

# INTRODUCTION

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From the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

**Article II, Section 8** (legislative compensation)

The members of the General Assembly shall receive such salary and mileage for regular and special sessions as shall be fixed by law, and no other compensation whatever, whether for service upon committee or otherwise. No member of either House shall during the term for which he may have been elected, receive any increase of salary, or mileage, under any law passed during such term.

**Article III, Section 1** (the original purpose rule)

No law shall be passed except by bill, and no bill shall be so altered or amended, on its passage through either House, as to change its original purpose.

**Article III, Section 2** (the committee rule)

No bill shall be considered unless referred to a committee, printed for the use of the members and returned therefrom.

**Article III, Section 3** (the single subject rule)

No bill shall be passed containing more than one subject, which shall be clearly expressed in its title, except a general appropriation bill or a bill codifying or compiling the law or a part thereof.

**Article III, Section 4** (the three day rule)

Every bill shall be considered on three different days in each House. All amendments made thereto shall be printed for the use of the members before the final vote is taken on the bill and before the final vote is taken, upon written request addressed to the presiding officer of either House by at least twenty-five percent of the members elected to

that House, any bill shall be read at length in that House. No bill shall become a law, unless on its final passage the vote is taken by yeas and nays, the names of the persons voting for and against it are entered on the journal, and a majority of the members elected to each House is recorded thereon as voting in its favor.

Now go back and read those sections again. Go ahead - I'll wait.

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Article II, Section 8 spells out the compensation system for members of Pennsylvania's General Assembly. The four Sections from Article III are some of the rules dictating what they have to do when they want to pass a new law.

Pretty simple stuff, huh? If you're a regular Joe Sixpack like me, you'll view these rules as fairly straightforward. You might have to read them a couple times to fully grasp what they mean, but the vast majority of people will draw the same conclusions from them: They mean what they say, as plainly written in black and white.

However, if you're a politician, connected lawyer, judge or any other person who depends on the actions of government for your livelihood (a.k.a. the Political Class) you may view these sections of the Pennsylvania Constitution differently. You may see them instead as loose guidelines with plenty of gray area to manipulate for whatever reason you see fit.

There are some distinct differences between the Joe Sixpacks of the world and the Political Class - and that's what this book is about. Joe Sixpacks see things in black and white. The Political Class sees gray areas. Joe Sixpacks can tell the difference between right and wrong, usually by sense of smell. The Political Class tries to make wrong masquerade as right.

There are millions of Joe Sixpacks in Pennsylvania. The members of the Political Class are far fewer in number, but they create all the rules Joe and Jane Sixpack have to follow. This alone is not a problem, as long as those rulemakers follow the simple guidelines millions of Joe Sixpacks have laid out for them in the ultimate expression of their will: the Constitution. This is where it gets a little dicey - and now we're talking about the other subject of this book: Power.

The struggle for power between men (and women, of course) is a time-honored tradition that stretches back to the first meeting of two cavemen with clubs. The caveman with the bigger club won and got all the power. If the caveman with the smaller club complained about the power imbalance, the caveman with the bigger club simply knocked him over the head and order was restored. Government as we know it was born. The only difference today lies in the particular club used to wield that power.

It's amazing to watch what people do in the struggle for power over others. They'll go to great lengths to obtain it. They'll go to even greater lengths to keep it. Some assume they have power when they don't. Others have more power than they need and use it sparingly. Many don't realize how much power they already have. And a few will abuse their power over others so much and for so long, they actually begin to believe they're justified in doing it.

The power struggles you'll read about in this book are not unique. They are common struggles we can all relate to in one way or another. The Pennsylvania political figures you'll read about here are not unique either. I imagine we could visit any other state or nation and find a few other suspects to fill the same roles. There are heroes and villains everywhere and they come in all shapes and sizes.

One of the things that is unique to this book is the way Pennsylvania's power struggle played out. I can't recall ever reading or hearing about a similar situation where events transpired quite like they did in Pennsylvania in 2005-2006. Although many people are aware of what happened, I'm not sure they saw it in quite the same light as I did.

We've all witnessed memorable events unfold around us. I equate it to seeing a spear aimed and thrown at a target: We watch as the spear is picked up. We see the thrower taking aim. We hold our breath as he releases it. We follow along as it flies through the air. Our focus switches to the target as the spear approaches. After the spear makes contact, we judge its aim and assess the results. These observations are all made from a distance, though. Rarely are we ever personally involved in the process. I was fortunate enough to be caught up in a remarkable event. I was not the spear's thrower nor was I its target. Instead, I had the pleasure of observing from the unique perspective of sitting at the spear's tip as it sliced through the air.

Many people have asked what it was like to be in the middle of Pennsylvania's political revolution of 2005-2006. The short answer? It was amazing. It was exciting. It was exhausting. Sometimes it was downright frustrating. Other times it was surreal. Most of all, however, it was satisfying. Starting something and having it exceed your expectations by leaps and bounds cannot be compared to anything else - especially when the thing you started comes from your heart and incorporates everything in which you believe.

My experience was so unique, utterly personal and deeply moving that no quick comment or conversation could ever do it justice - and that's why I wrote this book. I wanted other people to know what it was like at the Tip of the Spear.