

Pennsylvania State Grange



*American Values.
Hometown Roots.*

2018-2019 Summary of Legislative Policies

(As approved by the Delegates of the PA State Grange Annual Session, October, 2018)

PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRANGE

Policy Development...

The Pennsylvania State Grange is a grassroots organization. Resolutions originate at the local level, in Community Granges that have been the foundation and strength of the Grange since its inception in 1867. From the local level, the resolutions are considered at the Pomona or county level. Those that are approved, with or without revision, are then submitted to the PA State Grange. At the state level committees study, review and revise the resolutions. During our annual convention these committees recommend resolution approval or disapproval to our delegate body, comprised of 2 members each from 240+ Granges. Resolutions that are approved addressing national issues are then forwarded to National Grange for a similar process.

Once the resolution process is completed our policies can be implemented. One of the functions of the Grange is to seek legislative action in line with our established goals. We work with members of the PA General Assembly, our national Congressmen, and various government agencies to improve the lives of citizens across the Commonwealth. Legislative activity is accomplished at the local, state and national levels through a variety of arenas including legislative meetings, one-on-one contacts, and visits to the state and national Capitols.

Contact: The Pennsylvania State Grange
20 Erford Road, Suite 216
Lemoyne, PA 17043
717-737-8855 Fax- 717-737-8858
president@pagrange.org OR legislative@pagrange.org
www.pagrange.org

To contact your elected leaders:

State Officials

The Honorable (state senator)	The Honorable (state representative)
Main Capitol	Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120	Harrisburg, PA 17120

If you do not know who your state senator or representative is, please use www.legis.state.pa.us as a locator or contact the PA State Grange. This will also give you their office telephone numbers.

Federal Officials: Hard copy mail is delayed due to 911. They prefer emails. To locate your Member of Congress (US Representative) go to <http://www.house.gov/representatives/>

Our two US Senators are The Honorable Bob Casey 202/224-6324 and The Honorable Pat Toomey 202/224-4254. There are also comment forms on their web sites: www.casey.senate.gov and www.toomey.senate.gov.

CONTENTS

Agriculture	2
Dairy	3
Energy, Fuel, Natural Resources	4
Environmental Pollution and Protection	6
Hunting and Wildlife	7
Land Use	8
Livestock and Poultry	9
Crime	10
Deaf	11
Education	11
Health and Insurance	13
Religion	14
Gambling	14
Government Assistance Programs	14
Federal Issues	16
State Government Issues	18
Elections	21
Employment and Labor	21
Taxes	22
Transportation	22
Vehicles	23
Utilities	24
Archived Resolutions	25

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Group Funding

The Grange supports a dependable and reliable dedicated source of funding to support youth, 4-H, FFA, county fairs, and other agriculture-related organizations. (2016)

Animal Welfare

Of continuing concern to farmers are groups who claim to be animal welfare rights protectors. Animals provide food and clothing. Every effort must be made to educate the public on modern livestock production methods. Those who are abusing animals in their care by not following generally accepted agricultural practices should be penalized. Any legislation that addresses animal rights concerns must consider the adverse economic impact on food production, consumer food prices, and the farmer's welfare. (2001)

The Grange opposes any legislative effort to elevate the legal status of pets to companions rather than property. (2003)

The Grange opposes any enactment of legislation to dictate production systems or husbandry practices for farm animals. We support the freedom of farmers to choose ethical and humane methods of husbandry based on sound science. (2011)

The Grange recommends that the PA Crimes Code, Section 3503 (Criminal Trespass) be amended to make it a crime to take pictures or videos on farms depicting perceived animal or environmental abuse without the owner's consent and that, if necessary, investigations of perceived abuse will be conducted by proper authorities to assure due process for farmers and their operations. (2013)

Biological Defense Lab

The Grange supports efforts to upgrade, replace and build facilities for biological and agricultural defense. (2005)

Check-Off Programs

The Grange encourages Cooperatives to voluntarily initiate a program that allows membership of the co-op to vote on any program that takes money out of the farmer's pocket with a yes vote for approval. (2003)

Disease Control

The Grange opposes any proposed relocation of Plum Island Animal Disease Center to mainland United States. (2006)

Dog Law

The Grange denounces the neglect and cruel treatment of dogs and supports reasonable legislation that provides dog owners the flexibility to exercise reasonable care in tethering of dogs outside. We oppose legislation making outside tethering of dogs illegal or placing time restrictions on outside tethering. (2010)

Farm Yields

A farm yield or county average yield shall not be influenced when one year's yield is less than 50% of the normal yield of a given crop and is caused by any weather related disaster that is out of the farmer's control. (2003)

Farm Show

The PA State Grange opposes any move to put the PA Farm Show Complex into an equity or leasing arrangement. (2017)

Funding for Fairs

The Grange urges Agricultural Fairs and the PA Department of Agriculture to include Junior Granges in activities related to promoting agricultural programs and visibility. (2016)

Grain Brokers

PA State Grange supports legislation requiring Grain Brokers be bonded to secure payments to farmers/producers for grain received. (2017)

Hemp

The Grange supports full scale production of industrial hemp. (2016)

Immigrant Workers

PA State Grange supports the guest worker application process be more streamlined and that workers have more flexibility in their work schedules. The Grange believes that as long as an immigrant worker has a proof of employment and no criminal record, they be allowed to have a renewable visa and that an agricultural employer who has a fully integrated business be allowed to use his immigrant workers for all aspects of his business. (2013)

Penn State Ag Trustee Election Process

PA State Grange with other Agricultural organizations must become pro-active in the Penn State Ag Trustee selection process to ensure consistent implementation at the county level and guarantee continued Ag Trustee representation. (2017)

Expediting DEP Agriculture Permitting

Any farm operation needing a permit to improve or build on their operation apply to National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and that NRCS and the local soil conservation prepare and document needed requirements and improvements in preparation of submitting to DEP.

During the permitting process, the National Resource Conservation Service have the opportunity to contact DEP with any technical questions and also secure an appointment in the schedule of DEP in a timely manner. (2018)

Seeds/GMO

PA State Grange supports a wide variety of food source seeds to be maintained in an open source model. (2015)

Surplus Food

Surplus food purchased by the government should not be sold at reduced prices to compete with farm prices. Surplus foods should be given to charitable organizations. (2003)

FARM POLICY

Funding for Farmland Preservation

The Grange strongly supports funding for Farmland Preservation. (2009)

Commodity Trading

The Grange supports limiting commodity trading to producers, wholesalers, retailers, and users of the commodity traded and not to speculators who do not intend to take delivery of a commodity. (2009)

Crop Insurance

Because crop insurance is an important risk management tool for farmers, we urge adequate state and federal funding for the program. (2004)

COOL

The PA State Grange recommends that Country of Origin Labeling be expanded to include the ingredients in the manufacturing of processed foods. (2008)

Precision Agriculture

The PA State Grange supports precision agriculture and acknowledges its potential for more efficient use of energy and nutrients, reducing pollution and increasing production. We support incentives for precision agriculture in the various farm programs. (2008)

DAIRY

Dairy Transparency

The Grange urges the General Assembly to vote on the Dairy Transparency bill. (2016)

Definition of Milk

The PA State Grange asks that the Food and Drug Administration reserve the term "milk" solely for milk and milk products derived from mammals. (2014)

Milk Federal Orders

All federal orders should have tighter restraints regarding opting into or out of pooling the orders. (2004)

Milk Marketing Board

We fully support the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Act and oppose any effort to abolish minimum retail pricing. We recommend that the PA Milk Marketing Board continue with the same type of representation as they have at the present time.

The Grange supports an over-order premium on all classes of milk that is paid directly to dairy farmers. (2003)

If the over-order premium is pooled we believe that the money should be sent directly to the farmer. The Grange supports any effort by the PMMB to limit the price the consumer pays for milk. (2003)

The Grange supports policy to equitably distribute the over-order premiums to all PA dairy farmers. (2010)

Milk Price

The Grange urges the PMMB to keep the price of milk high enough so the family farm can remain in business, and develop a regulation requiring payment of current accounts before switching suppliers. (2004)

The Grange supports a price per hundred-weight of milk that is beneficial to the dairy farmer. (2009)

The Grange supports a new milk pricing formula to be based on three main ingredients— forage, energy and protein. A floor price per cost of milk in tank should be established. Quality and components should be a plus and minus to the milk check. If production exceeds demand, a quota system should be ready for implementation. (2010)

Non-Nutrient Sweeteners in Dairy Products

The Grange encourages the FDA to prohibit the use of all non-nutrient sweeteners in milk products. If non-nutrient sweeteners are used in milk products the Grange recommends that the products must be conspicuously labeled. (2013)

Raw Milk

The Grange supports maintaining strict state health and safety regulations for production and sale of raw milk and raw milk products. Such permitted products should always bear labels disclosing PA Department of Agriculture and U.S. Food and Drug Administration permit types and numbers. (2007)

Reduction of Dairy Herds

The Grange recommends that any facility that receives a monetary incentive for the disposal of a dairy herd should not be allowed dairy cattle in that facility for a period of 5 years. (2009)

School Lunch Program

The Grange urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to put whole milk back in the school lunch program. (2015)

USDA Dairy Genetic Evaluation

The Grange encourages USDA to continue performing dairy genetic evaluations for the dairy industry. (2012)

Urban Agriculture

The PA State Grange supports legislative educational and regulatory efforts to make fresh agriculture products available to “food desert” urban areas by encouraging the development of urban gardening and working to overcome legal obstacles that may prevent the growth of urban agriculture. (2017)

ENERGY, FUEL, NATURAL RESOURCES

Energy – General Policy

The Grange supports increased research and development of all forms of domestic energy resources in order to broaden our energy base and reduce our dependence on unstable foreign sources for oil. Alternative and renewable energy sources should be researched and developed to make energy consumption more affordable including co-generation facilities using agricultural biomass, renewable fuels, and waste. (2005)

Alternative Energy

The Grange supports the federal government's encouragement of wind and solar energy technology development and urges more suitable tax credits to make these alternative energy sources affordable to the farmer and homeowner. (2010)

The Grange supports efforts to promote alternative energy generating capabilities and preserve net metering. (2015)

Carbon Credits

The Grange supports Conservation Districts to be the aggregator of choice for carbon credits between agriculture and business. (2007)

Cap and Trade

The Grange opposes any "Cap and Trade" legislation. (2009)

Energy Conservation

Conservation of natural resources must be part of any domestic energy program. We support the use of financial assistance and technical assistance to encourage energy conservation including recycling. (2001)

Energy Independence

The Grange continues to support U.S. energy independence. (2015)

Fuel Surcharges

The PA State Grange supports investigation of fuel surcharges to ensure that they reflect true cost increases. (2008)

Marcellus Shale

The PA State Grange does not support a severance tax on natural gas wells; however, the Grange supports an impact fee on gas exploration and production activities that would be shared by all impacted entities. (2011)

The PA State Grange supports legislation to hold gas companies responsible for payment of the full agreed-upon royalty (12.5% minimum by state law) with no deductions allowed from it. (2014)

The PA State Grange supports oil and gas development on state-owned lands. (2015)

The PA State Grange opposes a statewide fee being imposed on existing gas customers to expand gas service in an area not currently economically viable -- House Bill 107 in the 2017-18 legislative session. (2017)

Pipelines

An all-inclusive registry of pipelines, pipeline operators, and their locations should be developed and that information should be available to emergency response personnel, planning agencies, and other relevant agencies and systems. (2011)

The Grange supports, within the parameters of our current legislative policy regarding eminent domain, the renovation, upgrading, and construction of pipelines across Pennsylvania to take advantage of the economic development possibilities, well-paying jobs, and freedom from dependence on foreign oil that Pennsylvania-produced natural gas will bring to our community. (2015)

Granges shall work together to provide a vital community service by becoming involved in the pipeline expansion process to assure the rights of the private landowner are preserved in the process of leasing of rights of way. (2015)

Surface Mining

The Grange supports legislation requiring any sale of coal or coal rights by tax sale to be first offered to the surface owner for 90 days for the amount of back taxes owed before it is offered to the public. (2007)

The Grange favors laws to protect surface owner rights by enforcement of all surface mining requirements and compensation of surface owners for damages. (2007)

Water Policy

Water is a natural resource most important to agriculture. We recommend that any legislation passed make clear agriculture's rights to water, understanding that farms be allowed a full allocation of water for the purposes of food production. Agriculture needs to document its water use to establish a database for industry needs. The Grange opposes water use fees for agriculture irrigation or livestock use.

We further support the restoration of the federal government's equitable share of funding in support of the programs and activities of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, continuation of funding from the Environmental Protection Agency to monitor and protect water quality in the Susquehanna River Basin, and eligibility for funding from other sources to enable it to carry out water resource management and planning functions as required by the SRBC Compact. (2006)

We support the recommendations of the Groundwater Management Plan for the Susquehanna River Basin developed by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. (2006)

We also support the development of a PA Ground-Water Management Plan. This plan should involve "well-head" management and pertain to certain pesticides identified by EPA as possible groundwater contaminants.

The Grange advocates better water recharge practices to minimize nutrient loss. (2005)

The Grange supports legislation to ensure fair, equitable water usage among citizens, agriculture, and industry. (2016)

The Grange supports legislation to ensure that industry pays its fair share in ensuring the continuing quality of the Commonwealth's water supply, through compliance with clean water regulations and payment of taxes and fees. (2016)

The Grange opposes actions that would impose water fees on agricultural water use and household wells. (2016)

The PA State Grange joins the National Grange in opposing expansion of the regulatory authority of the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers concerning the Clean Water Act including the definition of 'navigable waters' (WOTUS) (2016)

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AND PROTECTION

Ag Plastics

The Grange urges State, county, and local governments to exempt farm plastics from burning laws. We request county governments to make funding available in their recycling programs to purchase the necessary equipment to assist farmers to keep costs of recycling agricultural plastics to a minimum. (2010)

Biosolid Applications

The Grange supports maintaining DEP authority over the application of biosolids and rejects giving municipalities a veto or imposing restrictions on biosolid application. (2016)

Conservation Districts

The Grange strongly supports maintaining the County Conservation Districts' responsibility to prevent stream damage and pollution to our waterways and land as a result of gas drilling. (2011)

The Grange opposes compulsory imposition of Chesapeake Bay pollution compliance enforcement on the conservation districts. (2016)

Endangered Species Laws

The Grange recognizes the unique role agriculture and the livestock industries play in land and environmental management and advocates for greater flexibility in environmental laws interpretation to allow for historic land use varying environments and situations across the country. (2018)

Flooding Prevention

The Grange encourages federal and state officials and local agencies to work together to help prevent future flooding situations. (2006)

Green Buildings

The PA State Grange encourages voluntary “Green” construction initiatives for new construction without mandating retrofitting existing structures. (2016)

Ground Cover

The Grange supports continued research into alternative forms of ground cover and erosion control. (2011)

Litter Laws

PennDOT and municipal officials should put greater stress on enforcement of litter laws for the health and safety of farmers and travelers. (2007)

Management of Forest Land

The PA State Grange opposes any creation of local authorities empowered to regulate forest management and stream setbacks. (2009)

The PA State Grange supports efforts to strengthen the freedom to practice forestry. (2008)

Redemption Fees

The Grange encourages the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to institute redemption fees on all beverage bottles and cans to reduce landfill buildup. (2013)

Storm Water Management

The Grange advocates adoption of better water recharge practices to ease the burden on agriculture and minimize the loss of valuable nutrients. (2005)

High Tunnel Structures

The PA State Grange opposes any regulation (or ordinance) by municipalities to restrict construction of temporary high tunnel structures and to exempt them from storm water management consistent with Act 15 of 2018. (2018)

Stream Debris Removal

The Grange encourages development of an ongoing program to clear stream debris following a major flood. (2012)

Delaware River Basin Commission

The Grange is concerned as the Delaware River Basin Commission moves toward a ban on drilling and developing gas wells in the basin. This effort has been buoyed by a recent court decision that ruled the Commission had control over all projects that have a substantial effect on quality or quantity of water resources. A consequence of this ruling is that the Commission is now moving away from regulating to banning a project they perceive could affect water quality or quantity. This recent ruling effectively gives the already powerful Commission unchecked legislative jurisdiction over any project that could substantially effect water quality or quantity.

The Grange believes this recent court decision should be appealed and other actions be taken as needed to limit the authority of the various river basin commissions. (2017)

NOTE: This was included in the Journal of Proceedings in the Agriculture & Environment Committee and was approved at State Session. (2017)

HUNTING AND WILDLIFE

Crop Damage by Wildlife

The Grange urges farmers to work with the federal Wildlife Conservation Control Units to protect property from deer, vultures, and other wildlife bird problems. (2005)

The Grange requests the pilot wildlife services program of USDA, PDA, and the PA Game Commission be funded and implemented in all areas of PA to combat losses from wild birds and animals. (2008)

The Grange supports a broader awareness and support for programs directed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the USDA Wildlife Services to control problem animal populations. When possible, landowners and

sportsmen should be involved in the efforts to reduce the population and culled animals should be provided for food usage. (2009)

Coyotes

The Grange encourages the PA Department of Agriculture, the PA Game Commission and USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services to manage coyotes and other predator pests, nuisances and vector species. (2016)

Disposal of Deer

The PA State Grange supports legislation detailing how dead deer are disposed of on Pennsylvania state and Interstate highways, who is responsible for removal. (2017)

The PA State Grange urges PennDOT and the Game Commission to advertise a reporting procedure for dead deer such as a 1-800 Hotline (2017)

Game Commission

The Grange opposes any legislation that would merge the PA Game Commission and PA Fish and Boat Commission. (2004)

The Grange urges the PA Game Commission to work with the Department of Agriculture to develop an effective groundhog reduction program. (2004)

The Grange opposes the Game Commission's proposal for separate hunting licenses for deer, turkey and other animals because of the extra financial burden for senior citizens purchasing licenses. (2006)

The PA Game Commission should open the wildlife management area access roads on Sunday so our senior citizens and wildlife enthusiasts can have access on Sundays. (2006)

Hunter Safety Training

The Grange urges that any child participating in the mentored youth hunting program be required to take a hunter safety course. (2015)

Rodent Control

The Grange supports legislation to make the

"Rodentator," a rodent eradicator, legal for use in Pennsylvania after taking an operator's course and being certified to properly use the equipment. (2015)

Semi-Automatic Rifles

The Grange supports legalizing the use of semi-automatic rifles for hunting in Pennsylvania. (2015)

Sunday Hunting

The Grange opposes Sunday hunting on any land. We support the antlered and antlerless deer season be extended by one week, allowing more hunting time and more harvest of deer, without Sunday hunting. (2005)

Wild Pig Imports

The Grange opposes any importation of wild pigs from the Southeastern states for sporting or hunting events. (2006)

LAND USE

Ag Land Preservation

The State Grange supports state agricultural land preservation laws and legislation enhancing the preservation of family-operated farms. As long as the land remains in agricultural use, any farm enrolled in a county Agricultural Land Preservation program should be permitted the subdivision of any or all of its farmland, subject to local or county ordinances. To further promote the program, there should be no closing costs for farmers when they participate in the Installment Purchase Agreement Program.

The Grange supports the inclusion of land with cell towers and wind generators into the farmland preservation program. Also, any electricity generated through these means could be sold. (2005)

Emphasis should be given to preserve farms in blocks so as to protect more viable parcels of land instead of just open space. (2005)

We support the federal Family Farm Preservation Act which relieves the capital gains tax for the sale of preserved farmland. (2005)

The Grange supports a review of the current PA Farmland Preservation program and amending the law with clearer language that will better define allowed uses on preserved farms. (2015)

Zoning

We will work with all government entities to strengthen agricultural zoning to better protect agricultural use of land. (2005)

Governing bodies should not create legislation prohibiting “normal and necessary” activities required to run an agricultural enterprise. (2004)

Clean & Green

All county assessment officials involved in administering the Clean and Green Law should be trained and certified by the PA Dept. of Agriculture and all counties should keep uniform standards for assessment of Clean and Green properties. (2004)

The Grange supports legislation to collect back taxes only on the primary site of the gas well, windmill or cell tower. (2009)

The Grange believes the extraction of minerals and other natural resources which may or may not result in above-ground termination facilities shall not be reason to force a subdivision or change of use with regard to the assessment of the parcel, and no roll-back of real estate tax should be levied on parcels used for such extraction. (2010)

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Grange supports the NRCS regulations concerning CREP to only enroll highly erodible soils into the program. Also, we oppose public money being used to fund the CREP program unless hunting is allowed on the land. The Grange supports the Conservation Stewardship program because it rewards working farmers and historical landowners for continuing contributions to environmental quality. We also support the re-establishment of the Grassland Reserve Program. (2005)

The Grange recommends that any land sign-up in the CRP & CREP initiative programs not include any class 1 or 2 soils, which are needed for

production. We also believe that a better noxious weed control program be installed or required in the CRP & CREP programs. (2013)

Eminent Domain Protection

The Grange opposes the use of eminent domain to acquire property not needed for public services or to be used for economic development. (2005)

The Grange opposes acquisition of gas rights by the natural gas industry through the process of eminent domain. (2010)

Eminent Domain & Farmland Preservation

The PA State Grange advocates prohibition of natural gas pipeline, power line and commercial construction encroachment and granting of rights of way for construction on preserved farmland in Pennsylvania. (2018)

Forestry

The Grange supports twenty percent (20%) of revenues derived from timber sales and oil/gas leases on state forest land to be distributed to school districts, municipalities, and counties. (2015)

Local Impact Fees

The Grange supports the concept that local government can impose impact fees on new development with the right to set the amount as it sees fit. (2006)

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY

Animal ID

The Grange should seek legislation to accomplish a national identification for livestock and poultry which includes safeguards to protect the privacy of the farmers. (2003)

Backyard Poultry

The PA State Grange supports the right of people to raise “backyard” poultry in residential settings. (2014)

Cell Cultured Protein Product Identification

The PA State Grange supports legislation that opposes any effort to label cell cultured protein

(manufactured by laboratory process) as “meat or poultry.” (2018)

Cell Cultured Protein Products Regulation

The Grange advocates that USDA be the primary regulator of all cell cultured protein products to ensure they are held to the same rigorous food safety and labeling standards (as meat and poultry). (2018)

Drought Assistance

The Grange supports assistance to those farmers lacking good quality crops because of drought to help purchase good quality feed, etc. for their livestock. (2004)

Livestock Gas Emissions

The Grange opposes empowerment of the Environmental Protection Agency to levy fines, fees, or any other monetary pressure based on emissions of livestock. (2009)

Horse Slaughter

The Grange supports state or federal legislation allowing the humane slaughter of horses. (2009)

Food Animal Veterinarians

The Grange supports a reimbursement program of student loans for large animal veterinarians committing to work in rural areas. (2009)

Registration of Domestic Animal Premises

The Grange supports the identification and registration of premises where domestic animals are housed for the purpose of containing, controlling, treating or eradicating any danger to the general public and/or other animals. (2006)

Veterinary Records

The Grange supports legislation requiring a farmer to maintain animal veterinary records for 2 years after the animal has left the farm. (2004)

CRIME

Capital Punishment

The Grange supports the death penalty for convicted killers who have exhausted their rights to appeal. (2007)

Child Sex Offenders

The Grange supports legislation to require child sex offenders to wear tracking devices for the rest of their lives when released from prison after molesting charges. (2005)

Good Samaritan Legislation

The Grange urges Legislators to enact laws that would provide protocols for citizens to legally use force to enter a vehicle or smash a window if the citizen has a good faith belief that such action would save a minor child, and other rescue efforts have been attempted such as calling 911 and trying to open a door or sunroof. (2015)

Medical Conviction Registry

The Grange will work with legislators and the medical profession to establish a medical conviction registry of medical professionals who are convicted of crimes or legally required to stop practicing medicine, to assist the public in securing services from ethical and professional practitioners in the field of medicine. (2011)

Minimum Sentences

The Grange supports legislative review of mandatory minimum sentencing. Legislators should return sentencing discretion to judges and the Sentencing Board and offices should be eliminated. (2011)

Revenge Porn

The Grange will work with Legislators to make the posting of privately shared, sexually explicit pictures or videos on the internet a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment, a fine, or both. (2015)

Sexual Assault Forensics Act

The Grange supports the passage of the Sexual Assault Forensics Evidence Registry Act of 2010 in order to assist in the linkage, identification and prosecution of perpetrators of rape and sexual assault crimes. (2011)

Spyware

We encourage restrictions on spyware companies requiring them to notify computer users that spyware has been installed. (2005)

No State Pensions for Convicted Legislators

State lawmakers could save taxpayers' dollars by having any convicted of a felony forfeit any and all of their pensions earned. (2018)

No Taxpayer Money for Sexual Harassment Cases

Any state or national legislator, governmental administrative executive should be held accountable for his/her own actions and not use tax money to settle any harassment case, but should come from the individual's own personal funds if found guilty.

DEAF

Sign Language Interpreters

People who are deaf (native signers), but are without current teaching credentials should also be considered qualified sign instructors until there are enough certified teachers available. (2005)

EDUCATION

General Statement

The Grange supports public education. We support the constitutional right of a thorough and efficient system of public education – a free and appropriate program for all children in kindergarten through 12th grade. We support equity of resources and educational opportunities for all PA students. Programs emphasizing strong academics as well as vocational training are needed. We encourage schools to work with communities and the state to foster skills and establish activities as a meaningful link to post graduate employment.

Many young people are finishing high school with poor reading and writing skills. Many are also dependent upon calculators and have trouble doing simple arithmetic. We urge our schools to place more emphasis on teaching the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic; and that more emphasis be placed in the high school curriculum on local government and environmental problems. We also recommend that the phonics system of teaching reading be re-instituted into all schools.

The PA State Grange seeks implementation of cursive handwriting instruction in the required standards of education in PA. (2014)

We recognize the continuing need for an adult education program and commend those who implement this program. An equivalency high school certificate is an asset to many who are unable to complete regular high school programs.

The Grange opposes wasting money on a study of the consolidation of school districts. (2009)

The PA State Grange opposes compulsory school district benefits consolidation. (2016)

Airborne Toxin Detection in Schools

The Grange recommends that all schools install equipment to detect carbon monoxide and other airborne toxins. (2013)

The Arts in Schools

The Grange strongly supports funding of the arts in our public schools. (2011)

Common Core

The PA State Grange encourages the PA Department of Education to abandon the Common Core curriculum in lieu of a program which allows for more flexibility of instruction. (2014)

CPR Training

The Grange supports the training of school employees in life saving measures including CPR and the use of the AED. (2004)

Drug Testing

The Grange recommends legislation that would require school personnel to be randomly tested for substance abuse and appropriate action taken. (2003)

Early Childhood Education

The Grange supports funding for federal level preschool programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start. (2012)

English Language in Schools

The Grange encourages maintaining English as the primary language taught in our schools. (2006)

Master Gardener Program

The Grange supports the Master Gardener Program offered through the Cooperative Extension Service (2012)

Private and Charter Schools

The Grange believes that private and charter schools must be held to the same evaluation standards as public schools. (2012)

School Board Meetings

The Grange urges all school boards to follow the Sunshine Laws and advertise all meeting dates and agendas in local papers so citizens have the opportunity to comment before final actions are taken. (2007)

School Boards

The Grange opposes active school administrators and teachers from serving on school boards in their district of employment. (2003)

School Lunch Programs

The school lunch program has been affected by recommendations from the PA Department of Education. We recommend that USDA guidelines carry supremacy for school lunches. Additionally, we recommend that milk and fruit juice container sizes not be restricted in school vending machines. (2005)

The US Congress should be urged to direct the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to amend their rules to allow consumption of grapes, whole milk, and white potato agricultural products by students in school meal programs and that language to that effect be inserted into the 2018 Farm Bill. (2016)

School Personnel Strikes

Strikes by professional and non-professional school employees disrupt education and create a hardship on students. We believe that teachers should be prohibited from striking.

We support a revision to Act 195 requiring that all contracts for the coming year for these employees be negotiated before the end of the present school year. If a contract has not been agreed upon by that time, the parties should be required to submit the matter to Common Pleas Court for binding arbitration so that schools can open at the normal time and remain in session for the school year.

We support "last best offer" legislation to end teacher strikes in PA. (2005)

Library Funding

The Grange supports funding for public libraries in the Pennsylvania state budget. (2009)

Unfunded Education Mandates

The Grange urges the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to refrain from burdening school districts with unfunded state mandates. (2012)

Museum Funding

The Grange believes that all museums should be removed from the non-preferred appropriations category and that those funds traditionally appropriated for their operations be placed into the Museum Assistance Grants line item in the annual budget. These funds should be administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The Grange urges the legislature to adopt a fair competitive application process open to all museums in Pennsylvania for the distribution of the Museum Assistance Grants fund. (2009)

The Grange will seek public as well as private funding for the PA State Grange. (2016)

The Grange will work to include language in legislation passed by the General Assembly providing aid to museums contain a provision making funds available to smaller or newly-established museums and heritage centers. (2016)

HEALTH AND INSURANCE

Banning of BPA

The Grange supports legislation to prohibit the use of bisphenolA (BPA) and other similar industrial chemicals in all children's products, human food, and food packaging. (2012)

Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Hotels

The Grange supports requiring all hotels, motels, and other places of public lodging to install carbon monoxide detectors in all corridors and bedrooms adjacent to places where HVAC and other fuel-burning equipment are present, with all such detectors connected to a central alarm monitoring system. (2015)

Control of Drugs

The Grange believes the Food and Drug Administration should control drugs from manufacture to the consumer. (2003)

Cruise Ships Emergency Personnel

The Grange recommends that all U.S. cruise ships have emergency personnel as members of their crew. (2006)

Flood Insurance

The Grange urges National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to change policy provisions to allow umbrella coverage over multiple structures on a property. (2016)

The Grange urges that the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) conduct a public awareness campaign to help property owners understand their rights when there is a flood map reclassification. (2016)

The Grange supports continuation of 'Write Your Own' (local insurance agent) model of securing Flood Insurance. (2016)

Hearing Aid Coverage

The Grange supports mandatory uniform insurance coverage of hearing aids. (2010)

Helmet Law

The Grange supports reenactment of the helmet law for motorcycle riders and operators. (2004)

The Grange encourages the use of helmets when operating or riding a motorcycle or all-terrain vehicle (ATV) in all situations. (2009)

Hunger

Grange members are encouraged to support and volunteer to assist local food banks in achieving their mission. (2016)

Health Care Benefits for Elected Officials

The Grange supports the regulation that state and federal legislators be required to participate in any health care system they create for the citizens. (2009)

Long-Term Care

The Grange recognizes the tremendous cost to taxpayers from expanded long-term care costs to Pennsylvania taxpayers and urges promotion of Qualified Long-Term Care Partnership insurance policies as an alternative to Medicaid as well as legislative consideration of legislation to increase incentives for people to purchase private sector insurance. (2016)

The Grange commends the PA Long-Term Council inclusion of financial strategies to afford long-term care as part of its mission. (2016)

Prescription Drugs

The Grange will work with the State Insurance Commission to help control the high costs of prescribed medications, including psychiatric medications. (2010)

Opioid and Heroin Crisis

The Grange supports actions that confront the opioid and heroin crisis. (2016)

Public Restrooms

The Grange urges the Department of Labor and Industry to implement action needed to require all establishments open to the public to either provide public access restrooms or allow use of their private facilities in the event of an emergency. (2005)

The Grange encourages establishment of unisex family restrooms in public places. (2011)

Reimbursement

The Grange urges the Legislature to provide reimbursement for expenses incurred in making home modifications and/or assistive devices for dependent residents. (2008)

Tattoo Parlors

The Grange supports that tattoo and piercing artists be required to undergo professional training pertaining to safety and cleanliness as it relates to their customers, and that tattoo and piercing parlors be regularly inspected with regard to specified cleanliness and safety procedures so as to protect the health and safety of their customers. (2015)

Workers Compensation/Health Insurance

The Grange recommends to the General Assembly that a study be done as to the feasibility of developing a hybrid Workers' Compensation/health policy. (2016)

RELIGION

Prayer Rulings

The Grange believes that local decisions concerning religious prayer should be decided by referendum of the voters in that jurisdiction. (2007)

Religious Choice

We believe that local decisions concerning religious symbols should be made by referendum of the voters in that jurisdiction. (2007)

Religious Freedom & Building Codes

The Grange supports legislation that enforces the adherence to building codes for building, relocating or renovating a structure and the procurement of proper permits, with no exceptions made for altering such codes due to religious beliefs. The Grange supports municipalities in the enforcement of these codes and urges all parties to work together to develop processes and regulations that are acceptable to both. (2009)

GAMBLING

General Policy

We support the legalization of slot and video machines for use at the existing horse race tracks, but not at off-track facilities. We strongly believe that strict accounting and maintenance of machines be established. Those slot and video machines at the track should be regulated through the Lottery Division of the PA Department of Revenue. The existing lottery contract should be utilized and expanded to provide computer equipment and oversight. The profit for the track should be no higher than the percent allowed by other states. We also recommend that a compulsive gamblers program be established.

We believe that all gaming revenue used for school district expenditures be distributed to the school districts on a per child basis. (2005)

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Accessible Appliances

The Grange urges the U.S. Department of Commerce to work with the National Federation of the Blind and representatives of the home appliance and consumer electronics industries to encourage the manufacture of appliances and consumer electronic products with optional audio or mechanical controls. If voluntary efforts to achieve this goal are not met, the Grange will seek federal legislation mandating the manufacture of appliances and consumer electronic products with optional audio or mechanical controls. (2010)

Requirements for Public Assistance

The Grange supports a requirement that all welfare recipients be U.S. citizens. (2007)

The Grange supports laws that would require a drug screening before an applicant is approved for assistance through the Department of Human Services and that random drug screening be performed as a condition of continuing to receive such benefits. (2011)

Food Stamp Funding

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) also known as the Food Stamp program benefits the health and well-being of disadvantaged Americans and agriculture. This program should remain in the USDA and not redirected as state block grants. For better understanding, the USDA Food Programs should be more visibly accounted for in the USDA budget. The Grange encourages continuation and expansion of programs that educate consumers on balanced nutrition and economical ways to purchase and prepare food. (2005)

Food Stamps Used for Nutritional Products

The Grange encourages USDA to require that SNAP (Food Stamps) can only be used to purchase nutritional foods. (2018)

Handicapped Accessible Post Offices

The Grange urges all post offices that are not handicapped-accessible to provide either a ramp or drive-up window for accessibility. (2007)

Insurance Identification Numbers

The Grange supports the implementation of a federal law mandating that the Medicare system use an identification number other than the individual's Social Security Number and supports the universal implementation of such a law across all insurance providers. (2009)

Medicare Payments

We urge Congress to refrain from reducing Medicare reimbursement payments to physicians and providers because it would place an additional burden on those who need the program. (2007)

The PA State Grange encourages Medicare recipients to report any discrepancies in billing to help reduce fraud. (2008)

The Grange supports continuance of all types of Medicare options. (2010)

The Grange opposes any Congressional action to make further cuts in Medicare Part B drug reimbursements. (2012)

Parenting Network

The Grange urges the U.S. Congress and federal agencies to establish a national parenting network for parents with disabilities. (2015)

Support Service Provider Program

The Grange urges the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Congress to extend the Support Service Provider program to all 50 states. (2015)

Social Security

The Grange supports periodic cost of living increases in social security payments to be granted on a percentage basis. A family should be entitled to the Social Security payments for the month in which the recipient expires.

The Grange supports legislation that requires the government to stop spending or borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund to hide a deficit or finance other expenditures. We do not oppose taxing half of Social Security income when other income in the household raises the income level over the tax minimum set by Congress. We believe that a permanent secure funding of Social Security must be addressed.

Terminally ill people should be permitted to apply for social security disability benefits upon diagnosis of the terminal illness and the application process should be completed within four months of the initial application.

Social Security Information

The Grange urges organized entities to take necessary precautions similar to those included in the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to protect an individual's identity when registering for services, opening an account, or responding to requests for information. (2009)

FEDERAL ISSUES

Disability for Agent Orange Exposure

The Grange believes the Federal Government should continue to offer disability compensation to all service personnel who were exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. (2012)

“Emergency” Legislation

The Grange advocates that any future “emergency” legislation proposed by the President of the United States which needs immediate action and passage by our national legislators does not contain any type of ‘pork barrel’ projects. (2009)

Federal Appointments

The Grange encourages the President and Senate to choose and confirm individuals who are the most qualified, responsible and ethical persons so that we, the American people, can put our full trust in them to execute the duties of their positions. (2009)

The Grange strongly opposes the use of any commission, council, or other consortium of non-elected appointees to create legislative mandates that Congress must adhere to, that are not subject to judicial review or the American system of Checks and Balances. (2011)

Firearms

The PA State Grange supports federal legislation that

1. Repeals the arrest and firearm authority granted to Offices of Inspectors General by the 2002 Homeland Security Act;
2. Prohibits federal agencies other than those traditionally tasked with enforcing federal law, such as the FBI and U.S. Marshals, from purchasing machine guns, grenades, and other weaponry regulated under the National Firearms Act;
3. Requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to write a complete report detailing all federal

agencies with specialized units that receive special tactical or military-style training and that respond to high-risk situations that fall outside the capabilities of regular law enforcement officers. (2014)

Food Labeling

The Grange requests the Food & Drug Administration and USDA to establish and enforce uniform labeling standards for food products. (2007)

Government Downsizing

Due to economic concerns, the Grange recommends that all levels of government attempt to adjust their way of doing business by learning to live within their budgets, to eliminate overspending and to consider reducing the size of government by examining current positions, programs, and spending, and by making eliminations where appropriate and feasible. (2009)

Government Services

The Grange supports a policy that requires continuation of services, including paychecks, to military personnel and their families, social security recipients and other critical social services recipients if the federal budget is not passed on time. (2011)

Governmental Salaries & Bonuses

Any COLA given to governmental personnel should be equal to the Social Security adjustments. (2005)

The Grange believes that state and nationally elected government officials should do their fair share by forgoing any increase in salary/hourly rates. We believe that our budget deficits on both the state and national levels would be reduced if our elected officials would forgo this salary/hourly rate increase and that it would help to significantly reduce the state and national debt. (2009)

The Grange supports a policy that prohibits state and national legislators from receiving their salary, expenses and benefits during any time in which a budget is not in effect, and that no retroactive salary, expenses or benefits be provided once a state or national budget has been approved. (2011)

Hatch Act

The Grange supports revisions to the Hatch Act to permit federal government employees to run for election for local municipal and county offices in order to serve their community, as long as no conflict of interest exists. (2015)

Industrial Hemp

The PA State Grange is committed to educating the public concerning industrial hemp and its products and development of hemp research and will urge the state to pass legislation to allow cultivation of industrial hemp. (2004)

Immigration

Legislation should be enacted denying automatic citizenship to children born in this country whose parents are here illegally. (2003)

The Grange urges the federal government to enforce immigration policy. (2004)

The Grange seeks to implement a plan improving border security including stricter penalties for aliens and elimination of citizen benefits for illegal aliens. Illegal alien workers should not be eligible for social security benefits if they do not pay into the fund. (2005)

We believe that border patrol guards should be given full protection and support of our government in protecting our borders. (2007)

The Grange supports updating of immigration regulations to be fairer for all legal immigrants. (2007)

National Park Service

The PA State Grange supports the designation by the National Park Service for the "Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area" in Lancaster and York counties. (2008)

Pensions

Many local governments currently do not have their pension funds adequately funded. In some cases, all funds come out of current taxes.

It is our belief that all pension funds should be made actuarially sound within five years and that no new funds be created that are not actuarially sound.

The current pension plan for elected officials contains many injustices. In some cases, all the money deducted from the employees' salaries for the pension fund has been returned without any decrease in annual pension.

We would like to see the pension plan changed so that the return of any of the employees' money paid into the fund would only be allowed in regular monthly annuity payments.

We believe that government pensions should not exceed in one year the highest yearly compensation paid during their years of service excluding cost of living adjustments.

We recommend legislation to increase veterans' pensions at the same rate as Social Security increases.

The Grange believes that all federal, state, county, local, and pension funds guaranteed by the taxpayer must be invested in principal guaranteed investments. (2005)

We support legislation requiring all political office holders who have been convicted of bribery, extortion, perjury, or molestation to forfeit their taxpayer funded pensions. (2007)

The Grange supports amending the laws such that current and former political office holders convicted of public corruption crimes will have their pensions reduced to zero. (2011)

Postage Stamps

The PA State Grange urges the United States Postal Service to issue a stamp to recognize the 150th anniversary of the founding of the National Grange (2017)

REAL ID

PA State Grange urges adoption by the PA General Assembly of legislation bringing the Commonwealth in compliance with the Federal REAL ID requirements of personal identification required for airline travel, access to Federal facilities. This legislation should include all drivers' licenses and other forms of identification issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and that holders of REAL-ID compliant identification not be required to subsidize the transition from present Pennsylvania identifications. (2017)

Recognizing War Veterans

We support the engraving of the words "So Help Us God" on the World War II Monument in Washington D.C. since this is the full quotation by Franklin D. Roosevelt. (2007)

Respect the U.S. Flag

We believe that the Pledge of Allegiance, when repeated anywhere on U.S. soil, should be said in English. (2007)

Second Amendment

The Pennsylvania State Grange supports the Second Amendment. (2013)

Social Security Numbers for ID

All stores, doctors' offices, hospitals, companies, etc. be required to no longer use Social Security numbers as identification, and that all stores, doctors' offices, hospitals, companies, etc. use different numbers or another means of identification for customers and patients. (2018)

Space-Available Travel

The Grange urges Congress to support the inclusion of service-disabled veterans in the Space Available Program operated by the Mobile Air Command. (2015)

Speculative Trading

The Grange supports Congressional legislation referred to as the "Wall Street Trading and Speculators Tax Act" that imposes a modest tax of 3 to 5 cents on every \$100 of speculative trading. (2013)

Term Limits

PA State Grange supports legislation that would limit the terms of elected Representatives and Senators at the State and federal level to 12 years. (2017)

United Nations Funding

We support legislation that would withhold funding from the United Nations if it violates the rights provided by the second amendment to the U. S. Constitution. (2005)

United States Law

PA State Grange holds that any non-citizen living in or visiting the United States must abide by United States' laws or face possible deportation. (2017)

Veterans Benefits and Services

PA State Grange urges that a central database be developed to assist the Veterans Affairs Officers. (2017)

STATE GOVERNMENT ISSUES

Access for Emergency Vehicles

PA State Grange advocates that Pennsylvania implement a strong education campaign on emergency vehicle law. (2017)

Freedom to Raise Children

PA State Grange advocates (parents and guardians) keeping the freedom to raise children and develop their responsibility, independence and resourcefulness without legislated and mandated guidelines for supervision, control, and parental behavior. (2018)

COLA Payments

The Grange supports repeal of the COLA for state legislators. (2011)

Drones

PA State Grange advocates curbs on drone use over public events in Pennsylvania through action in Pennsylvania or at the Federal level or both. (2018)

Forensic Center

The PA State Grange supports the creation of a Regional North-Central Pennsylvania Forensic Center in the Lycoming County area. (2014)

General Assembly Costs

The Grange supports a commission to analyze costs associated with the General Assembly's multiple printing offices, TV and radio production studios, with the goal of reducing printing offices and TV and radio production studio expenses. (2011)

The Grange supports legislation to reduce legislative staff. (2011)

General Assembly Size

The Grange establish a committee to examine the proposed reduction of the PA State legislature and that said committee is to make its report to the PA State Grange Committee on or before October 31, 2017. The committee's findings will be communicated to the PA General Assembly through written and oral testimony. (2016)

Housing

The Grange encourages the PA Housing Finance Agency to build or rehabilitate and preserve housing for low income, older residents and disabled persons. (2008)

Legal Notices

The Grange encourages the PA General Assembly to enact legislation that allows the electronic publication of legal notices for all levels of local municipalities to provide greater accessibility to information and cost savings. (2014)

The Grange urges that all legal announcements from local governments be published in the newspaper of the widest circulation in that area as well as the municipalities' website. (2016)

Legislators Record Retention

The Grange supports a policy to create a system of legislator records retention that not only provides for security of records but also requires legislators to pass on records to those who succeed them in office. (2011)

Legislators Health Insurance

The Grange encourages members of the House of Representatives and employees to pay one percent of their health insurance costs. (2008)

Lieutenant Governor

The PA State Grange supports continuation of the office of Lieutenant Governor and supports a system by which the gubernatorial nominees select their own running mates for Lieutenant Governor. (2014)

The PA State Grange urges the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to make every effort to relinquish possession of the property now used as the Lieutenant Governor's Mansion residence. (2017)

Liquor Stores

The Grange supports the sale of both the wholesale and retail aspects of the government liquor monopoly while retaining the state government's proper role of license sales, regulation and enforcement, provided wine and liquor are not sold in grocery, department, and convenience stores. (2010)

Local Government

The Grange opposes any legislation that would give county governments exclusive control of issues and policies presently under the control of townships, boroughs, cities, and any other local municipalities. (2010)

The Grange opposes any attempts by the state to force mandatory consolidation of local governments. (2015)

Lottery

The Grange supports the Pennsylvania Lottery Commission continue to oversee and manage the Pennsylvania Lottery. (2013)

Loud Fireworks

The PA State Grange urges that the PA Legislative Budget & Finance Committee study policy options regarding use and restriction of loud fireworks and that this study should include the impact of loud fireworks on vulnerable

populations and inventory proposed or adopted by other states. (2018)

Political Conventions

The PA State Grange suggests that Pennsylvania gives no tax dollars to host political conventions in the future. (2017)

Prevailing Wage

The Grange recommends that our state legislature update and reform the Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act to account for inflation by raising the project construction threshold to \$250,000

REAL ID

PA State Grange urges adoption by the PA General Assembly of legislation bringing the Commonwealth in compliance with the Federal REAL ID requirements of personal identification required for airline travel, access to Federal facilities. This legislation should include all drivers' licenses and other forms of identification issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and that holders of REAL-ID compliant identification not be required to subsidize the transition from present Pennsylvania identifications (2017)

Service Animal Fraud

PA State Grange supports legislation to more strongly regulate service/support animals to reduce the opportunity for fraudulently claiming pets to be service/support animals (2018)

State Budget

The Grange supports state budget assistance to Penn State University College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. (2010)

The Grange urges wage payments to state employees even if the budget is not passed on time, thus aiding their family's finances and helping the economy. (2009)

The Grange will push for legislation that supports withholding of pay for the Governor and all Pennsylvania Members of the General Assembly until the State Budget is passed if

action is not completed by June 30, the end of the current fiscal year. (2016)

State Parks Funding

The Grange advocates that funding for State Parks be included in the Pennsylvania state budget so that they will remain open to the public; we also encourage state parks to pursue options to operate more efficiently. (2009)

State Pensions

The Grange supports the conversion, over time, of the state pension plan system to a state employee retirement contribution plan under Section 401(K) or other applicable section of the Tax Code. (2011)

The PA State Grange strongly supports efforts by the General Assembly and Governor to address the insolvency of the state pension funds and to set forth a plan for increasing fund performance and reducing plan liabilities, with a strategy for long-term reform and actuarial stability. (2014)

The PA State Grange opposes the creation of a state-run pension plan and Pennsylvania State Government should devote more resources to educate citizens about the need to prepare for financial self-Sufficiency after retirement and to educate them as to the private sector options that might be available. (2018)

State Police Funding

The Grange favors a shift in funding for the Pennsylvania State Police from the motor licensing fund to the General Fund, allowing a larger percentage of the motor licensing fund to be utilized for road repair. (2007)

The Grange opposes the assessment of individual members of the Commonwealth whose township or municipalities do not have their own law enforcement agencies. (2009)

Powers of Sheriffs

The Grange supports the passage of legislation to restore and reaffirm the law enforcement authority and powers to the Sheriffs and Deputy

Sheriffs of Pennsylvania. (2008)

The Grange recommends the County Code be amended by the State Legislature to allow county sheriff deputies to work at non-profit events where their payment would come from the sponsoring organizations. (2013)

Veterans Benefits and Services

PA State Grange urges that a central database be developed to assist the Veterans Affairs Officers. (2017)

Vital Records Modernization

The Grange supports the modernization of the Pennsylvania Office of Vital Records. (2009)

Wasteful Spending by Government

The Grange asks all governmental instituted programs to abide by the bidding process, where required, to insure that funds are spent wisely. (2006)

ELECTIONS

Ballot Questions

The PA State Grange advocates that amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution be clearly written; and that the Commonwealth of PA prepare an explanation of the amendment reviewed by a citizen's task force formed for this purpose only which shall include rural and urban voters reflecting an income and educational cross section of the voters; and that all state agencies include a copy of this explanation in newsletters, flyers, issuance of licenses and other communications to the public in the three months before the proposed amendment appears on the ballot. (2018)

Ballot Voting Intention

The Grange will ask all PA Political Party Committees to consider changing primary rules to list national delegate candidates on the primary ballot along with their convention voting preference or if undecided. (2016)

Election of Judges

The Grange supports election of judges, with

the exception of temporarily filling of vacancies as provided for by the Pennsylvania Constitution. (2010)

Need for Open Primary Elections

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (must) replace closed primary elections with open primary elections, thus allowing all registered voters to exercise their right to vote in the selection of political candidates. (2018)

Telemarketing

The Grange supports amending the Do-Not-Call law to include political telemarketing. (2005)

Term Limits

PA State Grange supports legislation that would limit the terms of elected Representatives and Senators at the State and federal level to twelve years. (2017)

Redistricting

The Grange supports reforms to Pennsylvania's redistricting system. Redistricting should be carried out by an independent body that would be responsible for both state and federal legislative redistricting. Any redistricting plan must comply with Constitutional Standards and Voting Rights Act requirements. The plan must assure equality of population between districts and fair representation for minority populations.

Additionally, respect for county, township, and municipal boundaries should be a central feature of any redistricting legislation. Use of voter registration data, historical voting patterns and trends, or identifying addresses of incumbents/challengers when designing districts should be strictly prohibited. The redistricting process should involve the public by making the information and standards used in redistricting available, and encouraging public input on the standards. Further, the public should have opportunity for criticism of the information when it is published. (2008)

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR

Child Labor Laws

The Grange believes that any new regulations that are proposed by the U.S. Department of Labor concerning youth and family farms should ensure safety while not adding unnecessary burdens to family farm operations, especially regarding youth labor. (2012)

TAXES

Delinquent Taxes

The Grange believes that any elected official who is delinquent in paying property taxes should be denied salary compensation and that said compensation should be held in escrow until the official's delinquent taxes have been paid. (2009)

Employment Taxes

Christmas tree growers shall be considered agricultural workers for the purpose of workers compensation rating. (2003)

Family Farm Preservation Act

The Grange supports the federal Family Farm Preservation Act which relieves the capital gains tax for the sale of preserved farmland. (2005)

Federal Fuel Tax

The Grange supports retaining the existing federal fuel tax. (2011)

Health Care Facilities

The Grange opposes any new tax on extended health care facility costs. (2015)

Payment in Lieu of Taxes

The Grange supports an increase of the "in lieu of taxes" payment to school districts, municipalities and county government for tax-exempt state forest and game lands from the current \$3.60 per acre to \$6.00 per acre, with one-third each going to school districts, municipalities and counties. (2015)

Property Tax Reform

The Grange supports property tax reform. (2004)

Property Tax on Grange Halls

The PA State Grange asks the PA Legislature to refine the state tax law so that all Grange Halls are exempt from property tax. (2012)

Tax Preparers and Privacy

Tax preparers should be vigilant of their obligation to comply with privacy standards of Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999, privacy rules of the Federal Trade Commission, relevant provisions of Pennsylvania privacy laws and regulations (through professional education) by accounting trade associations. (2018)

TRANSPORTATION

Alternative Fuel Vehicles

The Grange urges support from the federal government for an energy policy that encourages automakers to produce alternative fuel automobiles and that it provide incentive for purchasing these vehicles as well as requiring the availability of alternative fuels (as set forth in Grange policy statement). (2006)

Bonding Roads

The Grange urges the State Legislature to increase the fees for bonding roads to \$50,000 per mile for unimproved roads and \$100,000 per mile for improved roads, and require PennDOT to re-evaluate fees annually. (2008)

The Grange believes the state should require companies holding road bonds to make the condition of the roads the same as they were before Marcellus drilling began, and that bonding money for roads should be used for the purpose of repairing damage to roads. (2012)

Buggies

The Grange recommends that all buggies and horses' harness have reflective material on all sides so they can be seen day or night. (2008)

Cell Phone Use

The Grange will propose legislation banning the use of cell phones while operating any vehicle on public roads. (2016)

Daytime Running Lights

The PA State Grange will lobby for auto manufacturers to be required to produce or program all new vehicles with daytime running lights that would include both headlights and taillights. (2018)

Highway Education

The Grange encourages PennDOT to develop a system to educate the public on changes governing the use of the highways. (2008)

Highway Funding

The Grange supports the use of public/private partnerships when funds are used for construction of new facilities. (2008)

A portion of the windfall revenues coming to the state from forestry sales and hydrocarbon leases needs to be earmarked for rural road development. (2010)

Highway Mowing

The Grange urges PennDOT to rescind the requirement for a shadow vehicle to follow mowing equipment on low-volume local roads. (2015)

Road Identification

We encourage uniformity for all road signs and urge that they be kept free from obstruction. (2005)

Road Maps

The Grange supports inclusion of the year on the front of official PA Tourism and Transportation maps when reprinted. (2007)

Safety Barriers

The Grange requests that highway transportation engineers and safety personnel design and place highway safety barriers with escape locations to return stranded traffic to the nearest detour route or traffic interchange. (2012)

Sight View Clearance

The Grange urges the clearance of obstructions due to weeds, brush and tree branches from signs, intersections and rights-of-way to provide the

public with a clear sight view distance at stop signs and intersections. (2006)

The Grange urges the clearance of obstructions due to weeds, brush, and tree branches from signs, signals, and crossings to provide clear sight distance at all railroad crossings. (2008)

The Grange supports exploring mechanical and biological alternatives for vegetation maintenance (NOTE: versus over-reliance on herbicides and defoliants). (2016)

Toll Roads

The Grange opposes the leasing of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. (2007)

The Grange opposes state efforts to toll expanses of the Interstate highway system that have been constructed and operated as toll-free. (2007)

VEHICLES

Driver's License

The PA State Grange supports legislation that all driver's license tests in the U.S. be given in English. (2014)

The Grange supports mandatory licensing of all driver examiners before they administer skills driving tests so they are familiar with all licensing requirements. (2005)

EPA Guidelines

The Grange urges that EPA guidelines for vehicles should consider fuel consumption, manufacturing costs, and locale of operation as well as emissions when establishing future regulations affecting agriculture. (2010)

Fair Dealership Law

The Grange supports legislative efforts to update the Fair Dealership Law to protect dealers by allowing them to sell competitive lines and other changes that give dealers the ability to thrive and better serve Pennsylvania farmers and other consumers. (2011)

Farm Vehicle Safety

The Grange supports farm vehicle safety and motor carrier laws being monitored and modified in ways that will provide safety to the public but not put undue strain on the farm community. The Grange urges exemption of farm tractors and farm equipment in tow from Motor Carrier Safety rules. (2010)

Farm Vehicle Weight Limit

The Grange supports increasing the weight limit to 26,000 pounds for truck-trailer farm vehicle combinations permitted to be driven by persons under 18 years of age. (2010)

Towing

Anyone towing equipment on public highways should be required to have safety chains, safety pins, or other safety devices. This would not apply to operations by farmers on the immediate farm.

Semi-Trailers

The Grange supports any proposed legislation that would require rear and side impact/under ride guards on all newly manufactured semi-trailers. (2011)

The Grange supports that all trucking companies only be allowed truck and trailer licensing in a state if they have a major part of their business in that given state. (2015)

Truck Permits

The PA State Grange endorses legislation allowing overweight users of limited usage roads to purchase an annual permit that will allow them to travel the shortest route from a full tonnage limit highway to the farm.

Vehicle Lights

We also urge the U. S. Department of Transportation to redefine the candlepower of motor vehicle headlamps, reducing hazardous conditions to oncoming drivers. (2005)

UTILITIES

Broadband Access

The Grange advocates parity in Broadband

access for rural areas generally and specifically for rural schools. (2016)

Cable Choice

The Grange supports legislation to streamline and standardize the franchising process for voice, video and data service providers, as long as the local municipality's authority to manage public rights-of-way and to receive the franchise fee from providers is maintained. (2006)

Cellular Telephone Use

The Grange supports legislation making it illegal to use any hand held phone while operating a vehicle in motion. (2004)

We recommend that all cell phone and limited use telephone numbers be placed on the "Do Not Call" list. (2005)

Deregulation of Utilities

The Grange urges our elected officials to continue to monitor public utilities with some form of checks and balances to prevent sudden and large rate increases. (2009)

Landline Telephone Service

PA State Grange supports continuance of the PA Universal Service Fund and urges the General Assembly to continue landline telephone service to rural areas until there is universal access to Broadband. (2018)

Natural Gas

The Grange opposes natural gas drilling companies being considered, given status of, or otherwise treated as public utility companies. (2010)

911 Upgrade Funds

The Grange advocates that 911 upgrade funds be used strictly for their purpose and shall not be used in balancing the state budget. (2009)

Smart Metering

We urge the PUC to authorize smart metering technology and use so farmers can sell electricity generated on the farm from sources such as methane digestion to utility companies. (2005)

Telephone Solicitation

The Grange urges that no one calling a household for commercial purposes or charitable requests use a restricted number or call a phone with a restricted number. (2010)

Utility Rates

The Responsible Utility Consumer Protection Act was enacted to allow for the immediate termination of utility service. We recommend modifying Chapter 14 to restore the previous 48 hour notice of termination and limit reconnection deposits to one month. (2005)

ARCHIVED POLICIES

Adult Basic

The Grange supports reestablishment of Adult Basic to cover health care for low-income workers (2011)

ARCHIVED 2016: Affordable Care Act achieved same goal, rendering PA's program moot. NOTE: Given the Trump position on ACA, the Grange may wish to return to this issue.

Citizenship – President

The Grange opposes legislation allowing non-natural born candidates to seek the office of President of the U.S. unless they have been a naturalized citizen for a minimum of 25 years. (2004)

ARCHIVED 2017: Per the United States Constitution, naturalized citizens are not eligible to become President of the United States.

Citizenship U.S. Supreme Court Justices

The Grange supports a change in qualifications for individuals as a United State Supreme Court Justice that would require the individual to be a citizen of the United States of America at the time of said consideration and appointment. (2009)

ARCHIVED 2016: Origin of this Policy is unclear but research did not show any U.S. Supreme Court Justice who was not a citizen of the United States. That was true in 2009 as it is in 2016.

D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia

The Grange supports the National D-Day Memorial effort to be taken over by the National Park Service. (2009)

ARCHIVED 2016: According to the D-Day Memorial on 8/23/16, National Park Service conducted a review after 2009 and concluded that the D-Day memorial was well-managed, well-funded, and did not need to be taken over by the National Park Service.

Dog Law

The Grange supports the repeal of parts of Act 119 of 2008 known as The Dog Law which are onerous and burdensome. (2011)

ARCHIVED 2017: There is no definition as to what “onerous and burdensome” means. In addition, The Dog Law was amended since 2008 and the objectionable parts may have been addressed.

Employment Taxes

Christmas Tree growers shall be considered agricultural workers for the purpose of Workers' Compensation rating. (2003)

ARCHIVED 2016: According to the PA Compensation Review Board 8/23/16, Christmas Tree growers have a classification (number 0013) which includes nursery growers, tree farms, and Christmas tree growers, all of which are subtitled under the larger category of Agriculture and Farming.

Farm Safety

The Grange recommends that the Governor, the General Assembly and the Secretary of Agriculture take steps to implement the proposed program revisions for farm safety/agricultural safety and occupational health including the PA Outreach Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (POCASH) (2006)

ARCHIVED 2017: This is a picture in time. Research within the PA Department of Agriculture was unable to conclude what “proposed program revisions” were or even what POCASH is or was.

Funding for Fairs

The Grange supports funding for fairs and FFA and 4-H programs and recommends that monies from the State Gaming Fund which have not been distributed in grants to local law enforcement agencies within 12 months of transfer to the PA Gaming Control Board be transferred to the Department of Agriculture to be distributed to County Fairs, FFA, 4-H, and other agriculture-related organizations. (2009)

ARCHICED 2017: Legislation was passed to provide continual funding from the Race Horse Development Fund.

GMO

The Grange supports the establishment of a voluntary GMO-free (Genetically Modified Organism) labeling certification program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The Grange supports farms achieving the USDA Certified Organic label automatically qualifying for the GMO-free label program. (2015)

ARCHIVED 2016: Congress passed GMO labeling which was signed into law in 2016.

Tributary Strategy/Nutrient Trading

The Grange commends the efforts of DEP to develop the Tributary Strategy and Nutrient Trading between point and non-point sources of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment. We are concerned, however, about the lack of identified nutrient value assigned to projects. We believe legacy sediment and legacy nutrients are an integral and important portion of any nutrient strategy, because without these two giant contributors of nutrient sediment being understood and addressed it will be virtually impossible for PA to meet reduction requirements. Values should be established for important programs such as precision farming, improved animal nutrition, new cropping practices, or most of the already identified practices. Municipal governments will need assurances of long term contracts for the purchase or sale of nutrient credits. Conditions for landowners change so that they will be interested in granting short term contracts. Therefore we support the establishment of local brokers who know and understand both needs and can act as the arbitrator. (2005)

ARCHIVED 2016: PDA said that it is outdated.

Local Government

The Grange opposes legislation to take authority away from township and borough governments. (2011)

ARCHIVED 2016: Policy too broad and potentially far-reaching since it might be interpreted as putting the PA State Grange on record as not supporting Right to Farm and ACRE laws that protect normal practices of agriculture from township and borough prohibitions and restrictions.

NOTE: In 2015-16, this issue was central to enactment of a PA law protecting agricultural high-tunnel buildings from property tax.

Marriage

The Grange supports laws defining marriage as between a man and a woman. (2004)

ARCHIVED 2016: Such laws were voided by two U.S. Supreme Court decisions and one decision by a Federal District Court in Pennsylvania. These allowed legal same-sex marriages.

NOTE: This archiving should not be interpreted as conflicting with members' beliefs that true marriage as recognized by religions as being between a man and a woman.

Medical Marijuana Research

The Grange requests that the National Grange urge the government to fund research into the positive and negative effects of medical hemp (marijuana). (2006)

ARCHIVED 2016: 2014 Farm Bill included this provision and PA passed legislation to implement the Federal law.

Medicare Payments

The Grange urges lawmakers to eliminate the "donut hole" for Medicare prescription coverage. (2012)

ARCHIVED 2016: Affordable Care Act achieved same goal. NOTE: Given the Trump position on ACA, the Grange may wish to return to this issue.