

February 7, 2011

Stephen S. Aichele, General Counsel
Office of Governor Tom Corbett
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Steve:

We are writing to request your review of the continuing use of Pennsylvania taxpayer funds for the further subsidization of the controversial relocation of the Barnes art collection in Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County to the Ben Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia.

By way of background, the collection's original owner, Dr. Albert Barnes, specifically stated in his will that the collection must permanently be displayed in the unique museum he built in the Township.

After the Montgomery County Orphans Court granted the Barnes Board of Directors the opportunity to pursue this project, the previous administration compounded our concerns – and those expressed by many of our constituents – by committing slightly more than \$47 million of taxpayer funds through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Project (RACP) to building a new museum in Philadelphia. It is our understanding that approximately \$38.7 million of that RACP money remains unspent.

Consequently, we are seeking your assistance in having the Corbett Administration thoroughly re-evaluate the wrong-headed decision to borrow money and compel current and future generations of Pennsylvania taxpayers to pay off the debt incurred for the unnecessary Barnes relocation project. Further, we would respectfully request that the Corbett Administration take any and all steps necessary to halt the release of additional funding for this relocation project until a review is completed.

We sincerely believe that at a time when our Commonwealth faces the enormous challenge of closing a multi-billion dollar budget gap, our constituents – and all taxpayers – deserve the peace of mind in knowing that every dollar is spent prudently on projects of widespread community support and benefit. Unfortunately, in this instance, it appears our taxpayers are subsidizing the relocation of an unparalleled art collection from its home township and community in order to benefit another municipality just a few miles away. Lower Merion Township officials, the Montgomery County Commissioners, and their respective citizens have expressed outrage at this raid, yet their hard-earned tax dollars apparently are being used to accomplish it. Such a use of tax money should not be condoned or allowed any longer, and we would appreciate your immediate review of this matter with the hope that you will recommend the cessation of RCAP monies being used for this project.

Thank you for your cooperation and please let us know if we can provide additional information or assistance.

Respectfully,

Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress

Bruce Castor
Montgomery County Commissioner

JG: kaw

cc: Senate President Pro Tempore Joseph Scarnatti
Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi
House Speaker Smith
House Majority Leader Michael Turzai
Sen. John C. Rafferty Jr.
Sen. Stewart Greenleaf
Sen. Bob Mensch
Sen. Daylin Leach
Rep. Mike Vereb
Rep. Todd Stephens
Rep. Warren Kampf
Rep. Bob Godshall
Rep. Kate Harper
Rep. Tom Quigley
Rep. Marcy Toepel
Rep. Matt Bradford