

## **RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE 2005 CCAP ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The following resolutions were adopted by the delegates in attendance at the CCAP Annual Conference in Hershey at the business meeting on August 9, 2005. In italics after each resolution is a description of its content and intent.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1** *(Submitted by the CCAP Assessment and Taxation Committee)* -- The Association supports enactment of a new assessment law to include among its elements adequate testing and evaluation of assessments utilizing standards as established by the International Association of Assessment Officials.

*The resolution is an editorial change adding to a list of specific assessment statute objectives this criterion designating a specific national standard for assessment standards..*

**RESOLUTION NO. 2** *(Submitted by the Northwest Association of County Commissioners)* -- The Association supports an amendment to the County Code giving counties the local option, when selecting a Certified Public Accountant to perform the necessary and required audits of the counties' fiscal affairs, to elect not to use the auditors for that purpose while allowing the auditors to retain any remaining statutory functions.

*The resolution proposes giving counties the same option afforded townships of the second class which, when they appoint a CPA, remove the authority of the elected auditors to perform the audits but retain their other statutory functions. Under the resolution, auditors would still retain other functions under the Code, including for example monthly review of transactions under section 1602.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 3** *(Submitted by the Northwest Association of County Commissioners)* -- The Association supports legislation permitting county commissioners to abolish the office of jury commissioner by vote of the county commissioners, effective the end of the term of the jury commissioners then in office.

*The resolution allows the commissioners to take a direct vote to abolish the office, rather than by authorizing a referendum as had been the Association's previous position. The resolution specifies that the action does not take effect immediately but instead takes effect at the end of the then-seated jury commissioners' term.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 4** *(Submitted by Columbia County)* -- The Association supports development of recommendations by the Public Employee Retirement Commission, with county participation, on legislation to provide appropriate, secure, interim relief to county plans that from time to time suffer from adverse market conditions.

*While county pension plans have traditionally been the most stable government plans in the Commonwealth, the same statutory rigidity that encouraged this stability has also caused problems as counties were required to maintain rigorous actuarial and funding standards during the economic downturn of the late 1990s. This rigidity has caused significant short-term budget issues in many counties. The resolutions calls on the Public Employee Retirement Commission to develop for legislative consideration mechanisms to allow counties flexibility to bridge through these economic problems, but with appropriate safeguards against local abuse.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 5** (*Submitted by the CCAP County Governance Committee*) -- The Association supports implementation of the recommendations contained in the Governor's Election Reform Task Force report, dated May 12, 2005, with the exception of the recommendation to move the date of the Presidential Primary from the fourth Tuesday in April to the first Tuesday in March, which the Association opposes.

*The Association was a participant on the Election Reform Task Force and concurred at the time of their development with every recommendation ultimately adopted except the change in the primary date. The County Governance Committee expressed concerns with the overlap the March date would cause between petition filing and challenges and the holiday season, and additionally noted weather concerns. The Association's Platform already stipulates that all deadlines must shift concurrently with any change in primary date, and supports coordination of Presidential primary dates among the states along with a series of related recommendations.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 6** (*Submitted by Carbon County*) -- The Association supports an amendment to Section 1626.1 of the Campaign Expense Reporting Law to increase the amount of funds that certain candidates may receive or expend before being required to file a detailed campaign expense report from the current \$250 per any reporting period to \$1,000 per any reporting period.

*The resolution calls for an increase in the threshold for reporting campaign receipts / expenditures.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 7** (*Submitted by Carbon County*) -- The Association supports an amendment to Section 1626(g) of the Campaign Expense Reporting Law to increase the amount of funds that an individual can make as an independent expenditure during a calendar year before being required to file a campaign expense report from \$100 to \$500.

*The resolution calls for an increase in the threshold for reporting individual expenditures.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 8** (*Submitted by Fulton County*) -- The Association recognizes the significant increases in costs to counties and employers to provide health care coverage benefits to their employees, the trend for many employers to reduce the level of benefits offered to their employees, the decreasing availability of affordable health care to American families, and the increased vulnerability of parts of our population as cuts are made to Medicaid budgets, and calls on Congress to create a task force, working with state and local government, employers, and the health care industry, to develop solutions to these pressing health care needs.

*Rapidly increasing health care costs are resulting in higher costs for government and other employers and are resulting in declines in the scope of individual coverage either through private plans or through safety net programs such as Medicaid. The resolution seeks a comprehensive national solution, although not necessarily a unified or "national" program, but one that at least deals with market forces and results in more universal access to care.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 9** (*Submitted by the CCAP Human Services Committee and Courts and Corrections Committee*) -- The Association supports the efforts of the National Association of Counties to develop a methamphetamine policy that focuses state and federal efforts on giving county human services and corrections agencies and law enforcement agencies the tools to deal effectively with

prevention and treatment, human services consequences, and environmental consequences arising from this significant and growing drug problem.

*Methamphetamine abuse has been a long-time scourge in rural areas of the midwest and northwest, and is now spreading to the east coast and to urban areas. In addition to the physical and emotional problems it causes abusers, it also results in violent behavior (two Pennsylvania deputy sheriffs were gunned down by a meth producer last year), child neglect, and environmental hazards. The resolution states the Association's concurrence with the efforts of the National Association of Counties to promote strong, comprehensive, and coordinated federal and state methamphetamine policies.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 10** *(Submitted by the CCAP Courts and Corrections Committee)* -- The Association supports legislative or regulatory change that would permit a county to utilize an independent third party inspector, such as the American Jails Association, the American Corrections Association, or a similarly recognized body, contracted by the county to serve as the annual inspection as required by the Department of Corrections.

*The relationship between the Department of Corrections jail inspectors and many county jails has become adversarial, with the Department frequently using terminology to describe problems found within county jails that could create an untenable litigation scenario, and is focused in a punitive way that does not recognize local efforts or limitations. In addition, the Department is soon to promulgate new rules for county jails that will increase standards, create ambiguity with regard to compliance with those regulations, and utilize decertification of county jails when a compliance issue is found. There is precedence in many areas for allowing an accreditation process to stand for an annual compliance inspection. Having an alternative to the DOC inspection process provides counties with the ability to retain local control of standards as well as limit costs to the tax payer.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 11** *(Submitted by the CCAP Courts and Corrections Committee)* -- The Association supports amendments to the schedule of fines, fees, and costs to increase the county court cost fees for traffic and non-traffic criminal violations by \$5.00.

*The costs of the courts continue to increase, without commensurate increase in reimbursement from the Commonwealth or movement toward fulfilling the Supreme Court mandate to take over funding and administration of the lower court. The fees identified in the resolution, intended to offset some of the county administrative costs, have not been increased for some time.*

**SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS** *(Submitted by the CCAP Board of Directors)* -- Last year, one in six Pennsylvanians were aided by county human services programs such as children and youth agencies, juvenile probation and secure juvenile detention programs, Area Agencies on Aging, medical transportation programs, county affiliated nursing facilities, drug and alcohol treatment or mental health/mental retardation programs, or they received assistance from programs funded by the Human Services Development Fund. In the Commonwealth budget proposed by Governor Rendell for 2005-2006 and adopted by the General Assembly last month, the Commonwealth falls far short of its obligation to fund these mandated and entitlement services, by some measures as much as \$420 million. A multi-year trend of declining state appropriations has contributed directly to the increases in county property taxes during that time period, and this year's significant state shortfalls will undoubtedly mean increased pressure on county taxpayers as counties begin development of their own 2006 budgets this fall. County government cannot abandon or reduce the vital services we provide to those in need, but at the same time we can no longer raise the local property tax to make up for federal and state funding shortfalls, nor should we. The membership of CCAP expresses its strong displeasure with the

continuing inability of the state and federal governments to make appropriations commensurate with their fiscal responsibility to local government and our citizens. We ask the Congressional Delegation, the Governor, and the General Assembly, and the Commonwealth's citizens, to recognize that the state and federal shortfalls place the burden unfairly, but directly, on local property taxpayers. We ask our state and federal leadership to make the responsible choices that will provide adequate and fair funding for the programs counties carry out on behalf of our mutual constituents. For the funding share that rightly should come from county government, we ask for passage of our Blueprint for Tax Fairness so that our local taxes are fairly based on the ability to pay. We pledge to work with them toward that goal.

*Since the Pennsylvania County Platform contains several components directed at fair Commonwealth funding and taxation, a new resolution on the matter is not germane. Instead the CCAP Board offered, and the membership adopted, this Special Order of Business to serve as affirmation of their continuing frustration with the lack of solutions to, or in some quarters even recognition of, the federal and state funding crisis and its effect on local property taxpayers. The Special Order is directed to be conveyed to state and federal leaders, and to the media, as a focal point of the deliberations of the CCAP membership at its 2005 Annual Conference.*