

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING
BUDGET HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
MAJORITY CAUCUS ROOM
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2008, 1:30 P.M.

VOLUME IV OF V

PRESENTATION ON
MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

BEFORE:

HONORABLE DWIGHT EVANS, CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE MARIO J. CIVERA, JR., CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE STEPHEN E. BARRAR
HONORABLE CRAIG A. DALLY
HONORABLE GORDON R. DENLINGER
HONORABLE BRIAN ELLIS
HONORABLE DAN B. FRANKEL
HONORABLE JOHN T. GALLOWAY
HONORABLE WILLIAM F. KELLER
HONORABLE THADDEUS KIRKLAND
HONORABLE BRYAN R. LENTZ
HONORABLE TIM MAHONEY
HONORABLE KATHY M. MANDERINO
HONORABLE MICHAEL P. MCGEEHAN
HONORABLE FRED McILHATTAN
HONORABLE DAVID R. MILLARD
HONORABLE RON MILLER
HONORABLE JOHN MYERS
HONORABLE CHERELLE PARKER
HONORABLE SCOTT A. PETRI

1 BEFORE: (cont'd.)
2 HONORABLE SEAN M. RAMALEY
3 HONORABLE DAVE REED
4 HONORABLE DOUGLAS G. REICHLEY
5 HONORABLE DANTE SANTONI, JR.
6 HONORABLE MARIO M. SCAVELLO
7 HONORABLE JOHN SIPTROTH
8 HONORABLE MATTHEW SMITH
9 HONORABLE KATIE TRUE
10 HONORABLE GREGORY S. VITALI
11 HONORABLE DON WALKO
12 HONORABLE JAKE WHEATLEY, JR.

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8 ALSO PRESENT:
9 MIRIAM FOX
10 EDWARD NOLAN

DEBRA B. MILLER
REPORTER

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MAJ. GEN. JESSICA L. WRIGHT

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1 CHAIRMAN EVANS: I would like to reconvene
2 the House Appropriations Committee meeting.

3 It is now 1:30. We have Military Affairs
4 before us. And I apologize for the half hour we had
5 to move you up to, only because they would have had a
6 strike if I didn't do that. It was getting a little
7 weary.

8 Can you -- the first question I'm going to
9 go to -- tell us a little bit about things that are
10 going on in the department and the kinds of things
11 that, under the Governor's recommended budget, what
12 types of things will you be able to implement, first,
13 and secondly, some of the things that have occurred
14 this year relating to the Governor's budget.

15 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

16 Our programs are legislatively mandated for
17 veterans.

18 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Could you introduce
19 yourself for the record?

20 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: I'm sorry, sir. My
21 name is Jessica Wright, Major General, the Adjutant
22 General of Pennsylvania. And this is Mr. Dennis
23 Guise. He is our Chief Counsel of the Department of
24 Military and Veterans Affairs.

25 So when I talk about programs for veterans

1 that we monitor, just the programs, it's the blind
2 pension, paralyzed veterans, emergency assistance,
3 real estate tax. We have a Military Family Relief.

4 We just received the bill -- 915 has passed
5 -- where it is for the Veteran Service Officers,
6 where last year it was budgeted at \$450,000. It was
7 put in, and this year it has increased. So that
8 particular program is to provide services to
9 Pennsylvania veterans so they can apply for Federal
10 benefits. And the grant officer, the Veteran Service
11 Officer -- that is the Veteran Service Organization's
12 provider -- are the individuals that make that
13 application happen.

14 We also work with the county directors to
15 also give those benefits and process those
16 applications to give our Pennsylvania veterans the
17 Federal benefits that they deserve.

18 We run, as you know, six nursing homes that
19 the Governor's budget certainly covers, and Scotland
20 School for Veterans' Children.

21 That is a very, very short snapshot of our
22 veterans side of the house.

23 And you know we have our Army National Guard
24 and we have our Air National Guard -- primarily
25 federally funded, but receive some State funding for

1 upkeep of armories. And certainly State active duty,
2 shall we perform it, we would be State funded. But
3 the equipment and the training with regard to the
4 soldiers and airmen comes strictly from the Federal
5 budget.

6 Some of the things on that side of the house
7 that we have done this year is heavy on deployments.
8 We have close to 2,000 people deployed right now, and
9 by the end of this fiscal year, we are looking to
10 deploy close to 6,000 more soldiers, and we have
11 airmen deployed to about 16 countries around the
12 world.

13 Again, a real quick blush on our department.
14 I will certainly entertain any specific questions,
15 sir.

16 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Scott Petri.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PETRI: Thank you, Mr.
18 Chairman, and thank you, General.

19 I wanted to ask a couple of questions, and
20 the first one has to do with the tax relief program.
21 A couple of years ago, Senator Tomlinson enhanced the
22 Disabled Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption Program.

23 It is my understanding that there is a
24 tremendous backlog in that area and that there is
25 only one individual who processes that paperwork. I

1 don't know if that is true or not, but that came out
2 of your department, so I assume it is.

3 I was wondering if you could comment on what
4 the department intends to do. I know tax bills in
5 Bucks County just went out, and I'm sure I'm going to
6 be getting the call from disabled veterans who say,
7 why do I have to pay my taxes and hope to get a
8 refund in 6 months?

9 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir. You are
10 correct. We have identified that there is a problem
11 and that there is a backlog.

12 We had it fairly under control, and then we
13 did have the legislative change, which is a positive
14 legislative change for the citizens of Pennsylvania.
15 However, what it did to our department was increase
16 the number of applications that come in on a daily
17 basis, because more people are eligible for this
18 particular benefit.

19 We did have one person working this issue.
20 I will be honest with you: Our department has
21 received about five new programs in the last year
22 and a half; we have not received any additional
23 people to run those programs. We have had to
24 reallocate resources from other areas to support the
25 programs.

1 This was called to my attention that it was
2 a problem. We have people working overtime right now
3 to clear up that backlog, because we do think it is
4 as important as you think it is.

5 REPRESENTATIVE PETRI: Well, let me ask you,
6 in your GGO, you are seeking additional moneys for
7 personnel. Are any of the positions you are
8 intending to fill in the next year allocated to that
9 specific item, either part time or full time?

10 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: No, sir, not right
11 now. The two -- I believe that we are asking only
12 for two. One is a veterans service coordinator, and
13 the other one is for the Persian Gulf liaison
14 officer.

15 You know we have the Persian Gulf bill that
16 was passed, so there are about 33,000 Pennsylvanians
17 that qualify for that Persian Gulf bonus. So those
18 were the people that we were asking for.

19 REPRESENTATIVE PETRI: Well, I would
20 encourage you to consider hiring at least a
21 part-timer to help with that processing until it gets
22 caught up, because it does not seem like it is moving
23 very quickly, and in fact the delays seem longer.

24 In the area of the Veterans' Homes, I notice
25 that you are seeking a decrease of \$4.2 million, and

1 I'm being told that there's going to be another
2 \$12 1/2 million provided by the Federal government so
3 that effectively there could -- well, there is --
4 \$8.3 million more available between those two
5 adjustments -- the \$12 1/2 million up from the
6 Federal government, the \$4.2 million down from your
7 department.

8 What do you intend to do with that
9 \$8.3 million, which is about a 10-percent increase
10 for the Veterans' Homes?

11 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Sir, we use it to run
12 the Veterans' Homes. You know, the cost of
13 everything is going up. When you talk infrastructure
14 costs, the utilities are going up, the pay is going
15 up, the purchase of medicine is going up, food is
16 going up. So that is the increase that we have to
17 run the homes.

18 I will tell you that when you all granted
19 the single appropriation to the Department of
20 Military and Veterans Affairs for each one of our
21 homes to go from six lines to one, that has benefited
22 us, because we are able to now support any home that
23 has an emergency, or also we are able to support a
24 5-year plan that we have instituted for the homes --
25 buying new beds, buying new refrigerators, new

1 wheelchairs, new lifts, things that have not been
2 bought in our department for a very long time that
3 our homes need. So that money will also add for
4 that, sir.

5 REPRESENTATIVE PETRI: Well, good. I'm
6 looking forward to seeing some increases in those
7 Veterans' Homes and the enrollment boosting up so
8 that we will not have any vacancies.

9 The last item of topic. I saw that there
10 was an article about the number of homeless veterans
11 we have and was wondering what it is that we are
12 doing to try to make sure that they have the benefits
13 that they need.

14 And as a part B to that question, would you
15 support the legislation, either in the House or in
16 the Senate, which would call for the veterans
17 benefits portions of the program to be a
18 Cabinet-level position, and if not, why?

19 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: The homeless program
20 -- I know I have my notes here, and I'm sorry that I
21 just can't find it -- we work through the VSOs with
22 the homeless. It is a Federal issue. That doesn't
23 mean that our department is not hugely concerned.

24 I think that Pennsylvania has less homeless
25 veterans than several other States. We work with

1 CareerLink to try to get these veterans jobs. We
2 have a program called Helmets to Hardhats which helps
3 get these veterans jobs. We work in the VA
4 department, the Federal department, to, again, once
5 you get a veteran a job, you are able to then change
6 their whole life, because the homeless part, the
7 income will start to flow and the homeless will
8 decrease in Pennsylvania.

9 The separate departments question, sir, I am
10 absolutely neutral on the separate departments. I
11 have made it perfectly clear since I came on board as
12 the Adjutant General and when this topic first
13 bubbled up that my issue is great care for veterans,
14 however that is provided.

15 REPRESENTATIVE PETRI: Thank you, Mr.
16 Chairman.

17 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Representative Bryan Lentz.

18 REPRESENTATIVE LENTZ: Thank you, Mr.
19 Chairman.

20 Good afternoon, General. How are you?

21 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Good afternoon, sir.
22 Good.

23 REPRESENTATIVE LENTZ: First, just a
24 follow-up on the last question with regard to the
25 disabled veterans tax exemption.

1 I had a similar complaint, and I contacted
2 your department. I appreciated the promise with
3 which they got back to me on it.

4 It seems to me -- and this is just an
5 editorial comment -- but it seems to me, since we
6 know for a fact that our disabled veteran population
7 is going to increase in the years ahead, that we
8 should look as a State to do something like Maryland
9 has done.

10 If a person is permanently disabled in
11 connection with combat injuries, they should not have
12 to come back every year and prove it.

13 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Sir, it is every
14 5 years, and that is part of the legislation.

15 REPRESENTATIVE LENTZ: Oh; I'm sorry, every
16 5. I am sorry; you are right. That was the
17 improvement -- 5 years.

18 I don't think they should have to come back
19 again. You know, once you are permanently disabled,
20 I believe, if I understand the definition of
21 "permanent," that means that is not going to change.
22 So I just think that that is a future policy that we
23 should explore.

24 But my question, and I also would like to
25 compliment you and your staff and the Guard for the

1 outstanding job they have done in two areas. One is
2 in getting up and running these Stryker units. And
3 in the deployments, I read in the budget materials
4 that your unit has had over 12,000 soldiers deployed
5 since September 11 to a variety of parts of the
6 world, a variety of countries.

7 And I know from my own experience in the
8 military that those are two of the most difficult
9 things a unit can do -- bring in new equipment and
10 train up on it and deploy -- which leads to my
11 question, which is that I know that it requires
12 excellent junior leaders to execute those kinds of
13 missions.

14 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

15 REPRESENTATIVE LENTZ: And the National
16 Guard, I know, gets the majority of their junior
17 leaders from ROTC programs.

18 And there is one in particular that I'm
19 interested in, and that's the Early Commissioning
20 Program, which a lot of people don't know about,
21 which allows individuals to become commissioned
22 officers in the National Guard after 2 years of
23 college, and the one institution that does that here
24 in Pennsylvania is Valley Forge Military College.

25 So I wondered if you could talk a little bit

1 about that program. I know on your staff, Colonel
2 Lord is a product of that program and a good example
3 of it, and just a little bit about the program and
4 how it has benefited the National Guard.

5 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

6 We have a great working relationship with
7 Tony McGeorge, who is the President of Valley Forge
8 at this time.

9 The Early Commissioning Program is just
10 that. They go through an ROTC program at Valley
11 Forge, and at 2 years they get commissioned to
12 Lieutenant, where then they can go on to their basic
13 officer course, and once they complete that
14 particular course, then they are a deployable asset.
15 Until they complete that course, they are not a
16 deployable asset.

17 One of the things that I urge these young
18 Lieutenants to do, and in fact I'm very hard about
19 it, is they get an associate's degree, which is a
20 phenomenal degree and a very great instruction in
21 Valley Forge. They must go on and get a bachelor's
22 degree, because they will not get promoted to Captain
23 without that bachelor's degree. They can be the best
24 officer in the world, and we have that hiccup because
25 of the Reserve Officers' Act that is federally

1 mandated. But to start off with an officer from
2 Valley Forge is a step in the right direction.

3 There are a lot of commissioning tools. One
4 is ROTC from the several schools that we have in
5 Pennsylvania. One is Valley Forge, where we get that
6 focused individual, and the other is OCS, which is
7 Federal OCS at Fort Benning, or State OCS, which is,
8 again, sanctioned by the Training and Doctrine
9 Command and meets all the standards of the Federal
10 OCS, where they can go one weekend a month and
11 2 weeks in the summer and get commissioned, or they
12 can go for a total of 12 weeks as an accelerated and
13 get commissioned.

14 So we have a multitude of ways to get
15 commissioned officers. We do get a lot of officers
16 from Valley Forge.

17 Colonel Lord is my Chief of Staff, and he is
18 a Valley Forge graduate, and since you know him, sir,
19 he is deploying soon to Afghanistan.

20 REPRESENTATIVE LENTZ: I heard that. Thank
21 you.

22 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Miller.

24 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Thank you, Mr.
25 Chairman.

1 Good afternoon, General Wright.

2 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Good afternoon, sir.

3 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: You know, many of
4 the committee members that serve on the Veterans
5 Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, along
6 with staff, have toured the Scotland School.

7 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Absolutely.

8 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: My questions deal
9 mostly with the Scotland School.

10 I see that you only received an increase of
11 \$382,000, or 3.7 percent in State funding. Can you
12 give us an overview and status report on the school's
13 activities and functions?

14 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir, I can.

15 Scotland School is one of the jewels of our
16 department, and I believe one of the jewels of
17 Pennsylvania.

18 You know, it was created after the Civil
19 War. There were 11 of them in Pennsylvania for
20 orphans on both sides of the war. That funneled
21 into one as funding and the orphans' need went
22 away.

23 It changed to be a school, residential,
24 third through twelfth grade, and you must be a
25 relative of a veteran, not just mother and father,

1 but it could be grandparents; it could be aunt,
2 uncle.

3 It gives a great education. They attend
4 ROTC. We graduate about 30 students a year. Ninety
5 percent of that graduating class historically has
6 gone on to an institution of higher education.

7 We have funding in the budget, I believe,
8 that will accomplish what we need to accomplish at
9 Scotland School, and we have also had in the past
10 several years -- the past, I'm going to say, 4 years
11 -- an infrastructure building boom, if you will.

12 That doesn't mean that there's not more that
13 can be done, but, for example, we had package 1,
14 which was \$4.1 million, and we renovated the main
15 school building. That is completed.

16 We have a new boiler and underground storage
17 tank. Not all these things are visible yet. As you
18 know, the infrastructure is sometimes not real
19 romantic, but they need to be fixed.

20 Curtin Hall; ten cottages. We are in the
21 process now of doing that construction.

22 Renovation of the gym, the maintenance
23 building, the auditorium, and the student recreation
24 center, we anticipate starting this June.

25 And the last one that we have right now on

1 the books is package 4, and that will renovate
2 nine cottages, and we are developing that scope of
3 work.

4 So we are doing a lot when it comes to
5 infrastructure, but this school had been, not
6 necessarily neglected, comes to mind -- that is
7 probably not a great word to use -- but the emphasis
8 was not put on the infrastructure like it should be.

9 When it came to our department, we realized
10 that, and we fought hard to get money, and it was
11 very successful.

12 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Well, I appreciate
13 hearing about the improvements in the packages that
14 are being worked on, because the last time I visited
15 the school, it was obvious there were some serious
16 needs for improvement.

17 Is there an opportunity to take a look at
18 this also with Homeland Security? The large grounds
19 there as identified in the Commonwealth's emergency
20 evacuation plan for Three Mile Island and other
21 possible State emergency situations, are we
22 addressing it appropriately under the programs you
23 just outlined, or do we need to do more to bring
24 some of these structures, especially the large halls
25 and things, that might be used in an evacuation

1 scenario?

2 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: What I just mentioned
3 clearly was for the students at the school.

4 It is on the evacuation plan, and Homeland
5 Security money would be able to increase not only
6 what the students use on a daily basis but to
7 project, if there is an evacuation, if we need to set
8 up a mobile hospital or something like that. Because
9 as we all know, right now getting into an emergency
10 room on a weekend is very difficult, so in an
11 emergency, hospital bed space will really be at a
12 premium.

13 So, yes, sir, looking at Homeland Security
14 money is something that I will definitely do, and
15 thank you very much for that recommendation.

16 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Okay. Because I
17 think you might be aware that Representative Russ
18 Fairchild has proposed that we spend probably up to a
19 million dollars of Homeland Security money to address
20 that issue.

21 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir. My staff
22 and I have talked briefly about that, and we would
23 welcome that additional funding.

24 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Okay. Thank you.

25 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

1 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Siptroth.

4 REPRESENTATIVE SIPTROTH: Thank you, Mr.
5 Chairman.

6 General Wright, good afternoon.

7 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Hi, sir.

8 REPRESENTATIVE SIPTROTH: In the budget, the
9 Civil Air Patrol had requested a \$100,000 increase
10 from last year's budget of \$500,000. The Governor
11 has seen fit to slash their line item to zero this
12 year.

13 My question is, is the National Guard
14 prepared to assume the role and the responsibilities
15 and the duties, other than the great educational
16 benefits that are provided by the Civil Air Patrol as
17 well as great character building for our young men
18 and women, but is the Guard prepared to assume all
19 the responsibilities of a search and rescue and the
20 other activities that are performed by the Civil Air
21 Patrol?

22 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Well, sir, I think
23 the Civil Air Patrol is a very, very worthy
24 organization and needed.

25 Our Guard is very well equipped and very

1 prepared. However, the more people you have in an
2 emergency, the better off you will be.

3 REPRESENTATIVE SIPTROTH: Okay.

4 Would you support the reinstatement of at
5 least the \$500,000 that was originally proposed?

6 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Well, sir, I will
7 support the Civil Air Patrol. The funding, I am not
8 in the capacity to say exactly what they need, but I
9 clearly do support the Civil Air Patrol.

10 REPRESENTATIVE SIPTROTH: Thank you very
11 much on that.

12 Can you just give us an overview of some of
13 the improvements at Fort Indiantown Gap that have
14 recently been made?

15 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Oh, absolutely.

16 The Stryker Brigade was brought up. The
17 Stryker Brigade brings in \$1.3 billion worth of
18 economic impact to this Commonwealth. It is spread
19 throughout the Commonwealth, but there is a focus at
20 Fort Indiantown Gap on training areas and ranges.

21 We have over \$80 million worth of ranges,
22 completing construction probably in the next
23 2 months. We have a battalion-sized barracks and
24 dining facility and headquarters complex that will be
25 completed in the next few months, which, I may add,

1 that this will be the very first time since World War
2 II that our soldiers will be able to sleep in brick.
3 They normally sleep in the World War II wood that was
4 established when Fort Indiantown Gap was established.

5 Besides the Stryker Brigade, we had received
6 at the end of last year \$5.4 million with which we
7 are able to do small projects to improve things like
8 roads, warehouses, to build up Fort Indiantown Gap.

9 And the last thing that I would like to
10 mention is our unit training and equipment site --
11 brand new, recently opened, huge facility to fix our
12 wheeled and tracked vehicles. Twenty million dollars
13 worth of Federal funding was sent to Pennsylvania to
14 accomplish that.

15 So Fort Indiantown Gap is completely
16 different than you have ever seen it before. The
17 Guard this year will celebrate its 10th year of
18 managing Fort Indiantown Gap.

19 REPRESENTATIVE SIPTROTH: Thank you very
20 much.

21 Two more quick ones, Mr. Chairman.

22 How is the transition going at Willow Grove
23 from a Reserve operation to the Department of
24 Homeland Security and others that are going to occupy
25 that space?

1 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Well, sir, you know
2 that it was supposed to be closed according to the
3 BRAC. It was not closed. It is changing
4 complexions, if you will.

5 There was a study done, and it was released
6 on the 29th. It was hung on our Web site today for
7 the public or anybody to read, and there was a press
8 announcement sent out earlier today.

9 The fact of the matter is, it has multiple
10 recommendations within the study. We need to review
11 it; we need to digest it; we need to go through it
12 with a fine-toothed comb before we can make any solid
13 recommendations as to what the entire complexion of
14 Willow Grove should look like.

15 It is changing. We just welcomed a national
16 security organization, intelligence organization, to
17 Willow Grove just the other day. The 111th Fighter
18 Wing will remain there. They may have different
19 missions, but they will stay at Willow Grove.

20 REPRESENTATIVE SIPTROTH: Great. Thank you
21 very much for that.

22 Regarding the proposed budget for the
23 veterans outreach services, they are going to be
24 25 percent less than what was somewhat promised to
25 them during the process of passing Senate Bill 915.

1 Do you feel that they are going to be able to
2 accomplish the mission that was given to them or
3 expanded to them regarding the veterans with that
4 reduced budget?

5 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Well, sir, this last
6 fiscal year, they received \$450,000 as kind of a
7 start-up program, because it was toward the end of
8 the fiscal year. So I look at this as an increase --
9 \$1.7 million.

10 I understand that some are disappointed that
11 it is not higher. Saying that, anything that we can
12 do to increase Veteran Service Officers to provide
13 that key connection between them filing the benefit
14 and the Federal VA and giving the benefit is
15 absolutely important to Pennsylvania.

16 REPRESENTATIVE SIPTROTH: Thank you very
17 much, General.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Denlinger.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Thank you, Mr.
21 Chairman, and good afternoon, General.

22 General Wright, last year at this hearing we
23 discussed a report issued by the Commission on the
24 National Guard and Reserves presented to Congress
25 which stated, and I'm going to read this, "The U.S.

1 National Guard suffers from severe equipment
2 shortages that could jeopardize its ability to
3 respond to a possible terrorist attack, natural
4 disaster or other domestic crisis."

5 I'm wondering, in the year that has ensued,
6 what progress do you think has been made,
7 particularly with regard to Pennsylvania, to make our
8 Guard better ready to respond in the event of such an
9 emergency?

10 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Thank you for asking
11 that question, sir, because equipping the Guard is
12 one of my key issues.

13 General Blum, who is the Chief of the
14 National Guard Bureau, has petitioned Big Army to put
15 in \$36 billion worth of funding for equipment. That
16 does not come today. That is spread throughout
17 multiple years.

18 One of the things that he has asked us to do
19 is to turn in what the Army calls substitute
20 equipment. So we may not have the version of truck
21 that Big Army is using, but we have an older version
22 that we use as a substitute.

23 To do that is a double-edged sword. If you
24 use it as a substitute and carry it on your books,
25 then you get credit for it, so you don't need a new

1 truck. If you turn it in right now without the new
2 truck, then you put the citizens of Pennsylvania at
3 risk because you don't have the truck.

4 So what I have elected to do -- and we have
5 been asked to turn in this equipment -- I have turned
6 it in on paper, so all of my documents read that I
7 need new equipment. So the new equipment will come,
8 because it takes such a long time for the Army to
9 process old equipment, and I believe that
10 Pennsylvania will be in good shape.

11 We still have that substitute equipment. Is
12 it okay? It will perform a State emergency very
13 well. Is it wartime equipment? No. It can't be
14 deployed, but it will protect the citizens of
15 Pennsylvania.

16 What concerns me about the \$36 billion is
17 that if the supplementals stop on the Federal side
18 of the house and the war is changed in any way, that
19 \$36 billion may stop. That will be catastrophic for
20 us. So if I see that happening, I will be knocking
21 at your door for your help, sir.

22 REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Understood. I
23 appreciate that update.

24 And I do want to add my comments to those of
25 Representative Siptroth regarding the Civil Air

1 Patrol.

2 As a Major in the Patrol, I stand very much
3 in support of the CAP and hope we can put that line
4 back in place.

5 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Thank you.

7 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: The Guard and the
8 Civil Air Patrol have a very good working
9 relationship.

10 CHAIRMAN EVANS: McIlhattan.

11 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Thank you, Mr.
12 Chairman.

13 Just a couple of quick questions to follow
14 up on Mr. Miller's, Representative Miller's questions
15 on the Scotland School.

16 What is the eligibility for Scotland School?

17 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: You must be third
18 through twelfth grade. I believe you cannot start
19 Scotland School if you are an eleventh or twelfth
20 grader; you must start it at the tenth grade.

21 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: All right.

22 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: You must be related
23 to a veteran, either, again, a father or a mother, an
24 aunt, uncle, but a connectivity to a veteran.

25 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Do you need any

1 income eligibility or not?

2 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: No.

3 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Family income?
4 Nothing like that?

5 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: No. You must be a
6 resident of Pennsylvania. And these are not
7 adjudicated children; these are children at risk.

8 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Well, what do
9 you mean at risk? Can you define that for me?

10 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir. I will
11 tell you a story about a little girl, Adrianna. She
12 was trying on her uniforms, and she said to her
13 teacher, "I'm going to sleep really well tonight,"
14 and she was in third grade. And her teacher said,
15 "Well, Adrianna, why?" And she said, "Because nobody
16 is getting shot outside tonight."

17 So they come from areas where drug -- a lot
18 of our students come from center-city Philadelphia
19 where there is a propensity for drugs, a propensity
20 for violence, and it is that kind of risk that they
21 may be at. And their parents say, I don't want them
22 in this particular school because they are not
23 learning and the environment outside is risky; they
24 would like them to try to enroll in Scotland School,
25 which they have had huge success at.

1 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Do most children
2 finish out Scotland School when they start?

3 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Sir, our last
4 graduating class, if you can bear with me while I
5 just get to my numbers so I give correct ones to you
6 -- yeah. Our ninth grade was 39 students this year;
7 we graduate between 30 and 32 students. So I would
8 venture to say that most do finish the school.

9 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Your 312
10 enrollment for this year, is that what you normally
11 stay around, or is that up? down? or is that more or
12 less the average ballpark figure?

13 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: We have had a smaller
14 enrollment. We would like to go to 320. We have had
15 a smaller enrollment these last few years because of
16 what we are doing infrastructure-wise at Scotland
17 School.

18 If the cottages are being remodeled and
19 renovated, we cannot put students in there. So we
20 had to adjust our enrollment slightly in order to
21 rebuild that infrastructure, but we are working
22 toward 320, sir.

23 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Okay. There is
24 no requirement financial-wise. Is that correct? And
25 a parent does not have to be low income or anything

1 like that?

2 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: I do not believe so.
3 I would have to get you--- There are very specific
4 requirements. Those were the general ones that I
5 remembered today. I can get you the complete list of
6 requirements for Scotland School.

7 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Okay.

8 I was just sitting here thinking, the Milton
9 Hershey School is expanding quite rapidly, and to a
10 point, it might be almost the same type of student.
11 And I assume it costs an awful lot to run Scotland
12 School, and please don't think I'm against Scotland
13 School. I'm just sitting here thinking, what does it
14 cost to operate that facility a year?

15 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Our budget this year
16 is \$13,647,000.

17 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: \$13,627,000.

18 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: 47.

19 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: 47.

20 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

21 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: 312 kids.

22 Okay. Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRMAN EVANS: General, I would like to
24 thank you and your staff for what you do, one, first
25 and foremost for the State, as well as what you do

1 and coming before this committee and making your
2 presentation.

3 I would also like to thank the veterans who
4 have come here today just to show support for
5 listening to you, and again, I appreciate this
6 opportunity coming before us. Thank you very much.

7 MAJOR GENERAL WRIGHT: You are welcome, sir.
8 I appreciate it.

9 CHAIRMAN EVANS: No problem.

10 What I would like to do is take no more than
11 3 minutes or so to allow the Secretary of Education
12 to come up, him and his staff.

13 The other thing I want to say to the members
14 on the committee is, we also have a number of
15 superintendents from urban, suburban, and rural
16 Pennsylvania who will give their reaction to the
17 Governor's proposed budget.

18 Obviously, education is the most important
19 part of the budget, you know, so it is rather ironic
20 that we have education coming on the agenda the same
21 day the Department of Corrections was here. So we
22 have the back end and we have the front end. So this
23 will be an interesting discussion.

24 So I say to the members, we are going to
25 have a lively, maybe 2-hour discussion -- Education.

1 Again, we'll take a 3-minute break until the
2 Secretary of Education. I would like for the
3 superintendents, if they can come up, we have them in
4 the back, and then have the Secretary.

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6 (The hearing concluded at 2:05 p.m.)

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1 I hereby certify that the proceedings and
2 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the
3 notes taken by me on the within proceedings and that
4 this is a correct transcript of the same.

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Debra B. Miller, Reporter

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