



Pa. legislators enjoy high pay, generous

As My compliments to Lancaster Newspapers for the recent investigative reporting, exposing the spending of our tax money, the state college salary excess and the spending and globetrotting of our state legislators.

So, state Sen. Mike Brubaker says he has no obligation to those who finance his worldwide globetrotting in the name of his constituents. That statement belongs on the comic pages. The citizens should be reminded regularly of two pertinent facts:

• Pennsylvania has the second most costly legislative body in the U.S., exceeded only by California -- and that's before you include the cost of their lifelong pensions and other benefits.

• The average income of their taxpaying constituents in Lancaster County is less than \$50,000 per year. A Lancaster County senator retired a few years ago with an annual pension of \$79,000 after withdrawing his contributions of \$150,000, leaving the entire burden for the taxpayers. He also gets lifelong medical and long-term care premiums for himself and his spouse paid by the taxpayers.

Put into perspective, the cost for Pennsylvania's Legislature is \$319 million. Ohio's is \$48 million and Texas' cost is a mere \$24 million. Pennsylvania lawmakers also have more than 2,000 staffers.

Our traveling legislators tell us that it's necessary for them to represent Pennsylvania's

commercial and business interests. Does anyone believe that a business decision would depend on these folks instead of sound business principles?

Texas has an economy almost three times the size of Pennsylvania's. The Texas legislative body meets only every second year, there is no income tax or state inheritance tax and small wonder people are fleeing to Texas.

Our state Legislature torments us with a constant diet of more laws and regulations while presiding over a bankrupt and unsustainable pension system.

The pension system is actuarially bankrupt and will only be rescued by massive increases in property taxes.

Our lawmakers were clever enough to craft the law so that, when the pension fund gets unbalanced, the burden goes back to the school districts to make up the deficit.

I encourage Lancaster Newspapers to continue doing sound investigative reporting, defending the taxpayers, shedding light on the excesses of our government masters.

Richard Bauder, Manor Township