Constitution, we're talking about restoring the 17 18 Constitution to what it's always been and 19 restoring the common law to what it's been for 20 many centuries. 21 This is truly a restoration. This would 22 be equivalent to our State Supreme Court saying 23 that the right -- the constitutional provision 24 saying the right to bear arms shall not be

25 questioned.

1 For them to say that doesn't mean that 2 the Legislature can't take away peoples' right to 3 bear arms, it isn't what it seems to say, no 4 one's allowed to have guns. 5 Under those circumstances, that would be an emasculation of the Constitution just as what 6 7 the Supreme Court did on Commonwealth right to a 8 jury trial is an emasculation of the 9 Constitution. 10 And our founders, the people who put the 11 Constitution together, specifically foresaw or 12 intended to provide for these circumstances when 13 the courts would somehow go astray of what the 14 Constitution said. They put in provisions and 15 procedures for amending the Constitution. 16 And this is a classic example. I have yet to see any clearer, more compelling case 17 18 because, again, this is really about restoring

19 the Constitution to what it's always been and not 20 about amending it.

Finally, a couple of points I'd like to just address. I think the other arguments have been presented pretty compellingly as far as the American Bar Association and Chief Justice Warren and his views on this.

1 One of the arguments against this is 2 that somehow prosecutors will use this to coerce 3 guilty pleas by defendants who have privately-retained counsel. 4 5 This is somehow because a jury trial would cost more money, we'll say, it's going to 6 be a jury trial. We're going to make it be a 7 8 jury trial so you'll have to pay more, and 9 somehow that'll make you plead guilty. This is a very farfetched argument and 10 11 could only be tendered by someone who 12 hadn't worked in the criminal justice system. In 13 the 24 jurisdictions -- 24 states that have 14 Commonwealth right to a jury trial or peoples' right to a jury trial, no one's ever claimed that 15 this has ever been a problem. 16 17 There's no way for a prosecutor to know or we don't have any ability to know what the 18 19 finances are of any particular individual. Any 20 prosecutor that I've talked to throughout the 21 state or anybody that's familiar with the criminal justice system has just kind of laughed 22 and said, where does that come from? there's no 23 basis for that, there's no way we could do that,

and there's no claim and there's no indication at 25

1 all that this had occurred in any of the many 2 jurisdictions around the country that have this. 3 This is basically -- in the examples 4 you've given, it's really not intended to be an 5 attack on judges. It's really intended to 6 show -- because in the overwhelming majority of 7 cases around the state, we probably do better in 8 front of a judge than we do a jury. 9 Jury -- the judges around the state, 10 with the exception of Philadelphia, tend to be 11 pretty tough on crime. However, just like a defendant, if you're in front of a judge who you 12 13 know has a predisposition against your case and 14 the case -- the child abuse cases you heard illustrate that and some of the other cases. 15 16 If you know you're in front of a judge 17 who does not like that kind of a case, then why 18 shouldn't the victim be able to have their day in 19 court in front of a impartial fact finder? 20 That's what the Constitution was written 21 to provide for. That's what 400 years of common 22 law provided for that basically we're saying that 23 a victim of a crime is as much entitled to a fair 24 trial as the defendant as a criminal. 25 And that's all we're asking for. This

isn't something we would need to ask for a
 lot. It would just be in those particular
 serious cases where we know based on past
 experience that we won't get a fair hearing of
 our case in front of a particular judge and we'd
 like 12 jurors to come in.

7 For example, in the Montgomery County 8 case, the two child abuse cases you heard about, 9 if you were the parent of a child who was hurt in 10 the future, next year, and you lived in 11 Montgomery County or Westmoreland County and you 12 had a child who was seriously hurt and your case 13 got assigned to the judges who had heard those 14 cases before that you just heard about, don't you 15 think -- I mean, how would the parents of those 16 children feel if this were to happen in the future and you got assigned to those judges and 17 they said, we need a jury. We're not obviously 18 19 not going to get a fair trial here.

20 And we're just saying those particular 21 instances we need to be able to ask for that 22 little child who's been injured whose life has 23 been compromised, we need to be able to ask to 24 get a fair trial to bring in 12 impartial jurors. 25 That's all. That's not a radical

1 It's something that's always been the concept. 2 law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania until 3 very recently. No explanation's ever been offered for why it was stripped away. 4 5 And we ask you to restore victims, put them back on a equal playing field with the 6 defendants. And we ask you to restore the 7 Commonwealth to its original integrity. Thank 8 9 you. CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: 10 Thank you, 11 gentlemen. Before we turn this portion of the 12 hearing over for questioning, I'd like to ask the 13 Members who have come in since we began the meeting to introduce themselves. 14 15 **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** Thank you, 16 Mr. Chairman. Harold James, Democratic Subcommittee Chairman of this Committee. 17 18 **REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON:** 19 Representative LeAnna Washington, Philadelphia 20 County. 21 **REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA:** Representative 22 Joe Petrarca, Westmoreland County. 23 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Okay. Gentlemen, 24 we want to thank you for your testimony. I want 25 to give the Members of the Committee the

40 1 opportunity to ask you questions. 2 We'll preface that by saying that to the 3 Members of the Committee, if you would please remember we have a full agenda today, we want to 4 try to move it along as expeditiously as 5 6 possible. We need to ask pertinent and 7 thought-provoking questions and not be repetitive in the process. 8 9 And the questions should hopefully be to the issues before us; and that is the bill that 10 we're discussing, House Bill 1521, which gives 11 the right of trial by jury to the Commonwealth. 12 13 And I will begin with the Democratic 14 Chairman of this Committee, Representative 15 Caltagirone. 16 **REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE:** Thank you, 17 Mr. Chairman. Gary, getting right to the chase 18 on this situation --19 MR. TENNIS: Yes, sir. 20 **REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE:** -- is this 21 particularly a problem or a piece of legislation 22 that's addressed to Philadelphia's situation? 23 MR. TENNIS: No, Mr. Chairman. It 24 actually is -- what we intended to do with the 25 appendix in the cases cited in the appendix is

show how this problem crops up throughout the
 state.

We cited cases in Montgomery County,
Westmoreland, Lackawanna, Cumberland County,
Wyoming County. So it does occur throughout the
state.

7 I think the problem is more serious in 8 Philadelphia. I think they're doing fine -- for 9 example, we have four homicide judges. Two of 10 those judges if you waive in front of them will 11 not convict of first degree murder according to 12 my conversations with our chief of homicide.

So I think the problem is more severe in Philadelphia without a doubt. But it's a problem that -- as you heard from the District Attorney of Cumberland County, it's a problem that various district attorneys around the state find fairly serious.

19 REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE: You've done 20 a study of this, evidently, and you've had the 21 stats on various counties. The statistics on the 22 counties of where this occurs more frequently 23 than others, do you have any figures that you can share with this Committee either now or can you 24 25 get them to us of the total number of jury trials

1 as opposed to trial by judge? 2 MR. TENNIS: We've been trying to get 3 those, and it's been really difficult. They don't -- the -- they're not -- nobody breaks them 4 5 down that way. So we've been working on that. I think maybe what I could do -- and 6 7 I'll continue to try to get those for you. What 8 I'd like to do is give Mr. Ebert and Joel Rosen 9 can talk -- give you some sense of it. They can 10 give you some sense of it, not hard statistical 11 information. 12 **REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE:** In 13 Philadelphia though, how many cases -- and you're 14 also from Philadelphia? 15 MR. EBERT: Yep. 16 **REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE:** How many 17 cases actually originate in Philadelphia? Compared to many of our smaller counties around 18 19 the rest of the state, you probably have a lion's share of those types of cases. 20 21 MR. ROSEN: My unit is the Major Trials 22 Unit. We literally tried thousands, have 23 thousands of cases every year. And that's not 24 even the largest number of cases in terms of the 25 units in the DA's office.

1 And I would say that an increasing 2 majority of them are waiver trials. It seems to 3 become more and more every year. I don't have 4 the statistics at my hand, but I can tell you that the number of waiver trials as we go on from 5 6 year to year to year seem to be increasing as 7 judges seem to be -- more judges seem to want to 8 give discounts, what we call the waiver discount, 9 on particular cases. 10 It's becoming in the Major Trials Unit a 11 more popular practice in Philadelphia. For example, if somebody's charged with robbery and 12 13 it's a gunpoint robbery, it's a felony first 14 degree. We have more judges now finding 15 16 defendants guilty on bench trials but not convicting them of the first degree felony, only 17 18 finding them guilty of a lesser crime so they 19 don't have to sentence the defendant to a 20 mandatory sentence. So I know the numbers are I don't have the exact numbers with 21 increasing. 22 me. 23 **REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE:** If you would have information -- and I don't mean to cut 24 25 you off; but you want to speak to the issues,

I'm sure. But if you could share that, I think
 that might shed a little more light on what we're
 talking about here.

4 MR. EBERT: I really can't add a lot to 5 that. Obviously, I'm not going to sit here and 6 say I believe most jurisdictions are about the 7 same. Eighty-five percent of the cases roughly 8 are settled by guilty pleas of some sort.

Jury trials are always the smallest
number. I would estimate in my county, a
fourth-class county of a little over 205,000
people, we maybe have a hundred jury trials a
year. There's probably double or tripled that
number in waiver trials, and it's escalating.

MR. TENNIS: There's a lot of variation between counties. There is many counties I talked to -- this is not a -- especially the smaller counties, this is not an issue. Every case in my county is a jury trial because no one would want to go in front of my judge without a jury.

So there are some counties where it's
not a issue-wide fluctuation. But,
unfortunately, it does appear -- and we've been
really putting a lot of time into this because

1 this question was asked in the Senate -- it 2 doesn't appear that statistics are kept by jury 3 versus nonjury by any of the people that gather 4 this information. So we're having a little bit 5 of a tough time with it. We'll do our best 6 though. 7 **REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE:** Fine. Ι

8 think that would be helpful to shed a little 9 light on this issue. The other problem and we 10 were discussing, Counsel and I, prior to today's 11 hearing about whether or not this would create a 12 logjam in either the courts with jury trials 13 and/or prisons and how would we address that 14 problem?

MR. ROSEN: I will say this: From a
District Attorney's point of view, we don't want
a logjam. The thing that hurts us more than
anything in terms of our cases and our trials is
a delay in the case.

Because the longer the case goes on, the witnesses' memories fade, we lose witnesses, we lose cases because of that. So it's not in our interest to create a logjam by demanding large numbers of juries.

25

We'd be cutting off our nose to spite

our face. So with this right, it would be used
 judiciously. Not because I say we're going to
 use it judiciously, but because we're going to
 have to.

5 Because if we create a backlog by 6 demanding jury trial after jury trial, it's going 7 to be years before cases get tried, and we're 8 just going to lose all of those cases. It would 9 make no sense to do that.

10 MR. TENNIS: Just to confirm that, I actually had conversations with the District 11 12 Attorney, the First Assistant. And they 13 confirmed that we would be using this only in 14 very serious cases and only when those cases are 15 in front of judges that have a long history of consistently finding verdicts that we think are 16 17 clearly in conflict with the evidence, in clear 18 compromise cases.

So we would have to use it rarely for
the reasons that Mr. Rosen said, and that would
be the intention of the office.

22 MR. EBERT: I totally agree. I mean, 23 after all, I have to face that judge day after 24 day. And there's no question when you look him 25 in the eye and say, sorry, judge, I want a jury

1 trial. He knows what you're saying. 2 And I'm not going to do that except in 3 the cases where I have to look the victim in the eye and also look at that guy and say, gee, I 4 5 think you deserve the same right as that 6 defendant that hurt you did. We cannot live a fallacy of passing 7 8 these mandatory sentences and then talk about 9 let's be expeditious, let's just get them through the system, and we'll treat all different kinds 10 11 of victims differently. 12 I mean, that's just not a fair thing. 13 This Constitution is to provide equal protection for all citizens, and this discount waiver is an 14 15 advantage that only one party has to the system. 16 REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE: Thank you, sir. 17 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 18 19 Manderino. 20 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Thank you. 21 I have several succinct questions to each 22 Mr. Ebert and Mr. Rosen individually. I want you 23 both to answer this question. 24 In the past year, if you can just look 25 at the last year, how many cases have you seen as

a prosecutor that you would have required or you
 would have demanded a jury trial where you didn't
 have that right?
 MR. EBERT: I'm starting to keep a list

5 since these hearings began, and I think I would
6 have had six that I would have demanded a jury
7 trial.

8 MR. ROSEN: I didn't frankly come 9 prepared with an exact number on that one. Τ 10 could say that, obviously, we have a lot more 11 cases in our county than they do and a lot more I can think of easily 20 or 25. 12 judaes. It 13 may be more, but that's really a quess.

14REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO: In15Cumberland County, have you consulted with the16judges in your county to try to devise any17procedural mechanism to reduce the problem of18judge shopping? If yes, how? If no, why not?

MR. EBERT: We have had discussions
about that. The presumption in all of this is
you avoid appeals. And the right is that the
defendant has a right to a waiver trial. We have
a certain number of trial terms per year.

24We have a pretrial day where you have to25declare, do you want a jury trial or a nonjury

1 trial? But there is no absolute sanction. You
2 can't force the person to say, I want a nonjury
3 trial and then avoid, say, well, he waived it,
4 the waiver wasn't proper. It creates another
5 appeal issue.
6 And the judges, of course, there is a

7 concern about, you know, we've got to get through 8 the trial list. And it's so easy at that point, 9 take it off, just reschedule it.

We'll do it, and nobody thinks about the Cost of that because the witnesses have been subpoenaed and the police officers are standing by on overtime. And all of that is something that the taxpayers are paying for. And that even aside --

16 REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO: So you have 17 had those conversations in Cumberland County and 18 have determined that there is no procedural way 19 that you can avoid judge shopping?

20 MR. EBERT: No. I mean, this is the 21 Supreme Court saying the defendant has an 22 absolute -- I don't refer to it as judge 23 shopping.

24 REPRESENTATIVE MANDERINO: That is a
25 delay issue. What gets to the -- isn't there a

different mechanism to get to the issue of 1 2 whether I like this particular judge --3 MR. EBERT: No judge is going to admit that he's the person who is targeted to be judge 4 5 shopped. I mean, that one explanation I gave with regard to losing a -- a judge rules to 6 7 suppress evidence, I went in on appeal. 8 That defense attorney demanded that he go right back to that same judge. And he's, 9 like, well, I'm going to hear this fairly. But 10 he's angry. He's, like, they overturned me. 11 I'll take care of that. And once that happens, 12 13 it's over. No appeal, nothing. Not quilty. **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** 14 Mr. Rosen, have any discussions happened with judges in 15 16 Philadelphia County? MR. ROSEN: Yes. And, in fact, one 17 thing that I wanted to try to eliminate, what 18 happens is the defendant will request a jury 19 20 sometimes at the last minute and the case will get continued, go in front of another 21 22 judge -- because you mentioned judge 23 shopping -- then --24 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** You guys mentioned judge shopping. That's where I got it 25

from.

2	MR. ROSEN: That's fine. And then when
3	they get in front of a more favorable
4	judge, no, this isn't a jury anymore; this is a
5	waiver trial. So what I specifically requested
6	to avoid that was let's once a defendant
7	demands a jury, let's say he's not entitled to
8	waive in front of the new judge.
9	However, the court administration in
10	Philadelphia was unwilling to agree to that
11	because they wanted to have the quicker case,
12	the waiver trial, which is a lot quicker. That
13	was my attempt to eliminate it.
14	REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO: I'd also
15	like each of you to address my hypothetical. And
16	you are addressing this not as representative of
17	the DA Association because I'm sure they didn't
18	authorize you to answer this, but I would like to
19	hear your answer as prosecutors.
20	If you can have a right to a
21	Commonwealth trial by jury or mandatory minimum
22	sentences, but not both, which would you choose
23	and why?
24	MR. ROSEN: I could answer that.
25	MR. TENNIS: Go for it.

1 MR. ROSEN: I think I would choose the 2 right to a jury trial because it's so 3 fundamental, it's so important that to deny it to victims doesn't -- to deny it to everybody just 4 makes no sense to me. 5 6 Because it's such a fundamental right, I 7 think it needs to be guaranteed to everybody. 8 And mandatory sentencing is something that's put 9 in place for a reason. 10 But it's not such a fundamental, vital 11 thing that's guaranteed to everyone who lives in 12 the state. A right to a jury trial is, and 13 that's why I think that's much more important and 14 that would be the one that I would pick. 15 MR. EBERT: I would agree. And ask 16 yourself, why were those mandatory sentences 17 passed in the first place? Because there was a 18 perception that the judges weren't living up to 19 sentencing fairly. So we want you to sentence fairly. 20 It's 21 still going to sit in your lap. But to look at 22 the person who is wrong when they don't get -- the victim who is wronged when they don't 23 get a jury trial, that's the hardest thing in the 24 25 world to say that criminal who hurt you got more

1 than you did under your taxpayer paid-for system of government.

2

3 And I really believe that. And you 4 could go back to that because I would hope -- and I think most likely in my county I'm going to get 5 fair sentences. But they were passed 6 7 probably -- and I'm maybe speaking out of turn 8 here to address another Philadelphia problem of no sentences down there. And now we have this. 9 MR. TENNIS: That's a pretty easy one 10 11 for me too. I would much rather have Commonwealth right to a jury trial because for me 12 13 the issue, and as 17 years in the DA's office, but I care more about tough sentences as the 14 15 integrity of the criminal justice system. 16 And that's really what this is about. This is about restoring and maintaining the 17 integrity of the system and making sure that all 18 sides get a fair trial. And I think a fair trial 19 20 for the defendants is extremely important. 21 It's got to be there. And I think the 22 right to a fair trial, have the case fairly heard is just as important to our side. It needs to be 23 fairly heard impartially. And that's what this 24 25 restores.

1 And I think that has to be the 2 superseding value over everything else. The criminal justice system must have its integrity. 3 The public must be able to have faith in that. 4 5 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Let me end 6 on that note with the suggestion that maybe we can do an exchange. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 7 8 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 9 Josephs. **REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS:** 10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm kind of disturbed that there's 11 12 no statistics, I mean, that everything is 13 anecdotal or almost everything is anecdotal. And I'm really disturbed about it 14 15 because this is an old, old issue. This is not 16 the first time that it's been before some committee, some Judiciary Committee of the 17 General Assembly. 18 19 I had an interesting discussion with my 20 predecessor who many of you remember, Norman 21 Berson, who's my neighbor and my friend about 22 this issue. He was in the Legislature sometime 23 from the mid-60s to the end of the 70s. 24 He was Chair of the Judiciary Committee 25 for part of that time. And he said that

1 the -- whoever was the District Attorney at 2 that point or the Attorney General many times 3 introduced this concept as a joint resolution. 4 And it just boggles my mind -- and it was defeated, obviously, or you gentlemen 5 6 wouldn't be back here again -- that after all 7 that time there's no statistics that can give us 8 some guidance about what this would on tax day 9 cost our taxpayers. 10 So what I'm hoping -- it's not really a 11 question -- what I'm hoping is that we will be 12 keeping perspective statistics. And I applaud 13 you, Mr. District Attorney, for starting to do 14 that. 15 But I think we really need them on a 16 system-wide basis, something that goes into a computer and something that can be seen across 17 18 the state so that we know what we're doing here. 19 So I request that prospectively we start 20 doing this kind of analysis so that we as 21 Legislators know what we're doing. I guess my 22 question has more to do with you've been making 23 an assumption as you appear before us that juries are more impartial than judges. 24 25 I don't have any real comment to make

about that. But I remember in Philadelphia in a 1 2 recent District Attorney race that one of the 3 District Attorney candidates was exposed as -- I suppose the word is teaching prosecutors how to 4 get together the most biased 5 prosecution -- prosecution biased jury that one 6 7 could get. How do we guarantee that it's going to 8 9 be a fair trial, that the same kind of biases aren't going to come out of this jury group as 10

you claim are coming out of the single judge? I certainly understand that 12 MR. EBERT: question, and it's been raised before. 13 I don't 14 think you could go to any defense counsel seminar 15 and talk about when you select a jury, about your 16 use of peremptory challenges. As everybody says, 17 we want a fair and impartial jury.

11

Obviously, you want a jury that's 18 partial to your side. You might exercise your 19 20 peremptories in a certain manner. The point is 21 that you're dealing with a group of new people 22 every time they walk into that courtroom.

And you can't control that when you know 23 24 what a judge's bias is. Because you're going to 25 ask for a jury, you know up front what is going

1 to be the result in that particular case. 2 And remember when it comes to biasing, 3 it takes only 1 juror out of 12 people to say, I'm not agreeing with the others and there's no 4 5 verdict whatsoever. 6 So even with these race things in 7 Philadelphia right now, I mean, the majority of people who are getting hurt, who are victims are 8 also African-Americans also. 9 10 And I would think they'd want a right to 11 a jury by their peers also in that case. Now I 12 may have spoken out of turn from that I'm not 13 particularly familiar with Philadelphia but --I just want to point out 14 MR. TENNIS: 15 that was actually serviced by our office and 16 really heartily condemned by our office and 17 everybody -- every prosecutor in the office was 18 firmly told as they've always been told not to 19 engage in that type of -- ever to engage in the 20 type of practices that were advocated by that individual. 21 22 One of the things I have 23 experienced -- and I guess I should relate this because this has been brought up as some kind of 24 25 racial issue. I did jury trials for a while in

front of one judge who would discount cases
 severely.

And I noticed that the discounting of 3 4 sentences was much, much more severe on 5 black-on-black, African-American cases against African-American. And I hit the roof on one of 6 them because it was one individual shot another 7 individual in the stomach. And there was a 8 county jail sentence, seemed to be grossly 9 10 inappropriate.

That judge pulled me aside and told me that I was -- had no business imposing my cultural values on these people. And I was completely shocked. And I just want to say that clearly you are not -- the racial issue in terms of this issue is, I think, it cuts the other way.

I think that we actually do better in 17 18 terms of getting a trial and avoiding prejudices. Because you have the protection of 12 19 20 individuals, you get the cross section of the community, you get somebody that has to be 21 accepted both by the defense attorney and the 22 23 prosecution, I think you end up getting greater protections against those kind of considerations 24 25 in a jury situation than you do in a nonjury.

1REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS: I guess I want2to ask this of the Philadelphia people. And3since you say you don't have statistics, perhaps4the answer can come later. Some of these you5have the preliminary questions.

6 How many attorneys in your office handle 7 jury trials? I'm sure you know that. How many 8 additional jury cases do you think you have? How 9 many additional attorneys would you need to hire? 10 What does it cost to do a jury trial as opposed 11 to a bench trial?

How do you multiply that over the years? And since you don't know how many cases you think you have, I don't think you can really answer this; but I for one would really, really like to have statistics along those lines.

MR. ROSEN: In my unit, the Major Trials Unit, which any one of my DAs could handle a jury trial, there's approximately 32 DAs. There's the Homicide Division, which has about 25 DAs who all can do jury trials. There's a Family Violence Sexual Assault Unit which has 7 or 8 DAs who all can handle jury trials.

If you're asking me how many more DAs
would we need to try the jury trials, the answer

is none because our DAs are always in court.
 They're always trying cases whether they're jury
 or nonjury trials.
 So you're not replacing -- you don't
 need extra DAs. You can only try one case at a

time. So we wouldn't be hiring new DAs to handle
more jury trials, especially in light of what I
anticipate will be the number of jury trials that
we would demand in this situation.

10 And the cost answer would be the same. 11 The cost to our office shouldn't change because 12 you won't be hiring more DAs, you won't be hiring 13 more detectives. You can only try one case at a 14 time.

15 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS: Thank you. And
16 thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative18 James.

19 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Thank you. One 20 of my concerns -- I want to thank you all for 21 testifying. One of my concerns as Representative 22 Josephs has stated that this is not something 23 new.

24And it has been indicated that the25Philadelphia District Attorney's office can come

1 up with statistics when they need to and which 2 they have recently done. And it just boggles me 3 as to why we don't have the statistics to back 4 this up, what you have or what you desire. 5 So I just hope that you can get some statistics together so that the Committee can be 6 7 It seems and there's a question more informed. I have to, I guess, to Philadelphia District 8 9 Attorney and the other District Attorney. Would 10 this be taking some discretion away from the 11 judges if this happened? How do you respond to 12 that? 13 Would it take discretion MR. ROSEN: 14 away? There would be cases where judges would not be deciding the facts of the case. 15 But 16 really discretion in terms of sentencing, no, it 17 shouldn't. 18 I mean, all this will be doing is hopefully ensuring that you'll get more cases 19 20 where the verdicts are based on the facts of the 21 case and what happened and nothing else. I mean, 22 that's really the goal of this. 23 What we want is that when a case goes to 24 trial that the consideration of guilt or 25 innocence isn't based on anything but the facts

1 of what happened. That's what our justice 2 system's supposed to be about, and that's what 3 we're trying to do. Can I just state one other thing, sir, 4 5 because you mentioned statistics about this? I'm 6 not sure exactly what type of statistics you're 7 requesting. 8 But if you want to know from us in 9 Philadelphia at least how many waiver trials we 10 did, for example, last year versus how many jury 11 trials we did, we should be able to get that rather easily for all of you. 12 If that's the statistic you're talking 13 14 about, we'd be happy to do that. And I apologize 15 for not having it today. **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** 16 Representative 17 Josephs would give us -- any additional statistics that you felt we should have? 18 19 MR. TENNIS: How many jury versus how 20 many nonjury? 21 **REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS: Well, I was** 22 asking if whether it would cost more; and the 23 answer was it wouldn't. So there are no statistics that you're going to produce. 24 25 MR. EBERT: Your question of discretion

1 though, the only person that's got any discretion 2 in this process right now about what kind of 3 trial they have is the defendant. The judge has the same kind of discretion that I do. 4 If I even agreed to a jury trial, he'd 5 6 have the right to say, no, this is going to be 7 a -- I mean, if the defendant requested a waiver trial and I said I agree with a waiver trial, the 8 9 judge still has the right to say, no, this is 10 going be a jury trial. 11 So when you come to discretion, the only thing that's left that the judge does in a waiver 12 13 trial is determine the facts of the case. And all we're saying is that ought to be done on the 14 15 evidence, not on some other idea about I don't 16 like mandatories, I don't particularly like this case, I want to give this guy a break. 17 That 18 shouldn't be part of the system. 19 **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Well, and I** 20 heard -- I think it was you that said something 21 earlier in terms of why there were a lot of 22 mandatory sentences because the Legislature 23 probably thought that the judges wasn't doing 24 their job. I tend to disagree. 25 I think it was more political reasons

1 than different Legislators want to show that they 2 were tough on crime and more political reasons 3 than coming up with all these mandatory 4 sentences. And that was mostly why we had all 5 these mandatories. 6 And I think that mandatories then takes 7 discretion away from judges because cases on their own face value may have some different 8 9 circumstances in terms of, well, the judge can 10 decide. 11 And then you have the DA -- now, I see that where the cases that you put together, I 12 13 guess, that came from the Philadelphia District 14 Attorney's office too, these appendices? 15 MR. TENNIS: No, they were from all over the county -- I mean all over the state. 16 17 **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** You got them from 18 all over the state from different counties; but it's put together by your office, I imagine? 19 20 MR. TENNIS: Yes, I put them together -- actually, yeah, I, for the most part, 21 22 put this together. 23 I knew you guys **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** 24 are good at putting stuff together from all over. 25 So it leaves me some suspect in the terms of the

1 way you put this together because I remember seeing some cases that was put together not too 3 long ago.

2

4 And it was Philadelphia Bar Association 5 disagreeing with how you framed it and how you 6 framed the different cases and came up with some 7 disagreement that showed a lot of difference. So 8 it makes me suspect this even though that you 9 show that you're trying to help the victims.

10 Now, it seemed to me that victims -- and 11 I know you keep talking about this is going to 12 help victims. Victims usually want justice. 13 Victims usually want to be satisfied that 14 something is done about something that happened Now how is them having a jury trial 15 to them. 16 going to make that happen?

17 MR. TENNIS: Because if you're in 18 front of a -- let me go back to the situation I cited before. If you have a terrible child abuse 19 case where some child's been maimed or raped and 20 21 you're in front of one of those judges like that 22 judge who did the case in Westmoreland County, 23 the one in Montgomery County, then that victim 24 and the parents and the people who love that 25 little child know that they're in front of a

1 judge who has in the past never -- won't find 2 people guilty on serious charges for child abuse. 3 So they know they're not going to get a 4 fair trial. It helps them because they know that 5 if we have a right to a jury trial, that we're going to bring in 12 independent people, 12 new 6 7 people, and that they'll get a fair trial. The law will be applied fairly. And that means the 8 9 world, Representative, it really does --10 **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** Excuse me, sir. I just -- so you're saying that you know that 11 12 this judge for some reason is not going to favor 13 what you want done or how you want the results to 14 come out. So if this is passed, then that gives 15 16 you the opportunity to do, what, to say you want 17 a jury trial and then go ahead and get the jury 18 trial? MR. TENNIS: Yes. We'd be able to have 19 20 a jury hear the case. If we didn't think we 21 could get a fair trial based on the judge's past, we'd be able to have a jury come in, a jury of 12 22 23 citizens from the community. 24 **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** Okay. Now, isn't 25 this -- wouldn't this also be trying to in some

1 kind of way intimidate judges or force judges to 2 try to come along with the kinds of philosophy 3 that you as the prosecutors want to have because 4 if you don't, you're going to say we want to have 5 a jury trial? 6 Isn't it part of -- I'm just concerned 7 about the fact that prosecutors seem to be trying 8 to shape judges now in terms of philosophy and 9 all of that. 10 I don't see why a judge MR. ROSEN: 11 would care whether he or she decides a case or a 12 jury decides a case. They get paid either way. 13 I mean, that's what they're supposed to do is 14 either preside over a jury trial or hear a waiver 15 trial. So I don't see how that would intimidate 16 17 a judge at all. In other words, if I'm sitting on the bench and the attorney comes to me and 18 19 says, this is going to be a jury trial, let's bring a panel up and pick a jury and have a jury. 20 21 It makes no difference to me as a judge 22 whether I'm going to be hearing the case or the 23 jury's going to be hearing the case. In fact, frankly, it may be easier for some judges not to 24 have to make the decision on the facts and let 25

1 the jury make the decision. So, no, I don't 2 believe that would intimidate judges at all. 3 MR. EBERT: If what you're saying here 4 is that somehow we exercise an undue influence 5 over these people, I mean, I believe 6 realistically and you mentioned the fact that, 7 well, this criminal justice system seems fraught 8 with politics. 9 I know it's not my assistants that are 10 contributing to the election of these judges. 11 And if you come to say, I'm going to pander to one group or another, you're probably going to 12 13 support the people who put you in office. That is not fair to all citizens. 14 And we just don't exercise that kind of control over 15 16 these judges. They're there for ten years. They only have to stand for retention. They don't 17 18 even run again. I'm here every four years going at it all the time. You say, what do the people 19 I think that's the fairer system. 20 want? 21 **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** Okay. Thank you. 22 I have one more question, Mr. Chairman. Now, 23 let's say that one of the problems that is in the 24 criminal justice system is the fact that the 25 racism that's in the criminal justice system is

1 in the courts in every form, in every aspect of 2 it.

3 In terms of juries, there's been the 4 question as to jury -- a person does not have a 5 jury of his peers. And how would you feel or 6 what would be your position if, in fact, that we 7 was to establish a policy where that jurors that they have to be a certain number of jurors that 8 reflect the victim as well as the defendant on 9 10 the jury in terms of ethnic background or racial 11 or whatever?

12 MR. ROSEN: I don't know how you would 13 do that. I'm against anything that says you have 14 to have a certain number of black jurors, white 15 jurors, Hispanic jurors on the jury.

I will say this, if you come to 16 17 Philadelphia and look at the jury compositions 18 that are in case after case, in room after room, you're not going to see -- walk into the 19 20 courtrooms today -- maybe 10 or 20 years ago, not 21 today, and see all white juries or all black juries. I mean, it's rare -- it does happen that 22 23 you have juries --

24 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: I know you're not
25 going to see all black juries.

1MR. ROSEN: It's about equal, frankly,2especially from a practical point of view the way3it's worked out since the mayoral election where4Mayor Good was elected and they had a large voter5registration drive in the black community.

6 And now our jury selection is done not 7 just from voter registration, but from motor 8 vehicle registration. The panels that come up of 9 the 40 jurors, they're pretty evenly mixed 10 between black jurors, white perspective jurors.

Both sides, the defense attorney and the Commonwealth strike -- have the same number of strikes that we can strike seven people and they can strike seven people. We're trying to strike the people who we think will be worst for our case. They're doing the same thing.

17 The reality is when you go from
18 courtroom to courtroom, the juries are mixed.
19 They really are, at least in Philadelphia. I
20 can't speak for the other counties.

21 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: I'm glad to hear 22 the District Attorney respond in terms of 23 us -- we was to develop some kind of way where 24 that the defendant and the victim that someone 25 from that particular ethnic background are made

1 part of the jury. Would you be opposed to that? 2 MR. EBERT: I don't think -- I don't 3 know how you could practically do that. And I 4 don't think -- what you're presuming there is 5 that because of their race they bring a special bias there and they'll favor one side or other. 6 7 That's not what the system's designed to It's to get 12 citizens to come in 8 do at all. 9 there and judge a set of facts, not 10 because under the law -- not because of I'm going 11 to side with that guy because he's like me. That's not what we're looking for. 12 And 13 I see no -- to try and gerrymander these juries to -- it's not practical. And I don't think it 14 would add any extra level of justice to it other 15 16 than the perception. 17 But that perception has to be based on the idea that a certain racial group will always 18 vote for its own race. And I don't believe that. 19 20 REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: I don't believe 21 that either, but that's the perception that you 22 have in terms of saying that. I think that in 23 terms of you having someone from -- whether it is 24 the victim or the defendant, whoever, is that you 25 have someone that understands jury of peers.

1 I just think that has been one of the 2 problems of the jury system, you know, since it 3 They have not really adequately started. 4 represented the people. 5 So I'm looking that way to maybe say 6 that whoever the defendant is, whoever the victim 7 is, that they both have certain number of ethnic 8 representation on the jury. 9 MR. EBERT: I respectfully disagree. Τ 10 mean, that's a fragmentation about what do you call a peer? Do you have to then find the exact 11 religious mix? Well, I'm a peer, I'm a gang 12 13 member, so I should have a quy who's a gang 14 member who understands me. The number of 15 classifications is so great you could never 16 please anyone anyway. 17 **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** Okay. Thank you. 18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 19 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 20 Washington. 21 **REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON:** Thank you, 22 Mr. Chairman. I have a couple questions I'd like 23 to ask the panel. How would your office resolve a conflict where the victim wants a jury trial, 24 25 but your office deems the case to be relatively

1 simple and not requiring a jury trial? 2 MR. ROSEN: I think the decision would 3 be made the same way that we're supposed to 4 decide whether a case should be pled or not, 5 which is really the same kind of issue. 6 Sometimes we have cases where we feel 7 like a quilty plea is appropriate because it's most in the interest of justice even though the 8 victim may not agree with it. 9 10 So what I would anticipate we would do 11 is we would listen to the victim. Their 12 considerations would be important, but the 13 ultimate decision would be made by the District 14 Attorney's office the same way we do with guilty pleas. That's our obligation. That's what they 15 16 pay us to do. 17 **REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON:** The next one 18 is, what if the opposite were true? What if the victim especially wants a case 19 20 heard -- specifically wants a case heard before a 21 judge, but the attorneys in your office think that only a jury can render a fair verdict? 22 How 23 would you resolve that conflict? 24 MR. ROSEN: My answer would be exactly 25 In other words, I would listen to what the same.

1 the victim said, I would consider their opinion, 2 but the ultimate decision would be made by the DA 3 who's trying the case. 4 **REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON:** The other 5 two gentlemen, would you answer that question? MR. TENNIS: One of the things that's 6 7 clear is we work very closely with the victims. They are, obviously, the people that we're trying 8 9 to seek justice for and their opinions would be 10 given great weight in all cases. We give them a lot of consideration. 11 But ultimately, the Constitution and the entire 12 13 system puts on us the responsibility to decide. But I just don't want to downplay it, how much we 14 would try to work to meet the victim's need. 15 16 REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON: I'm glad to 17 hear it. MR. EBERT: I don't have to expand on 18 That's the classic lecture. I always say 19 that. 20 the victim is perhaps the most important person 21 that I would confer with; but ultimately, the decision has to fall on my shoulders. 22 **REPRESENTATIVE WASHINGTON:** Thank you. 23 24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 25 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative

1 Masland.

2 **REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND:** Thank you, 3 I know this is going to be a long Mr. Chairman. 4 afternoon, so I'm just going to make one brief 5 comment, no answers. Basically, this is in 6 response to Representative Joseph's early guery 7 regarding jury bias. 8 And I'd like to just for the record

9 state that as someone who spent three years as a 10 defense attorney before spending almost eight as 11 a prosecutor, I had the opportunity to attend 12 some defense attorney seminars and to read some 13 volumes by notable attorneys like F. Lee Bailey 14 on how to pick a jury.

15 And I'm not going to condone the 16 statements made by the then Assistant DA in 17 Philadelphia County, but those defense seminars 18 and those volumes of books were not designed to 19 pick a jury that was impartial towards everyone. 20 It was designed to pick a jury that would be most 121 favorable to the defendant.

Hopefully, the process works so that both sides are trying to avoid any bias against them. In the end, you get a good panel. That was my experience. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 2 Petrarca. 3 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Thank you, 4 Mr. Chairman. Quick question: Some have said 5 that the problem can be remedied by forcing a defendant to choose whether or not he or she 6 7 wants a jury trial at some point prior to the trial date. Would that solve the problem in your 8 9 opinion? No? Why or why not? 10 MR. ROSEN: It would not address the 11 situation where -- no, I don't believe that it would address the situation where a particular 12 13 judge may not be maybe biased against one particular side or the other, no. Because if a 14 defendant sees he's going in front of a 15 particular judge, he's just going to take a 16 17 waiver trial. REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Wouldn't it 18 cancel our judge shopping problem or --19 Because the defendant 20 MR. ROSEN: No. can always change his mind and demand -- you 21 22 can't take the right to a jury trial away from a 23 defendant. You should be able to so that if a 24 defendant says he's going to waive -- say he 25 comes into the system and says, I'm going to

1 waive and he executes a waiver and he gets to his 2 day of trial or the day before trial and he says, you know what, I've changed my mind. 3 I want a 4 jury trial. You cannot prevent that. 5 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: We can't by 6 local rule, by statute --7 MR. ROSEN: He has the absolute -- and 8 he should, frankly, he should have the absolute That's what the 9 right to a jury trial. 10 Constitution provides. I have no problem with that even though 11 the result may be judge shopping. But what we're 12 13 saying is give the other side, give the victim the same right, put us on a level playing field. 14 But no, you couldn't stop it that way. 15 16 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Thank you. CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I want to thank 17 you gentlemen for your testimony. I appreciate 18 you being here. I'm going to reverse the order 19 20 of the next two who are testifying. 21 I want to thank Mr. Frankel for giving 22 way, if you will, to allow our next testifier, 23 the Honorable Michael Fisher, Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to come and be 24 25 our next testifier. Welcome, Attorney General

1 Fisher. Would you like to introduce the 2 gentlemen with you to the panel? 3 MR. FISHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and 4 Members of the Committee. With me is Bob Gracie 5 (phonetic) who's Senior Deputy Attorney General 6 in charge of our Legal Appeals Section and our Criminal Law Division. 7 8 Very pleased to be here before the 9 Members of the Subcommittee on Crimes and 10 Corrections, a Subcommittee which I had the 11 privilege of serving as the Chairman of in 12 1980 when I was a Member of the House of 13 Representatives. I want to thank you for giving me the 14 15 opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 16 1521 today and to congratulate Representative 17 Gannon for introducing this important measure in 18 the House of Representatives. 19 I would like to begin with the history 20 behind House Bill 1521 as well as its counterpart 21 in the Senate, Senate Bill 555, and why this 22 history, I think, remains very relevant today. In 1935, the State Legislature enacted 23 24 Section 786 of Title 19 allowing a criminal 25 defendant to waive jury trial so long as the

1 judge approved and the prosecution consented. 2 The Act provided in pertinent part in 3 all criminal cases except murder and treason the defendant shall have the privilege with the 4 5 consent of his attorney, the judge, and the district attorney to waive trial by jury. 6 So as 7 you can see, a defendant could be tried without a 8 jury only if a prosecutor consented. 9 In 1968 after the Constitution gave the 10 Pennsylvania Supreme Court the authority to 11 promulgate rules of procedure for the courts, the Supreme Court adopted Rule 1101 of the Rules of 12 13 Criminal Procedure. Rule 1101 read as follows: In all cases 14 except those in which a capital crime is 15 16 charged, the defendant may waive a jury 17 trial with the consent of his attorney, if any, the attorney for the Commonwealth, and 18 the approval by a judge of the court in which the 19 20 case is pending and elect to be tried by a judge 21 without a jury. 22 That was in 1968. Those were the rules 23 that were applicable from 1968 to 1973. The comment appended to this rule noted that 24 25 requiring both the court and the prosecutor to

approve the waiver of a jury trial has been held
 constitutional. For this provision, the comment
 cited the United States Supreme Court case of
 <u>Singer versus United States</u>.
 Fives years later in 1973, the

6 Pennsylvania Supreme Court changed Rule 1101 to 7 its present form. It allows any defendant to 8 waive a jury trial; and important for the present 9 purposes, it deleted the requirement for the 10 prosecutors consent.

11A defendant needs only the judge's12approval to waive a jury trial. Did the Supreme13Court explain why it was changing all those 4014years of law under its relatively new rule-making15authority? No.

16 The comment to the Rules states that the 17 1973 modification by the court deleted the 18 requirement of the approval of the attorney for 19 the Commonwealth.

In 1977 after four years experience with this Rule, the General Assembly again acted and passed Act 50 which gave the Commonwealth the same right to a jury trial as the defendant. In 1978, this body put identical language in the Judicial Act Repealer Act,

1 Section 5104 (c), which read, In criminal cases, 2 the Commonwealth shall have the same right to 3 trial by jury as does the accused. Although it 4 was worded differently, Section 5104 (c) had the same effect as House Bill 1521 will have. 5 6 Since Rule 1101 did not require the prosecutors consent and Section 5104 (c) did, 7 there was a conflict. The Pennsylvania Supreme 8 Court resolved the conflict in 1982 in the case 9 of Commonwealth versus Sorrell. 10 In that case, the Commonwealth argued 11 12 that the right to a jury trial was a substantive right of the Commonwealth. But the Supreme Court 13 said that the jury trial waiver was a matter of 14 court procedure over which the Supreme Court had 15 16 total rule-making authority by the tenth section of the Fifth Article of the Constitution. 17 Since the Section 5, 5104 (c) conflicted 18 with the Supreme Court Rule, the court found 19 20 Section 5104 (c) unconstitutional. This historical background is significant for two 21 22 reasons: First, the principle embodied in House Bill 1521 is not a new legal concept. 23 It represents the resumption of a law 24 that had been longstanding in Pennsylvania 25

jurisprudence since at least 1935. Only in 1973
 did that law change. Secondly, the people of the
 Commonwealth support the law the way it was
 before 1973.
 Three times the people, represented by

5 Three times the people, represented by 6 their Legislators, have spoken. Each time they 7 said the defendant's motion to waive a jury trial 8 ought to be subject to the prosecutor's consent.

9 This Bill would represent the fourth 10 time and hopefully the final time that the people 11 have to speak on this issue. It is the sworn 12 duty of every prosecutor in the Commonwealth to 13 seek justice, not merely convictions.

14That duty is sometimes hampered when the15Commonwealth cannot present its case to a jury of16the defendant's peers from the community where17the crime occurred. House Bill 1521 would give18the Commonwealth that ability.

19 It should be pointed out that it is only 20 in criminal cases that the Commonwealth is denied 21 a right to a jury trial. In civil cases, we may 22 demand on behalf of the Commonwealth a jury trial 23 just as any other litigant.

24I do not believe that prosecutors will25often object to a defendant's request for a jury

1 In fact, reflecting back on my own trial. 2 experience, I was an Assistant District Attorney 3 in Allegheny County from 1970 through 1974. 4 So through part of that time, I operated 5 in a system where, in fact, part of the process 6 when you were in court in a nonjury trial was one 7 of the things which the attorney for the 8 Commonwealth always did was after counsel and the 9 defendant sat down at the table, the defendant 10 and his counsel signed a waiver form. 11 That waiver form was then passed over to the attorney for the Commonwealth who at that 12 13 time would sign off on the waiver form and present the same to the judge. 14 15 I can remember very few occasions in a 16 multi-county court district -- we had about ten 17 judges in Allegheny County at that time. And there were differences in philosophy; there were 18 different people serving on the bench. 19 20 I can remember very few times that as a 21 prosecutor trying many, many cases at that time 22 that I ever objected to the defendant's waiver of 23 the jury trial. Occasionally, I did. 24 Occasionally, colleagues of mine did. 25 But I also remember very clearly that in

1 1973 the Commonwealth took that right away from 2 us, and it to a certain extent did limit the 3 ability of the attorney for the Commonwealth to 4 get the fairest ground possible and to get 5 justice in those cases. 6 The consensus is that by and large the 7 judges in the Commonwealth conduct trials that are fair to both the defendant and the 8 9 Commonwealth. 10 However, there may be a particular case 11 in which a certain judge with an otherwise 12 impeccable and honored record may be considered 13 as unduly biased in favor of the defense or against the prosecution because of his or her 14 15 past actions from on the bench. 16 In such instances, it would be 17 appropriate for the prosecution to object to the 18 defendant's jury trial waiver in order to protect the rights of the victim and the public. Such an 19 20 objection should not be seen as the prosecution 21 attacking a defendant's rights. 22 As recently as February of this year, 23 the same Supreme Court that in 1973 took away the Commonwealth's right to demand a jury trial in a 24 criminal case reiterated in the case of 25

1 public review.

2 An additional layer of accountability 3 exists, of course, in the fact that prosecutors 4 are elected public officials. For these reasons, I support House Bill 1521 as well as its 5 counterpart, Senate Bill 555. 6 7 They do not represent a radical departure from Pennsylvania jurisprudence. 8 9 Rather, they present the resumption of a 10 longstanding part of that jurisprudence. 11 The people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have supported this concept for 12 13 several decades. These bills do not infringe upon the rights of a criminal defendant. They 14 only ensure that a criminal trial will be a fair 15 16 pursuit of justice. 17 I would like to close with a quote from 18 former Chief Justice Earl Warren of the United 19 States Supreme Court from the case of Singer versus the U.S. The case referred to the 1968 20 21 comment to Rule 1101. 22 Chief Justice Warren, a leading 23 proponent of the rights of the accused said, Not 24 only must the right of the accused to a trial by 25 a constitutional jury be zealously preserved, but <u>Commonwealth versus Whitney</u>, a 1998 case -- the
 Supreme Court said it was a capitol case -- While
 a defendant has a constitutional right to a trial
 by jury, he has no such right to a bench trial.
 And the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has relied on
 the United States Supreme Court's <u>Singer</u> decision
 for that proposition.

8 Yet a mere court-made right can deprive 9 the Commonwealth of the ability to put its 10 evidence before a jury. Nor is the prosecution 11 attacking the judge's record. In these few 12 cases, the prosecution is only seeking a level 13 playing field in which to participate in an 14 orderly trial seeking justice.

In the words of former Chief Justice
Nix, who dissented from the <u>Sorrell</u> decision,
House Bill 1521 merely creates in the
Commonwealth the corresponding right to possess
by the accused.

A prosecutor, moreover, will be held accountable for his or her decisions to object to a jury trial waiver motion. As with all other aspects of a criminal trial, the prosecutor's exercising the Commonwealth rights under this provision will be placed on the public record for

1 the maintenance of the jury as a fact-finding 2 body in criminal cases is of such importance and 3 has such a place in our tradition that before any 4 waiver can become effective, the consent of 5 government counsel and the sanction of the court 6 must be had in addition to the express and 7 intelligent consent of the defendant. 8 Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me 9 the time for these remarks. And I would be 10 pleased to answer any questions that you or 11 Members of the Committee may have. 12 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Thank you very 13 much, Attorney General Fisher. And we appreciate you coming here to us. I'm sure that you have a 14 busy schedule and thank you for the time that you 15 gave to us. Representative Masland. 16 17 **REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: (No audible** 18 response.) CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 19 20 Caltagirone. **REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE:** (No audible 21 22 response.) 23 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 24 Manderino. 25 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Thank you.

1 Thank you, Michael, for coming. 1970 to 1974 2 when you were District Attorney, do you recall, 3 were there mandatory minimum sentences back then? 4 I am sure. 5 MR. FISHER: To my recollection, at that 6 time there were none. 7 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Which leads me to my hypothetical. If you could have a 8 right -- Commonwealth right to a jury trial or 9 10 mandatory minimum sentences but not both, which 11 would you choose and why? 12 MR. FISHER: Well, I think just as the representatives from the Philadelphia District 13 Attorney's office and District Attorney Ebert 14 from Cumberland County answered, I think that the 15 right to a jury trial is so much engrained as 16 17 part of our system of justice that if you force me to choose that you can only have one, I would 18 19 be in the same position that they are. I would 20 choose that. 21 I think they're both very important in our criminal justice system, and I don't think 22 23 this is an either/or proposition. 24 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** I'm trying to make it one. 25

89 1 I understand your guestion MR. FISHER: 2 but --3 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Thank you for your answer. 4 5 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 6 Josephs. 7 **REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you've indicated, this is an 8 old issue. It's been before us three times. 9 10 This is the fourth time. So I am interested in statistics. 11 12 Across the Commonwealth, for instance, how many waiver trials do we have as opposed to 13 jury trials? Is that -- is there a trend? 14 IS the trend accelerating? What does the typical 15 jury trial cost the taxpayer? your office? 16 Public defenders, many times the 17 18 taxpayers, of course, paying both -- and so in the adversarial system, what kind of 19 delays -- how long does it take from arrest to 20 trial to conviction in a jury trial as opposed to 21 a waiver trial? 22 23 I mean, some argument was made before us previously -- I think you were here -- that there 24 25 were delays in hearing what was characterized as

1 judge shopping. Are there no delays in putting 2 together jury trials? 3 And if so, can you show us that 4 statistically? How many cases do you think 5 prosecutors across the state can you estimate 6 would -- where they would demand a jury trial, if 7 they could? And what would that cost per trial? And where would they be? 8 9 I mean, all we hear here -- or at least 10 all I am hearing here really is anecdotal 11 evidence. And for me to make a decision that has to do with -- I mean, we're both elected 12 13 officials. It's very difficult to make these kinds of decisions. It's particularly difficult 14 15 without statistics. 16 So I'm making a request for those 17 statistics so that we can make some kind of 18 intelligent decision here. 19 Representative Josephs, MR. FISHER: 20 it's certainly a very good question, one for 21 which you deserve an answer. And I think there 22 is an organization that should have those statistics. It's the Administrative Office of 23 24 the Pennsylvania Courts. 25 I don't know -- they can at least give

1 you the statistics as to the time number of jury 2 trials versus nonjury trials from county to 3 county. The cost per jury trial may be harder to 4 determine, and you may need to get that from each 5 of the counties. 6 You know, a jury trial in a DUI case may 7 take a day. A jury trial in a robbery or burglary trial could take a week. Obviously, 8 9 it's more than, you know, just the amount of time 10 that the trial took. You're going to pay the 11 jurors extra compensation. 12 Many counties have one day/one jury 13 systems where you come in; if you aren't picked, 14 you qo home. But I think the statistics would be 15 available and probably AOPC is the best body to 16 get them from. 17 **REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS:** I appreciate 18 your directing us to the places where we can find 19 these statistics. But if you'll forgive me, you 20 and others are here asking us to change the 21 Constitution. 22 It seems to me part of your argument has 23 got to be these statistics, that you should be 24 presenting them to us; and I would appreciate 25 that very much.

MR. FISHER: Certainly can help you and
 the Chair get those statistics. But I think the
 problem in trying to argue what the impact of
 this will be is talking somewhat a little bit
 about an unknown.

6 I have said, however, not only based on 7 my own personal experience as an Assistant 8 District Attorney but also in my experience as 9 the Attorney General of this Commonwealth and my 10 experience through the years as a Member of this 11 body and the Senate in the criminal justice system, I don't believe that the Commonwealth's 12 13 refusal to waive the right to a jury trial is 14 going to be abused or often used.

But I think it's a right that's so
fundamental that the Commonwealth should have the
right of retaining it.

18 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS: Thank you very
19 much. And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative21James.

REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Thank you,
Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Attorney General, for
testifying. I noticed in your testimony
on -- in the page 4 you said it is a sworn duty

1 of every prosecutor in the Commonwealth to seek 2 justice, not merely convictions. 3 You know, that stands out or just 4 raises some questions to me that if, in fact, that you had a attorney, deputy attorney, and it 5 6 showed that in his conviction rate that he had 7 more not quilty than convictions, would you call 8 him in, or her? 9 I don't think, MR. FISHER: 10 Representative James, that, you know, that's any particular basis on which you would evaluate a 11 12 deputy attorney general or deputy district 13 attorney. You know, certainly there are cases that 14 are tougher cases that obviously -- there are all 15 16 kinds of extenuating circumstances which lead to not guilty findings. 17 And I think it's the overall conduct and 18 the overall ability of the attorney that's 19 20 important for anybody that would serve on my staff. And I'm sure other prosecutors across the 21 22 Commonwealth would agree. 23 **REPRESENTATIVE JAMES:** So you're saying that that's just not -- your convictions or 24 25 nonconvictions is not what you just use to

1 evaluate a deputy attorney general? 2 MR. FISHER: Absolutely not. REPRESENTATIVE JAMES: Okay. Thank you. 3 4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 5 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I want to thank 6 you, Attorney General Fisher. I appreciate your 7 time spent with us today. MR. FISHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 8 Ι 9 thank Mr. Frankel for permitting me to give my 10 testimony out of order. 11 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: And next is Mr. Frankel, the Representative of the American 12 13 Civil Liberties Union. While he's taking his place, I need to make two announcements of 14 letters that the Committee has received in 15 conjunction with this hearing just for the record 16 17 and to make note that they are in possession by the Committee. 18 19 The first comes from a Dr. Charles 20 Kendall, Jr. And he is the co-founding member of 21 Pennsylvania Constitution Watch, Post Office box 22 665, Wayne, Pennsylvania. And he has submitted remarks to the record for the Committee's 23 24 consideration. And we'll see that the Committee Members 25

1 get that and they are duplicated. And I have a 2 second letter from Barbara J. Hartley (sic), 3 Director of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against 4 Domestic Violence. 5 It's addressed to the Senate Judiciary 6 Committee Members dealing with the Senate Bill 7 555, which is a virtually identical bill which was introduced in the Senate. 8 9 But she asked that it would be submitted 10 into the record and made available to the Members of the House Judiciary Committee as well. And we 11 will do that on her behalf. 12 13 For Mr. Frankel and for the rest of you 14 who are here and who are going to be testifying, 15 I would make a simple request; and that is and I 16 know you've all done a great job in preparing 17 your testimony, but if you have in your testimony 18 portions of that which has already been 19 presented, perhaps a historical perspective of 20 where we are today, I think we've heard it three 21 times already and I think we're familiar with it 22 now. 23 So if that is included in your testimony or anything else that is background information 24 25 and duplicative of that which we've already

1 heard, feel free to omit that from your remarks 2 so that would save us some time and also would, 3 I'm sure, keep us more riveted to your testimony 4 knowing that you have something new and fresh to share with this public hearing. 5 6 All that having been said, Mr. Frankel, 7 thank you for coming and thank you also for 8 agreeing to postpone your testimony till after 9 the Attorney General had given us his. You may 10 begin when you're ready. MR. FRANKEL: Okay. Thank you, 11 Representative Birmelin and other Members of the 12 13 Committee. It isn't often that I get a chance to 14 accommodate the Attorney General. I appreciate 15 the chance rather than aggravate the Attorney 16 General. CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: He appreciated it 17 18 too. 19 MR. FRANKEL: And I also hope that -- maybe you may not be riveted on my 20 testimony; but I will try and not belabor my 21 points and move this hearing along. Before I go 22 23 to my remarks, I would like to address Representative Manderino's hypothetical. 24 25 Of course, she didn't even ask me about

1 it -- probably commend her for coming up with a 2 question that I could answer in agreement with 3 all of the previous witnesses. 4 Certainly, if you can manufacture the 5 political trade where we get rid of mandatory 6 sentences, maybe the ACLU would be able to drop 7 its opposition to this constitutional amendment. 8 I also think that you could get an award 9 from an awful lot of people for manufacturing 10 that deal, but we would certainly be willing to 11 make the trade. 12 In any event, the ACLU believes that this proposed constitutional amendment raises a 13 14 whole series of questions, none of which have been addressed previously because they go to 15 16 subjects more complicated than simply leveling 17 the playing field or giving the victim the right 18 to demand a jury. One of the first issues that we think 19 20 about when we consider this proposal and hope you 21 will think about is how it will affect the entire judicial system. Not just the criminal courts, 22 23 but the entire court system. 24 I heard the previous speakers, if you 25 have more demands for jury trials, more judicial

1 time will be taken up with criminal jury trials. 2 That means that civil cases will be delayed, 3 domestic relations will be delayed, noncriminal 4 jury cases will be delayed. 5 There's only so many resources available. And it will have an impact on all of 6 7 the people of the Commonwealth who wish to use 8 the court system for all kinds of purposes. 9 Undoubtedly will occur that if dozens of criminal cases are transformed into jury cases, 10 it will increase the backlog that many of the 11 12 counties are trying to reduce at present. The 13 criminal jury trials will impose additional 14 expenses on the courts. 15 I believe that they will impose 16 additional expenses on the prosecutor. An additional 25 jury trials which can take one or 17 18 two weeks instead of a day, I don't understand how that might not cost the prosecutor's office 19 20 more money. 21 Certainly, it will cost the Public 22 Defender's office or the courts more money if 23 they appoint a counsel. It will cost the courts 24 more money. They have to pay for more jurors. 25 And ultimately, it's going to cost the taxpayers

1 more money.

2	And those costs are not just going to be
3	felt in Philadelphia and Allegheny County.
4	They'll be felt throughout the state,
5	particularly, I think in the smaller counties
6	with fewer judges and smaller jury pools.
7	And as you all know, at present the
8	counties pay those budgets. There's a fight over
9	who pays for court funding; but its cost being
10	imposed on the counties, not necessarily being
11	absorbed by the state.
1 2	The ACLU's also concerned about the
13	impact this will have on the relationship between
14	criminal defendants and the private defense bar.
15	I'm trying to imagine back to when I practiced
16	law and a client came in to see me saying they've
17	been charged with a crime and they want to know
18	what my fee's going to be.
19	To me it seems like a case that
20	we'll probably take nonjury. But I know in
2 1	the back of my head at some point it could become
22	a jury trial.
23	One of the first rules you learn as a
24	criminal defense attorney is you get your fee
25	paid up front. Because if you don't collect your

fee before you go to trial, you're not going to
 see the balance of the fee.

So as a defense attorney, I'm going to be obligated in some, maybe not all cases to charge at least that jury trial fee. The jury trial's going to take a week. It takes more preparation, probably more investigation, more witnesses; so I'm going to be charging more up front.

What will the impact be on the defendants who because of their income level do not qualify for the public defenders? Will I become unjustly enriched because we managed to get away with a judge trial and not a jury trial?

I probably, hoping I'm an ethical and honorably trained, refund the extra fee or negotiate out some kind of agreement that if it's not a judge trial, and refund the fee. But maybe other attorneys would do differently.

If those cases get transferred to the public defenders office instead because they're jury cases, again, you've had additional costs.
But, again, you've created a conflict for the attorney who's going to be losing that particular case.

The ACLU also fears that the Commonwealth will use their right to demand a jury trial as additional leverage in extracting guilty pleas. I have heard what Mr. Tennis said before me.

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And I subscribe, as I hope many defense attorneys who do perceive that they're going to have clients who would feel they cannot afford to mortgage the property to pay for a jury trial.

10 And what is their alternative going to 11 be if the Commonwealth is demanding a jury trial? 12 How do we protect the middle-class defendant in 13 those situations? And how do we protect them 14 against whether it's conscious or unconscious use 15 of the ability to demand a jury trial to create 16 financial hardship for them?

Fundamentally, we believe that the right at stake here is the defendant's right to a trial before an impartial decision maker. After all, it's the defendant who faces time in prison and it's the defendant who has the greater harm that may occur to them if it's an impartial fact finder.

Some defendants may feel that jurors
will be unable to set aside their prejudice based

1 on race, religion or political views. They may 2 feel that the judge in the county has a less 3 biased view. 4 It's not hard stereotypes against them because of their political beliefs or 5 6 backgrounds. It's the defendant's interest in 7 the neutral decision maker which could be severely 8 compromised by the Commonwealth's demand for a 9 jury trial. 10 And that concern regarding the biases of 11 juries was highlighted in the training tapes that 12 were already referred here today. I'm not going 13 to repeat what has occurred in some of the 14 questions, but I think all of us know that at 15 least in one point in time there's evidence now 16 that prosecutors were being trained in biased 17 jury selection processes. And there's some evidence that those 18 kinds of procedures still go on. And 19 20 Representative Masland is correct, defense counsel are trained and defense counsel should be 21 22 reprimanded when they engage in this process. 23 But the prosecutor represents all of the citizens of the Commonwealth. And the courts 24 25 have found that the prosecutor has a special

obligation because the prosecutor represents all
 of the citizens.

And the rights of the citizen to
participate in society's mechanism of justice by
engaging in jury duty should not be compromised
by biased jury selection process.

7 We think that until there is evidence 8 that these kinds of discriminatory practices have 9 indeed ceased and been terminated that it would 10 be premature to all of a sudden to give the 11 prosecutor to demand a jury trial so that they 12 could use these skills that they've learned in an 13 improper way.

You've heard discussion about judge shopping today. There were a couple of questions related to the fact, Are there other means for dealing with this issue?

18 When the Senate had its hearing on this Bill, Senator Earl from Erie County inquired as 19 20 to what kind of procedures were in place in the 21 counties of the district attorneys who were 22 present because she described the procedure in 23 her county where judges do enforce a requirement 24 that defendants state weeks in advance of trial, 25 possibly even before they know the judge who's

going to hearing a case, whether they want the
 judge or a jury; and they found a mechanism to
 make it work.

The current Rules of Criminal Procedure give the trial courts the authority to deny a defendant's request to waive a jury trial, and there are cases they have forced that authority.

8 Less than two years ago in the case of 9 <u>Commonwealth versus Jones</u>, the Pennsylvania 10 Supreme Court upheld a trial judge who had denied 11 a defendant's request to be tried by a judge 12 because he believed that the request was designed 13 solely for purposes of delay.

14And I cited a number of other appellate15court decisions where the courts have relied on16Rule 1101 to deal with defendants who are using17the right to waive a jury trial for improper18purposes.

19It's clear that the trial courts of the20Commonwealth have the power to deal with21defendants who request nonjury trials for22improper purposes. And trial courts do exercise23that power.

We think that amending the Pennsylvania
Constitution is an exaggerated and unnecessary

1 answer to the concern, at least that concern that 2 gave rise to the bill. 3 Finally, there is the, I think, rather bold assertion that the amendment is necessary 4 because of some lenient judges in the state who 5 don't impose mandatory sentences, a position set 6 7 forth in the Pennsylvania District Attorneys 8 Association position paper and reasserted here 9 today in various ways. And I know that the Honorable Linda 10 11 Wallach-Miller of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges is here to testify as is, I 12 13 believe, the Honorable Carolyn Temin from Philadelphia will be here also to testify. 14 And I think that they can answer much of 15 16 that assertion. But I would like to draw your attention to just one of the cases that are cited 17 in the District Attorney's materials. It's the 18 case of Commonwealth versus Leon Williams. 19 It's one of the homicide cases from 20 21 Philadelphia. In that case, a 15-year-old boy 22 was shot by the defendant in a drive-by shooting. He was killed, apparently because he was in the 23 wrong place at the wrong time. 24 And it's at least the inference if not 25

1 more explicit assertion of the District Attorney's that the defendant deliberately chose 2 3 a bench trial. 4 Well, I had the luck to speak to the 5 defense counsel in that case the day he left this 6 country to go take a vacation in France. But he 7 informed me that in that case, it was originally 8 scheduled as a jury trial. 9 And it was the prosecutor in the case 10 who first suggested that maybe they want to 11 take this as a nonjury trial, that his schedule 12 was backed up, he was having difficulties and 13 maybe they should go ahead with a nonjury case. 14 Defense counsel thought about it, went and consulted with his client, and they agreed, 15 16 okay, we'll go ahead with a nonjury case. Case 17 was ultimately tried. 18 According to defense counsel, the prosecution's main witness testimony didn't hold 19 20 up at trial and the judge found the defendant 21 guilty of third degree rather than a first or 22 second degree murder that the prosecutor wanted. 23 The defendant was sentenced to a maximum 24 of 45 years in prison and a minimum of 15 years. 25 They didn't get a life sentence, but the

1 defendant got a substantial sentence. 2 I also would note for your information, 3 the trial judge was the Honorable Jane Cutler Greenspan, who, before she went on the 4 5 bench, was the head of the Appeals Unit in the District Attorney's office in Philadelphia. 6 7 Now, when you talk to the Defense Attorney Barnaby Wittels, he did indicate he 8 would try and get me some written documentation 9 to substantiate that could -- I wouldn't be 10 engaged in what you call, hearsay, here. 11 This morning, I received in my office a 12 13 letter that apparently he dictated and wrote and faxed back his office. And I received the 14 letter here in the mail today. 15 And I'm going to leave copies of that 16 letter here so that you can see what I received. 17 I'm not bringing this to your attention to try 18 and cast aspersions on anybody other than that we 19 hear anecdotal evidence. 20 There are defense attorneys in these 21 cases who they may have a side to present about 22 23 the case, the judge sometimes has to make determinations between what one side and the 24 other is saying. 25

1 I would suggest it might be useful to 2 hear what some of the reasons that defense 3 counsel might give to the judge's determination 4 and the judges themselves because we found at 5 times, and as Representative James noted, there 6 is another side to these stories and both 7 sides aren't necessarily going to be told by an advocate. 8

9 I presume, again without casting
10 aspersions, often any of the honorable elected
11 officials here, I guess I kind of hope that you
12 don't expect anything of, say, all
13 the -- because I am a advocate for a position
14 being that you're an elected official and you
15 have to balance interests.

But unfortunately, it does occur and we do have two sides for various issues. Without going into further questions about the cases that I mentioned, I do believe that we have suggested and others will suggest substantive policy reasons that this is a much more complicated issue.

It's not only an issue of statistics, an
issue of how resources are going to be divided
and how the courts are going to function. And we

1 hope that you will take and know you will take 2 serious consideration of all points of view when 3 deliberating over this matter. And I will be 4 happy to try and answer any questions. 5 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Thank you, 6 Mr. Frankel. Representative Manderino. 7 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Thank you. 8 You thought you got away by preempting my 9 question, but now I have a follow-up for you. And the point that I'm sure it's clear 10 11 that I was trying to make is that when I look 12 back over what we've done legislatively in the criminal justice system and taking '73 as the 13 14 time frame historically that everyone's pointing us to as when the Supreme Court ruling changed 15 the way we did things in Pennsylvania, what I'm 16 17 trying to identify is, okay, then we had 25 years of legislation and jurisprudence that came after 18 that. 19

20 And what changes -- I identify mandatory 21 minimum sentences as just one issue, which is my 22 Achilles heel. But I suspect that there are 23 other things that have grown up in the wake of 24 adjusting and re-adjusting the system in light of 25 the way that it operated pre- and post-73, if you 1 can use that as an example.

2	And what I don't like about this is not
3	the fundamental approach, but the balance of
4	justice and fairness. And I'm trying to figure
5	out what else is on the other side of the scales
6	other than we thought you know, you took away
7	the right of us, the Commonwealth, to go to a
8	judge and then now you didn't leave us any way to
9	get around lenient, quote/unquote, judges.
10	So then we needed mandatory minimums.
11	And then it created this other problem where we
12	needed this. I'm trying to figure out what's on
13	the other side of the ledger. And I wondered if
14	you had any other perspective?
15	MR. FRANKEL: I think the other
16	perspective, if I understand the question, is
17	that a lot of behavior has been criminalized that
18	might previously not have been criminal behavior,
19	so there are more cases in the system; we are
20	
20	expecting our criminal courts to do more than we
20 21	expecting our criminal courts to do more than we used to because we make certain things a crime;
21	used to because we make certain things a crime;
21 22	used to because we make certain things a crime; whether it was correct or not, transferring

1 Some of it is what's occurred outside of 2 the criminal system. Courts are a resource. And 3 when there are more domestic relations cases, 4 that's going to put more pressure on the criminal caseload as well just because we need -- you 5 6 know, if you're a victim of a crime and you're 7 also waiting for your child support case to be 8 heard, I mean, where is your priority going to 9 be? 10 And all those kind of interests have to 11 be balanced out. I don't know if that's, you 12 know, responsive to your question; but when I 13 think of other factors that we have -- that 14 people involved in this system have to think about and deal with, it's those kinds of things. 15 16 There's more things that are made 17 crimes, more juveniles treated as adults when 18 maybe some other heavier sentencing that isn't necessarily mandatory sentencing and the fact 19 20 that there's a lot more demands being made on the 21 court system in general and how do you sort out 22 all those demands. 23 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Thank you. 24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 25 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative

1 Masland.

2	REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: Thank you,
3	Mr. Chairman. Mr. Frankel, I realize that your
4	first argument to retain the current system is
5	based on the impact of the judicial system.
6	But I think from our earlier
7	conversations that you would agree in situations
8	like this where you're talking about a
9	constitutional amendment, you have to look at
10	more than just costs, more than just data.
11	And that may be nice, but really
12	whether it costs more for a jury trial or nonjury
13	trial or those type of issues should be secondary
14	to the philosophical question of should you make
15	this change and whether or not justice will be
16	better served. Would you not agree with that?
17	MR. FRANKEL: While I would agree that
18	there are secondary issues, I don't think that
19	they can be discounted completely because they're
20	integral to whether justice can be served.
21	If the court system is so overloaded
22	that there's a breakdown, this amendment could
23	backfire because justice won't be served because
24	cases won't be able to proceed. So I don't think
25	you can discount entirely, but I do think you

1 first and foremost have to face it as a matter 2 without regard to cost. 3 **REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND:** And I would 4 concede that if it came to the point where 5 justice could not be served, then we would have to indeed take into account to a greater extent 6 7 the cost issue. Thank you. 8 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Thank you, 9 Mr. Frankel. We're going to take a short break 10 to give the stenographer a moment to give her fingers a rest, and then we will proceed again at 11 The official clock says 3:08. So at 3:15, 12 3:15. 13 we will pick up again. Take a short break and give those of you 14 15 who are here also an opportunity to use the rest 16 room if you need to. So we're in recess until 17 3:15. 18 (At which time, a brief break was taken.) CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I have offered to 19 20 the last five people who wish to testify the 21 opportunity to save time and expedite the hearing to sit as a group, four of them -- three 22 23 of them having accepted my offer. 24 I guess the fourth isn't going to be 25 here and Mr. Reil would prefer not to sit with

1 them to present his testimony separately, so I 2 will honor his request to do that. 3 Let me introduce the --4 JUDGE SALUS: I'm Judge Samuel W. 5 Salus, the Second; and I'm the President-elect of 6 Pennsylvania Conference of Trial Judges and I 7 will succeed --8 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I'll ask you to 9 do that again when you have a microphone. To my 10 far left is Mary Achilles, who is a victim 11 advocate from the Office of Victim Advocate, 12 Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole. Next to her is Mr. Robert Tarman, 13 14 Esquire, Cochair of Legislative Committee for the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense 15 Next to him is the Honorable Linda 16 Lawyers. 17 Wallach-Miller, a judge from the 43rd Judicial 18 District, which is in Monroe County. 19 And, sir, would you introduce yourself 20 again using the microphone so that our 21 stenographer can record your presence? 22 JUDGE SALUS: I'm Judge Samuel W. Salus, 23 the Second from Montgomery County. And I'm 24 President-elect of the Pennsylvania Conference of 25 State Trial Judges, and I will succeed Judge

1 Miller in July.

2 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Okay. Thank you 3 very much for coming here. I will ask Mary if 4 you would go first so that we can have you in order that you're seated. 5 6 And, again, I would ask you as I did 7 with the other testifiers if you would try to not be repetitive of that which has already been said 8 9 and to make your remarks from you perspective. 10 MS. ACHILLES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman 11 and Members of the Committee. My name is Mary 12 Achilles, and I'm a victim advocate in 13 Pennsylvania. 14 I'm here today before you to testify in 15 support of Senate Bill -- or House Bill 1521 and 16 also here to represent the Pennsylvania Coalition 17 of Crime Victims Organization and their support of House Bill 1521. 18 19 In 1996 when this legislation made its 20 first round through the Pennsylvania's 21 Legislature, the Coalition was in overwhelming 22 support. Discussion emanated from experience of 23 seasoned victim advocates from across the 24 Commonwealth. 25 Their firsthand experience has been that

1 the defendant's right to waive a jury trial has 2 developed into the defendant's right to judge 3 shop. 4 This is devastating to the victim in 5 that it gives the offender control of the degree 6 of exposure that the community will have to the 7 amount of human trauma perpetrated upon the 8 victim. Although I am usually reluctant to 9 10 generalize the feelings of the crime victims, 11 those of us who provide crisis intervention to crime victims know that each and every victim is 12 13 rendered powerless during the commission of a 14 crime. Our primary goal in providing support 15 services is to assist each individual victim in 16 regaining their equilibrium and their power. 17 18 Depending on the impact of the crime, this is for many a long and painful journey often interrupted 19 by the criminal justice process. 20 21 Our goal in seeking and securing the rights of crime victims and the prosecutors who 22

rights of crime victims and the prosecutors who
represent them is one more step towards providing
the crime victims with the opportunity to regain
power and control over their lives.

1My view of the justice system is one in2which the merits of the case from both the3defense and prosecution views are presented to a4judge or a jury.

5 As the District Attorney's Association 6 has already stated, in practice, the defendant's 7 right to a jury trial has become the Defendant's 8 right to present the merits of their case before 9 a particular judge whose reputation is known 10 throughout the courthouse.

Once a case has been scheduled for jury trial by an independent and impartial court administer at the request of the defendant, the defendant is allowed to waive their right to a jury trial in an effort to seek a more lenient or defense-oriented judge. The balance of power has been shifted in favor of the defense.

18 The system is following the lead of the 19 offender, and the victim and the prosecutor have 20 no opportunity for input. For many this may seem 21 to have a minor impact on the victim; however, it 22 is of great significance.

The victim continues to feel controlled by the crime, by the criminal, and now by the system. This procedural aspect of moving the

1 case through the criminal justice system and 2 process at the whim of the defendant is yet 3 another detraction from the victim's perspective 4 of the system's inability to effect justice. 5 Why should the victim through the 6 prosecutor not have a say in whether their case 7 is heard by a judge or a jury? Why should they be prevented from having the opportunity to share 8 9 their experience with 12 members of the community 10 in which they live? The value for victims is to have a voice 11 12 in whether or not their case goes before a jury 13 is separate and independent from the outcome of 14 the case. The system to be truly responsive to the needs of crime victims must demonstrate that 15 16 victims do, in fact, have a role in the process. 17 The system as an institution within our 18 communities must provide victims with an opportunity for validation, validation that they 19 20 are valuable members of the community and 21 afforded an equal opportunity to tell their 22 story publicly. It has been my experience that the 23 24 defendant will often waive their right to a jury 25 trial simply to avoid the number of people

exposed to the true element of the crime, to the
 true and often gruesome nature of the harm
 inflicted upon the victim.
 For many victims, the opportunity to
 have their case heard by a jury of their peers is
 a unique opportunity to receive validation from
 the system separate from the outcome of the case.

8 To give victims through the prosecutors 9 who represent them a voice in whether or not 10 their case is heard by a jury is another step 11 towards empowering crime victims to regain 12 control.

13The more input the crime victims and14their representatives have in the justice15process, the greater their sense of control and16the greater their chances of recovery.

The defendant's ability to exploit the system by demanding a jury trial then waiving it once the case has been assigned creates an undue burden on the victim, who is waiting patiently for their day in court.

This delay tactic is presently unavoidable and puts victims on an emotional roller coaster preparing for their day in court only to have it delayed by the defendant's

1 endless right to request a jury trial and then 2 change their mind. 3 I support the Pennsylvania District 4 Attorney's Association position on House Bill 5 1521 and ask that you vote to support this 6 legislation also. 7 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Thank you. Next 8 we'll hear from Robert Tarman, the co-chair of 9 the Legislative Committee for the Pennsylvania 10 Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. 11 Mr. Tarman. 12 MR. TARMAN: Thank you. And on behalf 13 of the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, I 14 would like to say that we are opposed to this 15 amendment. 16 I bring into this debate experience as an assistant public defender in Dauphin County 17 and then chief public defender for a period of 18 19 about ten years and then the last twelve as a 20 private attorney concentrating on criminal 21 defense work. And that's mostly in the Central 22 Pennsylvania area. 23 One thing from an historical perspective that I just feel compelled to say is that the 24 Sixth Amendment to the Constitution limits the 25

1 right to a trial by jury to the accused. And the 2 words "the accused" are in the Sixth Amendment. 3 Only by legislative enactment was that 4 ever changed. From a historical and constitutional perspective, this has been a right 5 of the defendant. 6 7 And it has been pointed out although 8 victims' rights are important -- and they have 9 been elevated in the past several years as they 10 should be -- but it's the defendant who stands to go to jail and lose his freedom and reputation. 11 And that really is the hallmark of our 12 13 criminal justice system. That's why we have the Bill of Rights that many times give certain 14 rights such as a right against search and 15 16 seizure -- improper search and seizure, to a 17 speedy trial, to a public trial. 18 Those are rights that although many of those rights are important to the public and the 19 20 victims, they're rights that enure to the 21 defendant. 22 Again, I don't want to belabor this; but 23 we're now at a point in our criminal justice 24 history here in Pennsylvania where prosecutors 25 have more power than they've ever had before and

most recently the power to ask for the death penalty, to invoke -- literally to invoke mandatory sentences to compel judges to issue them and to appeal judges who have sentenced outside the guidelines.

6 And a lot of these powers have been 7 given to prosecutors and taken from the judges 8 of this state. And we as defense lawyers are 9 against this trend and we think it should stop 10 now.

I want to jump to my fourth point. And that is that it's my feeling that this amendment does by its very writing, it says we don't trust Common Pleas judges in this state. And that annoys me greatly.

You know, when a defense lawyers takes 16 17 his client before a judge and makes the decision to go nonjury -- and usually, usually this 18 benefits the taxpayer -- this is usually a 19 20 situation where you want to preserve suppression issues for appeal, sometimes it's a complicated 21 22 case, sometimes it does involve resources where a client may not have all the resources that a jury 23 24 trial would expend.

25

There are many, many reasons why we do

1 this. But when we take a client before the 2 judge, we expect the judge to interrogate the 3 client; and I mean interrogate. 4 The judge wants to know if the defendant 5 understands his rights to a trial by jury; it's 6 explained to him, what a jury is, that it must be 7 beyond a reasonable doubt, unanimous verdict. He 8 wants to make sure the defendant understands the right he's giving up, and he wants to make sure 9 10 that it's for a valid reason. 11 The District Attorney can stand there 12 and say, Your Honor, this guy has done this three 13 times. He's kept this case going for four or 14 five months overdue by going between judge and 15 jury. 16 He can say that, and the judge can then 17 as he properly should can reject the defendant's effort to waive a jury and tell him that he's 18 19 going to pick a jury now in this courtroom. He 20 has that right. 21 And, you know, we talk about judges 22 being prejudiced one way or another. Most of the 23 judges -- a majority come from the ranks of 24 prosecutors. There have been, of course, judges 25 elected from the defense bar; but the majority

1 come from the ranks of prosecutors. 2 I believe all judges whether they're 3 prosecutors or former defense attorneys really seek and strive to be down the middle. And I can 4 5 tell you that that's all we want. We want a judge to be down the middle. б 7 I like, of course, to be in a courtroom 8 where I have a judge who likes me or who I think 9 may be favorable in some way. I'm an advocate, as Representative Masland has pointed out. 10 11 When I'm picking a jury, I'm certainly looking for a jury who's going to be prone to my 12 13 client and the prosecutor the same. Åny 14 prosecutor who would be truthful with you would 15 tell you the same thing. But I want a judge to be down the 16 middle, to look at my client and judge it as he 17 should. I don't want a prosecutor who may wish 18 to have a public forum in front of a jury and may 19 20 have disingenuous reasons, as many defense attorneys do in cases, I don't want him to come 21 in and tell me that I can't waive a 22 Constitutional right that was given to me. 23 I can compare it to a defendants's right 24 25 to waive his speedy trial rights. A defendant

has a right in this Commonwealth if he's
 incarcerated to have a speedy trial, and that's
 been ruled by our courts to be a hundred and
 eighty days.
 Many times, a defense attorney's not
 prepared for trial: It's a complicated case: here

prepared for trial: It's a complicated case; he
has experts out there that he needs more time
and he's actually going to be prejudiced by a
speedy trial.

He goes before a judge and he says he wants to waive his right to a speedy trial. Now, again, the district attorney can say to the judge, Well, I have elderly witnesses, I have witness that have to leave the country who won't be able to testify; the judge then can be right down the middle and make that decision.

17 And in answer to the question from 18 Representative Manderino, Where is this all going 19 to go, Well, the Commonwealth may come back to 20 you and say we want a Constitutional amendment to 21 deny a defendant from waiving his right to a 22 speedy trial.

We want a speedy trial too because it's
in our interest to have a speedy trial. These
are all issues that should be put before a judge.

The defense attorney and district attorney are advocates. It's the judge who should make these decisions.
If there's gamesmanship, if there are reasons for waiving a jury trial which are not proper which are expending the resources of the

7 Commonwealth, then the defendant should be8 denied.

9 When I testified before the Senate
10 Committee, I heard a case -- you hear all these
11 anecdotal cases which really amaze me because
12 they don't happen in my count. And in Central
13 Pennsylvania, I don't see it happening.

But it was a situation where apparently a defendant at the last minute waived his right to a trial by jury and the witnesses had to be sent home and the district attorney then had to face them and say, well, you have to come back next month, there's no reason for that.

A court administer can handle these problems. That jury should have been sent down and put in another courtroom and that defendant should have told, You're going to have your trial in front of me right now because if your lawyer was prepared to try the case in front of a jury,

127 1 then he certainly would be prepared to try the 2 case in front of a judge. 3 Also there was a comment before if a 4 defendant waived his right to a trial by jury 5 that then we could never stop him from 6 reannouncing that waiver. I don't think that's 7 true. 8 I take a client before a judge and waive 9 my right to a speedy trial and of course he's 10 interrogated, it's on the record, he's told what 11 a speedy trial is, he waives it; he can't 12 come back two days later and say, hey, guess 13 what, I want a speedy trial. 14 If that defendant waives his right to a 15 trial by jury, a knowing waiver of that right, 16 then he cannot come back and change that. He should not be allowed to do that unless he has a 17 18 compelling reason. And it should be a compelling 19 reason. 20 So what I'm hearing really doesn't make 21 The district attorneys are asking you to sense. 22 go to the tremendous expense of an amendment 23 process to change something that not only is 24 costly -- and I do agree with Representative 25 Masland that it's the philosophical decision here

1 that we should face over the cost -- but it's not 2 right. 3 It should be the judge that makes these 4 decisions. Judges have been stripped of their 5 power -- a lot of their powers in this state. 6 This is a power that should rest with them. 7 Finally, I just want to speak from a 8 lawyer who practices here in Central Pennsylvania 9 as a chief public defender, an assistant public 10 defender, and as a private attorney, I have never 11 abused the right to a nonjury trial. Never. 12 And I can tell you that the assistant 13 public defenders who worked under me did not. 14 And if they were, a judge would have stopped 15 So I don't -- I really don't see where them. this is a problem. And if it is, it must be in 16 17 Philadelphia. 18 And if there are judges down there who 19 openly refuse to invoke mandatory sentences -- and I know there are a lot of judges 20 21 who don't like mandatory sentences. It's been 22 pushed down their throats. 23 There are many cases in which they feel 24 it's an justice. And as you know, there are some 25 cases in which some defendants should get double

the mandatory. In some cases it's an injustice.
 They don't like it.

But if they openly say they won't invoke 3 the mandatory sentence, then they should recuse 4 5 themself from the case. If a judge is so 6 adamantly opposed to the death penalty that he 7 could not fairly charge a jury on a death case, 8 then the judge should recuse themselves from the 9 case. And the District Attorney has the right to 10 ask the judge for recusal.

And finally, I just want to tell you 11 maybe both sides should make statistics because I 12 13 know of several cases, big cases in Dauphin County -- the most recent one was a homicide case 14 in which there were two defendants. It was a 15 death penalty case. It was a robbery of a taxi 16 driver. So it was a robbery and murder and the 17 18 death penalty applied.

19 The one defendant went to a jury. The 20 other defendant, the co-defendant sat at the same 21 trial but allowed the judge to decide his case 22 with a plea agreement that if he were found 23 guilty of murder of the first degree that the 24 death penalty would not be sought by the District 25 Attorney.

1 The jury in that case rendered a verdict 2 of third degree murder against the defendant who did not make this deal. And the judge who had sealed this verdict before the jury came down to 5 protect himself rendered a decision of second degree murder.

3

4

6

7 He ruled that it was a felony murder, and that defendant is now subject to a life 8 9 sentence. So here's a case where the jury was 10 tougher than -- or the judge was tougher than the 11 jury.

And I can cite many other cases, many 12 13 other cases. There are many juries that render 14 verdicts where both prosecutor and defense attorney sometimes we shake our heads not only 15 because of the decision but why they made it. 16

And we don't have a perfect system, but 17 18 I can't see where taking power away from judges who are learned in the law and can divorce 19 20 themselves from emotion in cases why they should 21 be told that they can't decide whether or not a defendant can waive his right to a trial by jury. 22

23 And by the way, there are just those cases that are so complicated, are so emotionally 24 charged and racially charged that I believe that 25

1 a judge can sit and render a more competent and 2 more fair verdict than a jury. 3 As much as I believe in the jury system, 4 and I do; but there are those cases. And the 5 defendant should have the right to ask for a 6 judge trial in those cases. Thank you. 7 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Thank you, Mr. Tarman. 8 Our next testifier is the Honorable Linda Wallach-Miller. 9 10 MS. WALLACH-MILLER: Good afternoon, 11 Representative Birmelin and other Members of the House Subcommittee on Crime and Corrections. 12 Mv 13 name is Linda Wallach-Miller, and I am a judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Monroe 14 15 County -- that's up in the northeast -- and 16 President of the Pennsylvania Conference of State 17 Trial Judges, the organization representing the 18 over 400 trial judges in the Commonwealth. I want to express our appreciation 19 20 for this opportunity to talk to you and outline 21 our concerns from the trial judges about this 22 proposed bill. 23 At our mid-annual meeting at the end of February, the conference voted overwhelmingly to 24 25 oppose this matter. We ask that you consider the

1 matter carefully. We believe the consequences of 2 your taking this action are considerable and that 3 any perceived benefit is illusory and not real. 4 We have no quarrel with the District 5 Attorneys Association nor any alignment with the

6 defense bar. Indeed, more judges, including this
7 one, are former DAs than any other chosen path to
8 the bench.

9 Perhaps it is for this very reason that
10 the majority in our Conference recognize the
11 potential mischief which this measure does. The
12 burden of this measure in the larger
13 jurisdictions is potentially crushing.

Philadelphia County heard over 3,000 nonjury trials in 1996, specifically they actually heard 3,177 nonjury trials. And that compares to 541 jury trials. Allegheny County heard an additional 500 -- and I believe that's actually 562.

Without the waiver of jury trials, the system couldn't function. Trials that would take days are completed in hours. If this amendment is enacted, you will inevitably be requested to fund many additional judges to preside over the additional jury trial days needed for the

1 lengthier trials; citizens will be asked to serve 2 as jurors more often -- in some jurisdictions, 3 we're calling citizens back for jury duty every 4 18 months; our crowded jails will be unable to 5 hold the defendants in pretrial lock up; and the 6 possibility of Rule 1100 violations is very real. 7 Thus those very same defendants may be back on 8 the streets.

9 Overcrowded jails have come to mean that 10 in many places only the most serious defendants 11 can be kept in jail before trial. More jury 12 trials will need longer time at trial and it will 13 lengthen the time to conviction and 14 incarceration.

Because private lawyers charge much more
to try jury trials, more defendants will be
unable to afford them and counties will have the
expense of expanded public defender offices.

19It's apparent that the advocates of this20Bill support it based upon a belief that the21Commonwealth can get better results in front of22juries and in front of certain judges in a23particular county. Is it logical to enact a24Constitutional amendment based on this belief?25It is certainly true that trials before

different judges may have different results;
 however, to concede this is really to concede
 nothing.

Many of you full well know that there are few more random events in life than asking a criminal jury to apply the reasonable doubt standard. There's no evidence that jurors are more conviction minded than judges.

9 A reading of the headlines of some of
10 the most famous criminal trials of our decade is
11 evidence of this. Bear in mind that jury use
12 will not affect sentencing. That will remain in
13 the hands of the judges.

I testified in before the Senate
Judiciary Committee several weeks ago. During
the question-and-answer session that followed, it
was made clear to me and my colleagues present
that this bill is specifically aimed at
Philadelphia County.

Is it logical to amend the Constitution of Pennsylvania for a perceived problem in one county out of 67? Our constitution was written to protect the citizens of Pennsylvania, not to protect the government.

25

In our sound bite society, it's become

popular for elected officials, especially
 prosecutors, to label legislators and judges as
 soft on crime. This political posturing has the
 effect of eroding confidence in the Judiciary and
 the Legislature.

6 Our Constitution was written by men who 7 had firsthand knowledge of a judiciary that could 8 not and was not permitted to function 9 independently. We believe that the far-reaching 10 aim of this bill would seriously erode judicial 11 independence.

As judges, we respect your role and your concerns. We understand that you have a deep concern that serious crime be treated with gravity and with strictness. We share your concern. Remember as I said before, the large proportion of our judges came to their jobs from the prosecutor's table.

I do have statistics with me which 19 20 break down by county the criminal caseload 21 statistics. These are prepared by the 22 Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Court. 23 They are titled, Case Load Statistics of the 24 Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania. They 25 are for 1996. 1997 are currently being prepared.

1 The copy I have is not clear, but I will 2 get a clear copy and I will provide that to each Member of this Committee. I did verify this 3 afternoon with the AOPC that statewide in 1996 4 5 there were 4,623 nonjury trials and 3,239 jury These are criminal. 6 trials. 7 We would ask that you carefully consider the Constitutional and the practical 8 ramifications of this measure. And I thank you 9 10 very much for allowing us to appear here. I'm available to respond to questions as is Judge 11 12 Salus, who is the President-elect of our 13 organization. Thank you. Thank you very 14 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: 15 much, Judge Miller. Representative Manderino, do you have any questions? 16 REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO: Thank you, 17 Mr. Chairman. Do you kind of want me just to go 18 down the line? 19 20 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: You may ask questions of any of those four people. 21 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** I'll start 22 back at the beginning with Mary Achilles. I just 23 had one -- or actually two areas of questioning. 24 Earlier Representative Washington asked the 25

1 District Attorneys what -- how they resolve 2 conflicts when the victim wants a jury trial but 3 the DA feels that nonjury is the appropriate way 4 to go and then vice versa when the victim wants 5 nonjury and the DA wants jury. 6 And the DA's response from both of the 7 DAs that were there was that, of course, what the 8 victim says is very important, but ultimately it's our decision. 9 10 And when I listened to your 11 testimony -- and I understand you're a victim 12 advocate -- but it kept striking me that your 13 perspective was somewhat different. So I assume that you find yourselves and 14 15 crime victim advocates find themselves having to 16 counsel victims whose choice was different than 17 that of the DA's. And do you find that that 18 happens often and how do you counsel them? I think I remember the 19 MS. ACHILLES: 20 question. I think that, you know, the Bill 21 before us is about giving the prosecution that The way the Bill of Rights exists in 22 right. 23 Pennsylvania and the way it is practiced or 24 should be practiced is to consult with the victim. 25

I mean, DA's cannot make plea negotiations, reductions of charges without victim input; but victims don't get vote and total power. It has been my experience -- most of the times it's been my experience that victims don't want total power.

7 It's been my experience that what you're
8 categorizing as a conflict really in most cases
9 would not really become a conflict. It's a
10 discussion.

11 That you may have the parent of a child abuse victim who says my child still can't sleep 12 at night, they can't go through this, they're not 13 doing well in school, they can't testify; and 14 15 then that would be a major consideration in the 16 prosecution's presentation of their case and may accommodate the victim's concern by, you know, 17 wanting -- by agreeing with them for a jury 18 19 trial.

I really don't perceive the level of conflict that was in your question; however, I'm not saying that there would never be a conflict. But I don't find that in practice there is. REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO: So when you say for many victims the opportunity to have

1 their case heard by a jury of their peers is a 2 unique opportunity to receive validation from the 3 system separate and independent from the outcome 4 of the case, that's if the DA agrees? 5 MS. ACHILLES: Yeah. I think what I was 6 trying to focus on is about, you know, when I 7 recognize that victims' needs, which is different 8 than their rights, I think often are in conflict 9 with the justice system in general and that 10 victims telling their story is really important. 11 So I'm not advocating in that sense for 12 the victims to be able to say I want a jury trial 13 and control the courtroom; but I am talking about 14 that that does have an impact on victims, that they need that sense -- for victims, justice is 15 16 an experience. It's not something that gets 17 doled out by the judge. 18 You know, they need the participation; 19 the input; the contact with the prosecutor; the 20 police; the ability to talk, you know, before the 21 judge; and the ability to tell their story in 22 whatever manner. 23 I'm not saying that every victim wants to get up and tell their story in front of a 24 25 jury, but I think that there's a great impact in

1 terms of recovery and sort a therapeutic thing 2 about that. That's clearly what the victims need 3 to recover. 4 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** I guess we 5 are on the same page --6 MS. ACHILLES: Yes. 7 **REPRESENTATIVE MANDERINO: -- because I** 8 too have known victims that didn't want to get up 9 and tell their story but had to because of the 10 decision made of the waiver to pursue the case. 11 So it cuts both ways. It does. It does. 12 MS. ACHILLES: 13 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** My only 14 other question -- and I'm interested -- the Judge described a process by which the Pennsylvania 15 16 Conference of State Trial Judges voted to oppose 17 the legislation. 18 By what process did the Pennsylvania Coalition of Crime Victims Organization decide to 19 20 support the Bill? What --MS. ACHILLES: We voted in our 21 22 membership meeting the first time this 23 legislation came around. They have not looked at 24 it a second time also. **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** So members 25

of all the crime victim organizations across
 Pennsylvania --

MS. ACHILLES: Right. Well, or they're
a member of -- Coalition. That's a significant
broad-based group.

6 **REPRESENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Thank you. 7 Again, the only other question I have is for 8 Mr. Tarman. And that is, You alluded to -- and 9 maybe it's hard to enumerate specifically. But you alluded to the fact that of things that have 10 11 grown in the system to accommodate or combat the 12 perception of judges who are soft on crime.

From my perspective, mandatory minimum sentences are one of those things that have grown out of that perception. Are there other specific things that we have adjusted in our system in these past 10 or 15 or 20 years that you perceive has had that same kind of impact?

19MR. TARMAN: First of all, there have20been so many new crimes passed. And so many of21the -- the Crimes Code had really been put into a22situation now where it's more prosecution prone23because prosecutors have more crimes to charge.24And a lot of the rules of evidence, as25an example, in the sexual abuse cases, evidence

1 can be brought into a trial that formerly could 2 not be. And to some extent, we opposed some of 3 it; but some of it was right too, that it really 4 it was good legislation. 5 But with good legislation sometimes 6 comes bad. And recently I testified before the 7 Republican Policy Committee, and we offered to 8 the Committee the proposition to propose 9 legislation to waive the mandatory minimum 10 sentence for first-time, nonviolent offenses, 11 which mostly include drug offenses. 12 And we feel that that would be good 13 But not to get off your question, legislation. 14 so many things have been passed the district 15 attorneys can now appeal judges where they That's another area. 16 couldn't before. 17 They can appeal judges, as I mentioned, 18 who go outside the mandatory minimum, who fail to 19 invoke a lot of these tough statutes. They can 20 appeal them. 21 So, you know, and if I were to go 22 through the Crimes Codes, I could probably point 23 out many, many, many instances over the -- just 24 from the recent Governor Ridge's Crime Package. 25 I mean, my goodness, that has really changed the

1 face of criminal law in this state. 2 **REPRENSENTATIVE MANDERINO:** Thank you. 3 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 4 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 5 Masland. 6 **REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND:** Thank you, 7 Mr. Chairman. First of all, let me agree with 8 Judge Wallach-Miller that there probably is, as I 9 saw my old counterpart and compatriot Mr. Tarman 10 smile at the same time when she mentioned fewer 11 random events -- more random events in life than 12 that of asking criminal juries to apply 13 reasonable doubt, which is why the defense attorneys and prosecution spend so much time just 14 15 on what is reasonable doubt. 16 That being said, I can remember cases in 17 the DA's office where we felt we had to just 18 present that to a jury. It was for a sense of 19 justice. It was -- we knew something wrong had 20 happened. We felt that it was the defendant, but 21 it was one of those issues that let's just put it 22 before the jury and let justice determine what 23 happens. 24 I had one of those cases where a person 25 was acquitted and I walked out of the courtroom

1 satisfied. But you just -- you have that 2 feeling -- and nothing against judges because I 3 have some friends that are judges who recently 4 donned some of the judicial robes. But I don't 5 mean this disparaging at all, but there's some 6 sense that it's nice to have it before 12 peers, 7 if you will, and let them make those decisions. 8 Any thoughts on that? 9 MS. WALLACH-MILLER: I think I can 10 certainly empathize with you. During my days as a DA, I had cases like that too. Last year in 11 Monroe County we had five nonjury trials. All of 12 13 them were for the specific purpose of preserving 14 a record for an appeal basically because it was a 15 suppression issue. 16 We're sort of unique in Monroe County. While we're perceived in a lot of ways as a small 17 18 county, we're 70 miles from Manhattan. And in the last 15 years, our population has tripled. 19 20 Our criminal dockets have exploded. 21 We'll be doing criminal trials beginning the 22 first Tuesday of May. I believe at this point we 23 have over 350 trials scheduled. Now, 90 percent

24 of those will plead.

25

But even with the 10 percent left, with

four judges, we have a jury coming in, we've got 1 2 to get those done in two weeks because -- and all four of us do criminal trials. We don't have 3 4 divisions. We're not big enough. If a District Attorney -- or excuse me. 5 If a defendant comes in and says I want to go to 6 nonjury and of course the DA doesn't object, 7 wonderful. That means that we can save a lot 8 time, a lot of money, a lot of jury time, et 9 10 cetera, and court time. The judge always has the option and the 11 discretion to say to that defendant, No, you're 12 not; and the judge can weigh and balance those 13 14 issues. Frankly from a somewhat personal point 15 of view, I like working with a jury. It makes my 16 job easier. Just like if you pass this bill, 17 it'll make your job easier because it'll be an 18 amendment to the Constitution. It won't be 19 something that you necessarily have to make a 20 decision on. 21 So working with a jury is in a lot of 22 ways easier for a judge because the jury makes 23 the decision. I don't see how this bill will 24 impact, if I understand your question correctly, 25

1 one way or the other.

2 REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: Well, let me 3 get -- it was more of a comment just to see what 4 your responses were. Let me get to something 5 that really both you and Mr. Tarman can possibly 6 address.

7 And I agree that sometimes nonjury 8 trials are requested because it may be 9 complicated issues or issues of resources also. 10 My experience was that a lot of times they were 11 just extending guilty pleas, as you say, to 12 preserve suppression issues or under 13 situations -- in fact, the first one I had as a 14 defense attorney I was advised by senior defense 15 attorneys that the guy's going to be guilty; you might as well just go ahead and just use -- it 16 17 was an escape case.

He didn't come back to prison when he was supposed to come back to prison. So technically, it was an escape. But maybe it was just he had a beer and he didn't want to come back drunk. And that's a problem in and of itself.

24 So we thought he was trying to fool the 25 judge, but he was found guilty anyway. So it

1 didn't work. But that was basically the reason 2 we went there, to extend the guilty plea. But mv 3 question though really goes to the waiver issue. 4 My belief always was as a District 5 Attorney -- and I never saw it in my experience -- where a defendant said I know that 6 7 I waived my right to a jury trial and I was 8 willing to go nonjury, I've changed my mind, I 9 want to have a jury trial; I've never seen that 10 denied by a judge. And I'd be interested to know if there 11 12 is any case law where that's gone up on appeal 13 and the Supreme Court has said that when somebody wants to assert his right to a jury trial having 14 15 previously waived it that you cannot reassert it. 16 Are there any cases on that? MR. TARMAN: No, I don't know. But I 17 18 would equate it to the example that I gave on the waiver of a speedy trial right. If it's a 19 20 knowing waiver, I believe the court would use 21 that rationale that if it's a knowing waiver, 22 then it's a waiver. 23 Because, I mean, you can give up a Constitutional right. We can't have it both 24 25 ways. If a defendant --

1 REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: I would suggest 2 a speedy trial and a right to a jury are at 3 different levels. 4 MR. TARMAN: Not if you're in jail. Not 5 if you're in jail. If you're in jail -- and, of 6 course, the whole reason for the 180-day rule was 7 because in the big cities defendants were sitting in jail for a year, as you well know, and then 8 9 maybe were acquitted but still did a year in jail. 10 So I understand what you're saying. The 11 right to a jury trial is certainly one of the 12 more fundamental rights in the Ten amendments. 13 But I believe in some cases the right to a speedy 14 trial could be on the same level. 15 REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: You're using the speedy trial example. I'm asking, Is there 16 an example of --17 18 MR. TARMAN: I know of none. 19 REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: -- the right to 20 jury that has been waived and that has then been 21 denied, the defendant has been denied the right 22 to reassert the right to jury that's gone on to 23 appeal and there's some case law? 24 MR. SALUS: Representative, I'd like to 25 address that. Every guilty plea that we take, if

1 we do a correct Miranda colloquy and the person 2 waives their jury trial or trial by a judge 3 without a jury and a sentence is meted out and 4 that persons appeals and says he was only forced 5 into this guilty plea because his attorney forced 6 him to do this and the colloguy is appropriate, 7 covers all of his Constitutional rights, the person is in his full mind so that there isn't 8 9 any question of his being taken advantage of, the 10 appellate courts have upheld that waiver of a 11 jury trial or a trial by a judge. REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: And I would say 12 13 that's appropriate. But I still think that my 14 question is distinguishable. I'm not talking 15 about a guilty plea. I'm talking about a 16

16 situation where somebody did not plead guilty, 17 was ready to go to nonjury and said, no, I want a 18 jury trial.

MR. SALUS: I think that if his selection at the time that he chose a nonjury trial was knowing, intelligent, and voluntarily and a waiver that, No. 1, the judge would have a perfect right to turn down his flip-flop on the basis that he now has decided something differently.

1 To get to the crux of this --2 **REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND:** Excuse me, Your 3 Honor. The judge would have a perfect right. MR. SALUS: Would. 4 REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: My question is, 5 6 Has a judge ever done that and has a judge ever 7 been told, yes, you were correct by the Supreme 8 Court? I have personally done that. 9 MR. SALUS: I do not know of any case that has said that that 10 11 was inappropriate. But let me say this: Ι suggested to my colleagues when this matter came 12 up before the Senate that one of the ways to 13 14 solve this it seems to me is that if there is a rule promulgated by the Criminal Rules Committee 15 saying that if a defendant chooses a waiver trial 16 and that that trial is on the trial list that 30 17 days, that he cannot change his mind once that 18 thing is on the trial list or once he makes that 19 waiver that he cannot change it within 30 or 60 20 21 days after that waiver. Because the waiver may come before he's 22 on a trial list. But if there is a procedural 23 rule, I think that it is constitutional because 24 the waiver having been made in a knowing, 25

1 intelligent way by a miscellaneous criminal judge, before a miscellaneous criminal judge 2 that it would stick and it would solve this judge 3 shopping if that's what the perceived problem is. 4 As far as all of these anecdotal cases 5 6 that are going on and have been testified before you, let me say that no system is perfect. 7 I'm not perfect, and none of my 8 colleagues are perfect, none of the district 9 attorneys are perfect, none of the public 10 defenders are perfect. But certainly these are 11 bad results that somebody objected to and are not 12 the run-of-the-mill cases. 13 The greatest strength of the judicial 14 system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and in 15 every state is the discretion that the judges 16 17 have and the balance that the judges have in approaching the individual cases with the 18 individual facts and the individual defendants. 19 And to throw that off balance -- after 20 21 all, the prosecutor determines what charges he 22 brings and as many charges as he brings. And sometimes it has been said that these excessive 23 24 charges have been compromised. They've been compromised probably 25

because everything is thrown against the wall and 1 2 all these charges are brought. But when it comes 3 down to what you can prove before a judge and a jury or a judge alone, the evidence may not be 4 able to convict the person of those excessive 5 6 charges like aggravated assault versus simple assault. 7 8 MS. ACHILLES: May I answer your 9 question also, Representative? 10 **REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND:** Sure. 11 MS. ACHILLES: I don't have an exact 12 answer to your question, although I am very glad 13 that you posed it. Because I can tell you as a 14 victim advocate, I am very, very nervous that no 15 one has that answer. 16 And I know there's a lot of questions 17 unanswered today about statistics and costs. But the thing is that I don't want anyone to 18 construct some procedural mechanism to limit a 19 20 defendant's right. 21 And I do see in the Constitution -- and 22 I might be the only nonlawyer, nonprosecutor in 23 this room; but the right to the jury trial is something that I learned in grade school. And I 24 25 think that it has more significance.

1 And I'm concerned about people proposing 2 and talking about how they can work because if I 3 get arrested on my way back to my office, I want that right, right up to the time I make a 4 5 decision or I'm found quilty. I'm very concerned 6 about that as a victim advocate. 7 REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: Thank you. And 8 I want to thank Judge Salus. And I appreciate 9 the fact that you have made that decision to 10 limit somebody's right, but I'd sure like to see 11 what the Supreme Court has to say about it if it 12 ever gets up there. Thank you. 13 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Representative 14 Josephs. 15 **REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS:** I thank you. Ι 16 just also wanted to ask a question of you, 17 Ms. Achilles. I know that you are a victim 18 advocate. I've known that before you came here 19 and said that. 20 And I'm wondering about a situation 21 in which your victim is the perpetrator also. 22 Hypothetically, you've been dealing with a woman 23 who's a survivor of domestic abuse. You know 24 her, you've been trying to place her. These 25 things don't always work out. For whatever

1 reason, she ends up in a situation where she 2 assaults or kills her abuser. 3 Now, should this Constitutional amendment pass, she is going to not be able to 4 waive the jury trial if the prosecutor decides 5 6 that way. Maybe she doesn't want to tell her 7 story in front of a jury. 8 MS. ACHILLES: But under the law, she 9 is -- and I have great sympathy for that 10 situation and have grave concerns about women in 11 this' Commonwealth who are in that situation. 12 Under the law, she's the offender. 13 She's not the victim. And her story needs to go 14 And quite honestly, I don't agree before them. with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic 15 Violence because their letter to this Committee 16 is about their duel agenda for women who are 17 18 arrested and not just victims -- and not just 19 people who are victims. 20 And although all of us -- and I 21 particularly as a woman I understand that issue, 22 that she will be able to waive jury trial. It 23 has been testified to several times here today and before the Senate that this is about just 24 giving equal play to the prosecution. 25

1 No prosecutor has said they are going 2 to, in fact, start asking for jury trials in 3 I wouldn't want that as a victim every case. advocate. And you know in Philadelphia the 4 system would come do a halt next week. 5 I mean, it would just stop if there were no nonjury 6 7 trials. But the reality is, is that what we're 8 9 saying is the defendant's right has become an issue of judge shopping. Maybe not in every 10 11 county, okay, but in a lot of counties. 12 And we're saying in essence -- I don't 13 know how else to say this -- but the defendants and some defense people are not being good little 14 15 girls and boys. And just because there's a fear that the 16 17 prosecutor might not be little good girl or boy 18 if they get this power we're talking about, costs and whatever, to me this is an issue of 19 20 fundamental fairness. It's not an issue of let's not give it 21 22 to them because they might not do it -- they 23 might not use it well. I think that they're respectful, they're responsible, they have to try 24 25 cases before the same judge tomorrow as they do

1 today.

-	coddy.
2	REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS: But it seems
3	clear to me that if there's a conflict between a
4	victim and a prosecutor, the victim loses. It
5	also seems to me that because somebody if
6	there's a conflict. I mean, it may happen
7	once
8	MS. ACHILLES: Right.
9	REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS: in a million
10	years; but if it's you, you don't care. You
11	don't care how rare your case is. It's still
12	you. It also seems clear to me that when you
13	have a trial, that's what it's for. Maybe the
14	person who was arrested really isn't guilty.
15	MS. ACHILLES: Absolutely.
16	REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHS: Thank you.
17	CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I want to thank
18	the members who were here to testify and
19	appreciate your coming. Thank you very much.
20	Next testifier is Mr. William Taylor Reil.
21	Mr. Reil, when you're prepared, you may begin.
22	MR. REIL: Thank you very much. I
23	notice again as the last time I was here, um, I'm
24	the last testifier and the people who need to
25	hear this testimony, those number of them have

1 left; so it's good that a number of the Members 2 of the Committee that remain. 3 I have provided to this Committee Δ extensive documentation for today, and I would like to point that out before I proceed to make 5 sure that everyone has it. First of all, a 6 7 written testimony of nine pages; a 22-page 8 memorandum of law on the right to trial by 9 jury -- a common law trial by jury that you'll 10 hear and judge the facts and the laws. 11 Second documents is a composite of some 12 excerpts out of a book which is the Constitutions 13 of Pennsylvania and Constitution of the United 14 States compiled in 1986 by the Legislative 15 Reference Bureau under the direction of the then director Robert L. Cable. 16 17 I recommend that each one of the Members 18 of the Committee and, in fact, every judge and 19 lawyer get a copy of this book and start reading 20 I have not heard any argument that's based it. 21 on constitutional law today save for a few 22 comments, but I'm going to change that. 23 The second -- the next document is a 24 document which I wrote in 1993 called Project 25 Constitution, a Treasonous Plan to Overthrow the

1 Government of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. 2 It is, in fact, a composite of research 3 that I've done relative to the 1968 4 Constitutional change or so called changes, 5 which are unconstitutional; always have been. And also reference to the 1993 6 7 alleged constitutional changes which are also 8 unconstitutional. 9 I am astounded -- and I have my 10 testimony I'm going to be referring to it from 11 time to time rather than reading it. I think all 12 of you are able to read. I would encourage you 13 to read very carefully, more than once. And in this documentation, I refer to the 14 15 Pennsylvania Patriot Press several times. And 16 the specific edition which you have and I have 17 given you is the October, 1997, edition which has 18 the headline of Amendment Fraud Strikes 19 Pennsylvania Again. 20 And there are a number of articles in 21 this document, one of which is, The Supreme Court 22 Commits Treason. And I would suggest that this 23 Committee since it's -- or Subcommittee's primary 24 function is criminal prosecution of -- and I 25 going -- and legislation with respect to that, I

am astounded how little information the people in
 this body, not only this specific group, but the
 House in general and the Senate, know about the
 Pennsylvania Constitution.

5 I heard one gentleman refer to the Sixth 6 Amendment. While that's important, it doesn't 7 apply inside of Pennsylvania unless you accept the 8 myth the Fourteenth Amendment has, in fact, 9 usurped the State Constitution. And that's 10 unfortunately the reality.

However, moving forward to the issue of today, I cannot in my wildest dreams -- and I am, as I have said, my name is William Taylor Reil. I spell that with a capitol "w" and lower case I-L-L-I-A-M and capitol "t" lower case A-Y-L-O-R and capitol "r" lower case E-I-L.

Why do I make that point? Because 17 18 unfortunately, my research shows that this isn't 19 a constitutional government anymore. If it were, 20 we wouldn't be talking about jury trials. We'd 21 be talking about trial by juries that are 22 controlled by the Constitution, not by some 23 statute or something that you passed.

And if you understand the Constitution,
this discussion would have been over before it

started. And I'm going to show you why it's the
 case. You have no authority to be mucking around
 with a trial by jury right. That's what this is
 about -- rights.

Not how victims feel or accused feel, 5 but what's the law. I hope that this Body is 6 7 convened for the consideration of law. If this is not the rule of law that you folks are dealing 8 9 with and it's just public policy or opinion or 10 how do you feel today or how some judge feels or 11 how some prosecutor feels, you folks have 12 committed the massive fraud that's going on here. 13 And it's prosecutable. It's a felony.

You've got to understand, I think everyone needs to understand that the people in this Commonwealth, this citizens, people, not fictions, not treatious (phonetic) fictions have inalienable rights; and those rights are found in us.

And the authority that you have and everybody else has comes from us. All power's in the people. I hope you remember that. As I go about these halls, and I have been doing that for some six or seven years talking with various members of both the Senate and the House on a

1 variety of subjects, primarily the Constitution 2 since I'm a scholar of history and the 3 Constitution, among other things. I find it appalling how little you know 4 5 and admit to not knowing. I have been in 6 meetings recently where a Senator says, I don't 7 anything about the Constitution. I rely on the 8 courts to do that. I believe your constitutional oath, 9 10 Article 6, section 3 says you, not the judge, not 11 the judiciary, not anybody but you, each and 12 every Representative and Senator takes an oath to 13 support, obey, and defend the Constitution of this Commonwealth. 14 I would hope as we have had discussions 15 16 before that you will take my message to heart. Ι am the one, the only one other than the victims 17 18 right advocate that's a citizen here. Everybody else is employed by the government. Everybody 19 else is a government official. 20 21 All attorneys are officers of the 22 Judicial Branch. If you don't believe that, read 23 Title 42, 2521 and 22 where they take a special 24 oath. They are officers of the Judicial Branch. 25 There's no separation of powers.

1 And what we're struggling here with and 2 what this issue is about is violation of 3 fundamental rights. Now, I'm departing from my 4 testimony. You can read that at your leisure, but I'll cover the salient points. 5 6 If you're not here to consider and 7 protect rights, you're outside of any authority 8 you ever hope to have. And this particular right 9 is securely guaranteed by Article 1, Section 6. 10 That's what the discussion is on House Bill 1521, 11 Senate Bill 555. Now, it's interesting that if you knew 12 13 what you were talking about -- and I'm going to 14 bring your attention to exhibits -- the exhibit 15 that I have relative to the Pennsylvania 16 Constitution. It's this document packet. 17 And I took the time to copy various 18 sections from the constitutions that are found in 19 this book. Now the Legislative Reference Bureau 20 did a good job in compiling the constitutions. 21 And in their references, they also give 22 subsequent and prior sections from which a 23 particular section is derived. 24 Article 1, Section 6 is often used as it 25 has been every day in justifying not giving a

1 trial by jury. For petty crimes they say, 2 judges, if you're only going to spend less than 3 six months in jail, that's not problem. I'11 4 tell you, one minute in jail is not fun and it's 5 a depravation of rights and liberty and life. 6 And so the attitude that, Oh, you're 7 only going to spend a few months in jail is 8 absolutely counter to any concept of a Republican 9 form of government and freedom and liberty. 10 Well, if you investigate Article 1, 11 Section 6 turning to page 417, which is from the 1776 Constitution, it says -- excuse me. 12 That's 13 out of the government section. In the 1776 14 Constitution, that provision for trial by jury is covered that deals with Article 1, Section 6 in 15 16 the so-called 1968 Constitution, which as I said 17 before is unconstitutional. But the 11th section of the 1776 18 19 Constitution says that in controversies respecting property and in suits between man and 20 21 man, the parties have a right to trial by jury 22 which ought to be held sacred. The English is 23 very clear. They knew what they were writing. And you notice under the references that 24 25 are given there the Constitution -- the so-called

1 Constitution of 1790 says Article 9, Section 6. 2 By the way, that constitution was also 3 unconstitutional. 4 Constitutional -- so-called Constitution 5 of 1838 says Article 9, Section 6; and finally in 1874, Article 1, Section 6 is when they moved the 6 7 deprivation (phonetic) of rights to be Article 1. 8 So what we're really talking about here 9 in the current corporate-judicial system that's 10 been created since 1968, this unified judicial 11 system, is things that are now termed civil Isn't that true? Controversies -- demand 12 cases. 13 property have to deal with equity? They're not 14 criminal cases. 15 Now there's a reference in this to 16 Section 25 of the form of government which I have 17 referred to and given you a page on there. It starts on 419 and goes to 25 which is 427 because 18 19 that section is referenced and says, Trial shall 20 be by jury as heretofore. And that's the 21 section, the 25th. 22 And it is recommended to the Legislature 23 of this State to provide by law against every 24 corruption or particularly partiality in the 25 choice or term or appointment of juries.

So what they're talking about there is the Legislature in the form of government to make sure that the government doesn't corrupt the selection, the function, and the judgment of the juries.

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6 Because William Penn had experienced the 7 abuse in 1670 in the famous Hat Trial in September of 1670 where the jury found him not 8 9 quilty and the judge threw the jury in the jail. 10 And thank goodness for Edward Shell and three other jurors that were courageous and held out 11 and William Penn was not found guilty. 12 He was 13 released as was the jury because he order 14 a habeas corpus and we got the right to trial by jury and freedom of assembly and freedom of 15 16 speech all came out of those kind of decisions 17 back then.

18And it's been the same case here in19Pennsylvania since 1682. William Penn wrote the20laws agreed upon in England, Section 8, All21trials shall be by jury, all trials. All means22all. It doesn't mean when the prosecutor wants23it or anybody else wants it.

24Twelve impartial men of equal or nearly25equal character of a neighborhood is what

William Penn wrote. Because they had to know,
 they had to know who was on trial because they
 knew when they wrote the Constitution in 1776 and
 in 1682 that government is abusive. It tends to
 be abusive. Power corrupts and absolute power
 corrupts absolutely.
 And what you have now is continuous

8 encroachment upon the rights of the citizens.
9 That's what this ought to be about, preserving
10 and protecting the rights, not what it costs.
11 That's irrelevant.

In a Republican form of government, if one person's rights, one human being's rights are violated, it's a violation of the law. Now in a democracy, it's the majority rules. Today we're going to decide we're going to put you on the stand and we're going to hang somebody and that's okay. It's not okay in a republic.

The sheriff stands there and shoots
anybody who tries to take his prisoner in a
republic. I'm telling you that is due process of
law in a court of law and justice.

So here back to this issue, we're
talking about something dealing with the
controversies between man and man and property

1 with Article 1, Section 6. 2 Well, where in the world does this right 3 to trial by jury in criminal cases come from? If you read the current so-called Constitution, if 4 5 you look in Article 1, Section 9 of the current 6 Constitution, it deals with trial by jury in criminal cases. 7 8 I bring your attention 'to the -- excuse 9 me just a minute. I seem to have left page out. 10 I apologize for that. But we can get it. We can 11 get it out of the 1776 Constitution on page 1418 -- 418, excuse me. 12 13 Top of the page it says, In all 14 prosecutions for criminal offenses, a man has the right to be heard by himself or his counsel to 15 16 demand the cause and nature of the accusations, 17 to be confronted with the witnesses, to call for 18 evidence in his favor, and a speedy public trial -- that's where speedy public trial comes 19 It doesn't from statute or whatever, not 20 from. 21 if it's constitutional it doesn't -- by an 22 impartial jury of the country without the 23 unanimous consent of which jury cannot be found 24 guilty. And if you look at the notes on that, it 25

1 says that in subsequent constitutions, 2 Constitution of 1790 so-called, it's Article 9, 3 Section 9. In the 1838, it's Article 9, Section 4 9. In the 1874 Constitution, it's Article 1, 5 Section 9. And in the Pennsylvania Constitution 6 of today, it's Article 1, Section 9. 7 And the House publishes these books and 8 I give them out to help people understand what 9 their rights are. I think we ought to do more 10 of that. And this particular one is all messed 11 up in its printing. Article 1 and Section 9 of today's 12 13 Constitution says, Rights of the accused -- not 14 the victims, not the prosecutor, not the 15 defendant -- rights of the accused in criminal 16 prosecutions, in all criminal prosecutions the 17 accused has the right to a speedy public trial by 18 an impartial jury of vicinage, V-I-C-I-N-A-G-E, 19 the neighborhood. 20 And, in fact, though only the last 21 section, which was added in 1984, has changed 22 since 1776. So ladies and gentlemen, you folks 23 are trying to change the wrong section of the 24 Constitution. 25 Where are your scholars in the law?

1 Where are you in the law? If you do this, you 2 will be violating your oath of office. Don't do 3 it. You don't have the authority to change Article 1, Section 6. 4 5 Now, the reason I take that this is done 6 this way and why the lawyers, attorneys, and 7 judges do this in reference to Article 1, Section 6 is because of the words "as heretofore." 8 9 In fact, when I was first investigating 10 this back in 1993, then Representative Gerlach 11 used that very thing on me. Well, no you're not 12 entitled to a trial by jury in a divorce. Wrong. I had a jury trial -- not a trial by jury, but a 13 14 jury trial in divorce. It was a statutory one at 15 that. But if you don't understand what's going 16 on, then shudder, I really shudder at you folks 17 18 sitting up here making decisions that affect 19 everybody's lives. My charge to you as a 20 sovereign, the principle here, the only one other

everybody's lives. My charge to you as a
sovereign, the principle here, the only one other
than the lady who's the Victims Rights -- and she
didn't claim that and she doesn't understand.
And that's okay.
But you folks have a job to do. You

But you folks have a job to do. You have a solemn oath of office to support, obey,

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and defend the Constitution. That means
 protecting my rights and everybody else's rights
 and making sure that those are not abused. So
 you're responsible.

5 And I come here patiently waiting, 6 sometimes not so patiently, because I think more 7 people ought to hear the truth, the facts, the 8 law from you. But if not you, then I'll do that 9 and others like me will do that.

10 But this is your job, ladies and 11 gentlemen. And you're up here debating about whether you're going to trade -- trade trial by 12 13 jury with mandatory sentencing -- pardon me, Representative, don't you dare think about 14 trading away an inalienable right that was won by 15 16 hard blood fight over many, many years and settled by William Penn in Pennsylvania in 1682 17 and confirmed in 1776. 18

And don't even think about trying to
give away my right or anybody else's right. But
you do it all the time. And that's really
disturbing to me, really disturbing.

The second issue, I assume we're clear,
that the proposed amendment -- we can go through
this one more time real quick. The proposed

amendment that was drafted by quote/unquote 1 2 scholars in law, I expect the Legislative 3 Reference Bureau or some quote/unquote hack 4 who doesn't understand the law is suggesting 5 because the judges are telling them we want to have this arbitrary right "as heretofore," and so 6 7 we need to change that provision -- that's the only one they ever refer to. 8

9 I've been in court many, many times with 10 myself and on trial allegedly and others. And 11 they always bring Article 1, Section 6. They are 12 obviously trained that way because, in reality, 13 they want to have to deny the right to trial by 14 jury, which is our right in all cases.

And they do it all the time on all of these summary offenses which you folks through the guidance of these quote/unquote well-meaning attorneys have enacted to prosecute victimless crimes. That's unlawful, ladies and gentlemen.

All of these things are in the statutes that are summary offenses are just for revenue collection. That's what it's all about. And people get thrown in jail for a whole lot of reasons because they don't understand and they're tricked by the courts.

1 Now I'm not saying a broad brush of all 2 prosecutors and all judges. But by and large, 3 anybody who brings up Article 1, Section 6 and 4 tries to deny my right to a trial by jury in a 5 criminal case is going to have a fight on their hands. 6 7 Doesn't matter whether it's one day, one 8 minute in incarceration or under arrest. If it's 9 false, it's false. That's a felony. False 10 arrest is going to get a whole lot of folks a 11 chance to spend some time in those jail cells

Now, that's wrong, isn't it, to give that kind of power to the defendant. First of all, anything you do that purports to give discretion or authority to the Commonwealth in things in Article 1 is prohibited, is prohibited by the fundamental framework of government called the Constitution.

that they like to send us to.

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I bring your attention to, in the current Constitution, Article 1, Section 25. Now these folks knew who was going on when they wrote it in 1776. And hopefully, it'll stay unblemished as long as we can keep fighting for it.

1 It says, Section 25, Reservation of 2 powers in people to guard against transgressions 3 of the high powers which we have delegated, we 4 declare that everything in this Article is accepted out of the general powers of government 5 6 and even shall forever remain inviolate. 7 You can't touch Article 1, Section 6 to 8 give the Commonwealth anything. Don't do it. 9 The discussion is over relative to House Bill 10 If you proceed in doing this, you are in 1521. 11 direct violation of your solemn oath of office as 12 every judge and every attorney who tries to do 13 it. Now the day of reckoning is coming, 14 The people are waking up. This is law. 15 folks. It's not something you can arbitrarily and 16 17 capriciously do. You can't do it. Please take 18 it to heart what I'm saying to you. Stop right 19 now wasting your time, our cash. 20 You're supposed to be up here working on 21 But I tell you, most of what you things for us. 22 do doesn't. Start working for the people and 23 protecting or rights and stop sleeping on the job 24 and worrying about how you're going to get out to 25 the golf course or whatever you're thinking

1 about.

-	about.
2	I am very, very upset. I have been
3	working to try to help the people in this House
4	and in the Senate understand what the
5	Constitution means for almost seven years. Wake
6	up. What I'm telling you is fact. It's law.
7	And if anybody has a different opinion,
8	would you please put it on the table? Don't tell
9	me that's the way it is because I'm telling you,
10	I know what I'm talking about because I've
11	spent the time to find out.
12	I'm interested in the protection of
13	individual rights, which is your primary job. If
14	violate my rights, you violate everyone's rights.
15	Your rights in your private capacity, your
16	childrens' rights, and their childrens'.
17	People have died to preserve the
18	Declaration of Rights. It has nothing to do with
19	the Bill of Rights. It has nothing to do with
20	the Bill of Rights in the Federal Constitution.
21	What controls here is the State
22	Constitution, and don't bring the Federal
23	Constitution into this argument. And the state
24	Constitution's very clear.
25	A second issue I want to talk about

1 today which is covered in the paper is what this 2 House did in February. It's relevant because it's the two amendments that are now working 3 4 their way through the process allegedly to try to 5 dupe the citizenry on the November ballot. And that was House Bill 1520. Another 6 7 atrocious approach --8 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Mr. Reil. 9 I'm going take a few minutes. MR. REIL: 10 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Let me stop for This Bill is not before the 11 a few minutes. This hearing's not on that Bill. 12 Committee. 13 We're on 1521. I appreciate your concern and 14 your remarks, and you have them in writing for 15 us today --16 MR. REIL: You're not going to cut me 17 off, sir. If you do --18 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I want to tell you that we are speaking about House Bill 1521. 19 20 MR. REIL: They are, in fact, co-conspirators in fraud and corruption and 21 22 unconstitutional behavior. If you're not 23 interested in protecting yourself and your oath, 24 then cut me off. 25 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I'm not trying to

1 cut you off so that you can't make remarks 2 related to the topic at hand; but you have to 3 realize that we're House Bill 1521, not House Bill 1520. 4 5 If you want to draw a connection between the two --6 7 MR. REIL: I certainly intended to. CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: -- then please do 8 9 that. But don't simply spend a lot of time just 10 talking about House Bill 1520. I think you probably consumed 11 MR. REIL: 12 more time by your intervening here than we would 13 have done otherwise. 14 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I would be optimistic to say that that would be the case. 15 MR. REIL: Well then I'll take the time 16 17 that's necessary. I think you owe me that, sir. 18 I've sat here all day, listened to a bunch of, frankly, malarkey that has nothing to do with the 19 20 law. It has to do with posturing and who's 21 22 going to have control and power over the people. 23 And you're, in fact, a coconspirator to that if 24 you're -- another ten minutes. Now wake up. I'm 25 trying to courteous, but you've got to the fact

177 there with ~-1 2 **REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND:** Mr. Chairman, 3 today I'll comment. You're trying to be courteous? You're not trying to courteous. 4 5 Don't fool us, Mr. Reil --MR. REIL: You're an attorney, sir. 6 Ι 7 know where you're coming from. REPRESENTATIVE MASLAND: I'm sitting 8 9 here -- just a second. Let me say something. 10 I'm sitting here. I'm going to listen to you to till the bitter end; and I'm afraid it will be 11 bitter by the time you're finished. We're not 12 13 going to cut you off. You want us to cut you off so you can 14 15 complain to the Patriot, complain to the press and try to make a big deal about it. I'd like to 16 17 have you finish your testimony so that we can 18 get on with things. MR. REIL: I'm glad that you have a 19 clairvoyant behavior there, sir. I don't think 20 21 you do. What I'm trying to do is get your 22 attention. 23 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Well, Mr. Reil, I 24 would suggest that that's a noble goal. But to 25 do it by insulting people and telling them that

1 they're stupid and they're asleep really isn't 2 going to accomplish what you're trying to do. 3 And even though you may believe that -- and you're entitled to believe 4 that -- I think in saying that you really don't 5 help your case. The point I'm making is that 6 7 House Bill 1520 is not before us. MR. REIL: I'm going to testify --8 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: House Bill 1520 9 10 was before us. Representative --11 MR. REIL: CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: If you want to 12 make -- let me finish. You can say what you wish 13 14 if you'll let me finish. 15 If you want to make the connection between what House Bill 1520 is and relate it to 16 1521, if you wish to do that, that's fine. 17 But 18 I'm asking you not to just simply continue in that course of action decrying what happens with 19 a piece of legislation that isn't currently 20 21 before us. 22 This is only a public hearing. This is 23 a public hearing on a bill. It is not a discourse on the entire actions of the General 24 25 Assembly or this House of Representatives or even

1 on this full Committee. So I'm asking you as a 2 courtesy to please try to keep your remarks 3 to the issue at hand, and that is the issue of 4 jury trial by the Commonwealth. 5 The issue at hand, MR. REIL: 6 Representative Birmelin, is the amendment of the 7 Constitution, Article 1. And anything that you 8 try to tromple on in Article 1 is going to get my ire up because that belongs to the people. 9 10 It's a safeguard and it's corrupt 11 government. And frankly what's been going on in 12 this body for so long, it's so corrupt it's 13 sickening. 14 Now, I'm trying to say to you, If you 15 don't like the medicine that you're given, how 16 about stepping on the other side and get prosecuted and false arrested and beaten up and 17 18 thrown in prison over and over again. 19 That's what people are going through 20 because of the meddling you folks are doing up 21 here with law. That's what this is about. 22 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: No, it's not what 23 this is about. 24 Sure it is. MR. REIL: 25 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: That's what

1 you're about. That's not what this Committee is 2 about. That's not what this hearing is about. 3 MR. REIL: What is this about. CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: This hearing is 4 about House Bill 1521. And I have given far 5 6 latitude to everybody who's testified --MR. REIL: You certainly have, and I 7 8 expect the same treatment. 9 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: And I will give 10 you that latitude as long as you're staying to the subject at hand. And I'm asking you to do 11 12 that. I'm asking you politely to do that. 13 And if you don't want to cooperate and 14 you don't want to be -- you want to just talk 15 about what you want to talk about because it happens to be the subject that you desire to talk 16 17 about, then I'll just adjourn the meeting and say that it's over because we're here to talk the 18 19 issue of jury trial for the Commonwealth. 20 And that's what I'm asking you to 21 restrict your remarks to. 22 MR. REIL: Okay. Mr. Representative, 23 I'm going to direct your --24 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: Let me ask you 25 one other question --

1 MR. REIL: -- Article 1, Section 20 2 where I have the right to a redress of grievance, 3 I have the right in the Article in Section 7 of 4 freedom of speech. If you intend to do this, go 5 ahead and proceed. You're violating my rights. Let's come back to the -- let's come 6 7 back to this memorandum of law. Okay. This --8 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I'm asking you to 9 restrict your remarks to the issue at hand. 10 MR. REIL: I'm going to talk. That's my right, sir. 11 No, it is not 12 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: 13 your right to sit here and talk about anything 14 you want anywhere --15 MR. REIL: You don't know what I'm going 16 to talk about, Representative. You don't know because you're not letting me --17 18 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: You've already indicated that you're headed off in another 19 20 direction. I'm asking you to stay in the same 21 direction you've been on for the last 45 22 minutes --23 I'm going to lay a foundation MR. REIL: 24 and tie them together if just listen. 25 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: I'm willing to

182 1 listen --2 MR. REIL: Thank you. 3 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: -- but I wanted 4 you to know where I'm going --5 MR. REIL: I know where you're going. 6 Trying to control people. That's what you're all 7 about. This document right here, Trial by Jury, 8 is, in fact -- apparently I don't have your 9 attention. Is there some problem? 10 CHAIRPERSON BIRMELIN: You have the right to speak. You do not have a demand for our 11 attention. You have to earn that. 12 MR. REIL: I think I've earned it with 13 14 the facts, Representative. It's sorely lacking heretofore. This Memorandum of Law is 22 pages, 15 16 have been filed in the courts repeatedly. It, in 17 fact, addresses the history and law in 18 Pennsylvania relative to trial by jury. And we had a little reference to some 19 20 ancient history before 1930, very rarely; and it 21 was refreshing. But, in fact, the right to trial 22 by jury wherein the jurors have the right to 23 judge both the law and facts is a right; and it's 24 been stripped away by this corporate state. And 25 it's a shame.

1 We need it back. And the Memorandum of 2 Law -- in fact, I've incorporated in here and I direct you to read it and take judicial notice of 3 4 it and I hope that you will do that. 5 Now, relative to what I was saying about 6 giving judges discretion, which was what was done in that bill which is why I'm talking about 7 8 it -- and that is 1520 -- you've given judges, 9 officers of the judicial branch, just discretion, which is in Article 1, Section 14. 10 11 You can't do that either. Again, 12 Article 1, Section 25 says, To guard against that 13 discretion that they are seizing relative to 14 being bailed or habeas corpus or the right to 15 trial by jury is prohibited. That's the 16 connection, Representative. 17 You do it repeatedly. If you don't understand your job, I suggest you study. I'll 18 19 be glad to help you all I can. But I expect 20 respect because I have done the work. 21 And I don't necessarily have to ask your 22 favor to be telling you what I the principle is 23 asking you the agent to do. That's a concept 24 lost by this body apparently. You need to 25 reexamine your position. I do not cower or bow

1 to you, sir. In your official capacity, you are 2 a public servant. I am the principle. 3 (At which point, the court reporter asked for a brief pause in the proceedings.) 4 5 MR. REIL: I want to conclude and finish 6 this on an issue which is right to the point. 7 Relative to the abuse of judges and the discretion which is relative to the trial by jury 8 9 and denying that, judges often do that. 10 They deny the right of habeas corpus and 11 trial by jury repeatedly because of such things as the 1968 so-called change to the Constitution 12 13 which then gave rise to such things as Act 142 14 Franklin Law 586 which is restructuring the 15 entire Judiciary and Act 53, dash, 1978, Mackle 16 Law 202 which was this Massive Repealer Act and 17 in fact in which the definition of -- statutory 18 definition of trial by jury -- correction -- jury trial was made. 19 20 Those are unconstitutional, gentlemen. 21 And if you don't recognize that, I'd encourage 22 you to study the law. And we need to focus on 23 that, the law, not feelings or peoples' feelings 24 who are hurt, but on the law.

So in all cases, all cases, the accused

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1 have the right to trial by jury. The 2 Commonwealth can never, never be elevated, this 3 corporate fiction, to a position equivalent to 4 God -- creations of God, human beings, people who 5 are man, woman, and child -- flesh. You can't do 6 it. 7 And that's what Article 1 is talking 8 about: Securing and protecting rights to the 9 citizens, the people, not corporate entities, 10 which is what the Commonwealth is. You are 11 violating the law. If that doesn't mean anything 12 to you, then go on. Just admit that that doesn't 13 mean anything to you. 14 The last issue is the amendment process 15 itself because this Bill does call for placing 16 this particular bill potentially on a primary, 17 municipal, or general election. 18 And, in fact, if you change one comma or 19 period in this bill and any portion of that 20 document violates Article 11, which is the 21 amendment process, it's void. So maybe you want 22 to consider the law relative to how you change 23 the Constitution. And I'm not going to spend a lot of time 24 25 on this because it's not necessary to spend a lot

of time, but it's important for you to understand,
 I think, what is the law.

3 My assertion, which is based on 4 extensive history and evidence found by and 5 large in the law library across the street here, 6 is that the Pennsylvania Constitution cannot be 7 changed lawfully for any reason more often than once in seven years -- yes, seven years -- and 8 that any and all proposed amendments must be 9 10 submitted to the electors on the general election 11 that is in November on an even-numbered year, preferably a presidential election year -- that's 12 where you get massive participation -- after the 13 electors have been fully and factually informed 14 15 about the proposed Constitutional amendments. 16 That's not done today. You stick it on 17 the primaries and you just slip it through. 18 There's not a dialogue going on, which is good 19 that you're having this meeting. It's rare. 20 First let me state that factual history 21 of the constitutional law proves without 22 questioning that the only Pennsylvania 23 Constitution, which is in fact lawful, is the

25 paper that you have that addresses that. That's

There is an article in the

1776 Constitution.

24

under the Amendment Fraud Strikes Pennsylvania
 Again.

However, for the purposes of the discussion today, we can assume that all the constitutional changes prior to 1920 A.D. are constitutional. The evident fraud of the 1920's and beyond, however, shall not permit me to assume the validity of that position that continue beyond January of 1920.

10 In 1776 -- and you can get it out of 11 this book. I recommend that you read the minimum 12 process in here. It says on page 431 and 432, In 13 order that the freedom of the Commonwealth may be preserved inviolate forever, there shall be 14 15 chosen by ballot by the freemen in each city and 16 county respectively on the second Tuesday in 17 October and the year of one thousand, seven 18 hundred and eighty three and on the second 19 Tuesday on October in every seventh year 20 thereafter two persons in each city and county 21 of the state to be called the Council of Censors 22 who shall meet with -- meet together on the 23 second Monday of November next ensuing their 24 election. The majority of whom shall be a quorum 25 in every case except, except as to calling a

convention in which two-thirds of the whole
 number shall agree.

3 I'm going to skip the rest of that. Ι 4 encourage you to read it. Down to where we're 5 talking about the amendment process again it 6 says, The said Council of Censors shall also have 7 power to call a convention to meet within two 8 years after their sitting if there appear to 9 them an absolute necessity of amending any 10 Article of the Constitution which may be 11 defective, explaining such as may be thought not 12 clearly expressed, and of adding such as are 13 necessary for the preservation of the rights and 14 the happiness of the people -- not some whim of a 15 prosecutor.

16 But the Articles to be amended and the 17 amendments proposed and such articles are as 18 proposed to be added or abolished shall be 19 promulgated at least six months before the day 20 appointed for the election of such convention for 21 the previous consideration of the people that 22 they may have an opportunity to instruct their 23 delegates on the subject.

We need to instruct you folks before you start changing it. Now, the references in

24

25

this particular section -- and I have given you a
 copy in here -- says that the 1834 Constitution
 was Article 10 and the 1874, Article 18, Section
 1 are the equivalents.

5 There was, in fact, no reference to the 6 constitutional amendment process in the so-called 7 1790 amendment. It was left out. So in summary, two-thirds of the members elected to the Council 8 of Censors and only the Council of Censors could 9 10 call a Constitutional Convention to be conducted 11 within two years after their meeting on the 12 second Monday of November in 1783 and every seven 13 years thereafter.

If a convention was called, the proposed 14 15 amendments had to be for clarifying some point in 16 the Constitution or adding such as are necessary 17 for the preservation of the rights of the people. 18 All proposed amendments had to promulgated at 19 least six months before the convention for the 20 consideration of the people so they, the people, 21 could advise their delegates.

After the first two years, no change could be made to the Pennsylvania Constitution for the next five years no matter what. In other words, the Pennsylvania Constitution could only

1 be changed once every seven years and then only 2 to improve the document for the preservation of 3 the rights and happiness of the people. 4 As I said, the 1790 didn't allow -- the 5 so-called 1790 Constitution didn't allow for any 6 provisions for -- so in 1838 at they called a 7 convention. They didn't have the authority to do 8 it but they did it anyway as they did it in 1790. 9 The so-called 1838 Constitution for the 10 first time provided a legislative process for 11 proposing amendments to the Pennsylvania 12 Constitution. No provision for calling the 13 Constitutional convention though originally 14 proposed was made apart of the so-called 1838 15 Constitution of Pennsylvania. 16 Briefly, the method for changing the 17 Pennsylvania Constitution adopted in 1838 A.D. 18 required, much like today, the passing of a 19 proposed amendment or amendments during two 20 sessions of the General Assembly, advertising of 21 the proposed changes in the papers across the 22 state at least three months before the election, 23 a majority vote by the electors on separately 24 listed amendments for passage, and then five 25 years without any change to the Constitution.

1 This maintained the minimum seven-vear 2 process required in the 1776 Constitution. 3 History reports that the Pennsylvania 4 Constitution was changed only four times 5 following the 1838 introduction of a legislative 6 amendment process and prior to the 7 unconstitutional calling of the Convention in 1873 and the resulting so-called 1874 8 9 Constitution. 10 These changes occurred in 1850, 1857, 11 1864, and 1871 stretched over to '72. Seven 12 years. Boom, boom, boom. There were no other 13 changes. Now, there was a lot of things going on 14 at the time; but these changes clearly confirmed 15 that you had to change the Constitution once 16 every seven years. That was it all together. 17 Because there needs to be stability in 18 the basic form of a constitutional government. 19 The way you play tic-tack with the Constitution, 20 it's the article-by-article method introduced by 21 the Pennsylvania Bar back in the 50's and 60's 22 under Project Constitution. 23 It's absolutely unconstitutional. That, 24 in fact, was proposed as the Project Constitution 25 document was shown to you by William A. Schnader

in 1935 in his recommendation for changing the
 Pennsylvania Constitution because he wanted to
 change it faster.

4 In 1920, there was a commission by 5 Governor Sproul to investigate changes to the 6 Constitution. They came up with this putting 7 amendments on the municipal election and the Legislature turned it down because everybody knew 8 that you had to have them on even-numbered years. 9 10 Which, by the way, in the 1874 11 Constitution, November was selected as the time for an election. And, in fact, they added the 12

14And in 1909, there was an amendment15which in fact defined the general election as16being on even-numbered years. It also defined17municipal elections as being on odd-numbered18years.

word general election in 1864.

13

And so by 1920, everybody knew that you passed on the two sequential sessions. For instance, they were trying to put something on the 1923 ballot to accelerate it; and the courts upheld that even though everybody knew it had to be by their own report put on the 1924 general election.

1 So this corruption of the process of the 2 of amending the Constitution has been going on 3 for years. It's very clear if you go back and 4 study the cases around the turn of the century 5 and clearly before the war between the states in 6 1861 that the changing of the Pennsylvania 7 Constitution was very arduous and it was only for 8 very, very rare reasons. That's not the case 9 today. You're playing tic-tack with rights. 10 In 1920, it was known that the 11 Constitution could only being changed on the general election as November and even-numbered 12 years after the posted number of amendments had 13 14 been passed by two different sessions of the 15 General Assembly and had been advertised in two 16 newspapers in every county in the state for 13 17 weeks. Thirteen times immediately prior to the 18 two sequential general elections. 19 That's what Article 10 -- or excuse 20 me -- 11 requires, future amendments, not what 21 you're told by attorneys, not what you're told by 22 a lot of things by attorneys, all due respect. 23 You got to understand the history of 24 And that's your job. And that's why I'm law. 25 here, not be adversarial. I get upset when

people don't want to listen to truth. They want to listen to attorneys who want to get power over the people. That's wrong. You're not going to take away my rights, not without a long struggle. Because in 1993, I wrote this Project Constitution in preparation for prosecution of the House and the Senate. And, frankly, if this goes forward, we'll do it again. And you can't go to the courts to save you all the time even though they do guite a good job of that. The factual record about the corruption of the Pennsylvania Constitution amendment process has been --(At which time, the court reporter was dismissed from the hearing and it later adjourned.)

195 1 CERTIFICATE 2 I, Deirdre J. Meyer, Reporter, Notary 3 Public, duly commissioned and qualified in and for the County of Lancaster, Commonwealth of 4 5 Pennsylvania, hereby certify that the foregoing 6 is a true and accurate transcript of my stenotype 7 notes taken by me and subsequently reduced to computer printout under my supervision, and that 8 9 this copy is a correct record of the same. This certification does not apply to any 10 11 reproduction of the same by any means unless under my direct control and/or supervision. 12 13 14 15 16 er, re J 17 Notary Public. My commission expires August 10, 1998. 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

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