



## **Yo, youse guys, how was that free trip to Philly?**

By Jim Waters

Lawmakers took Kentucky taxpayers to the cleaners with tax increases during this year's legislative session. And we also got taken to the coffee shop, the bakery and even to Philadelphia.

House Speaker Rep. Greg Stumbo, D-Prestonsburg, deemed it "important" to send an army of bureaucrats and politicians to the National Conference on State Legislatures in Philadelphia this year because Louisville hosts the event next year. It's important to have a good showing, said Stumbo and Senate President David Williams, R-Burkesville.

That "good showing" required spending [thousands of dollars](#) on 63 politicians, bureaucrats and even state police. Yeah, state police!

The way the Kentucky armada ended up "showing" the green, you would think they attended a St. Patrick's Day parade.

After all, state troopers needed to provide security for Rep. Bigshot in the "City of Brotherly Love" to spend taxpayers' money. Like anyone even knew Sen. Gasbag went to Philadelphia. However, the Kentucky battalion who made the trip might want some of that security when taxpayers get the bill for this junket.

So far, 28 lawmakers have been reimbursed nearly \$83,000 in salary and expenses for the Philadelphia trip. That's nearly \$7,000 each, which adds up to a lot of cheese steak sandwiches and Rocky Balboa memorabilia.

These are the same lawmakers who increased their own legislative spending plan by 13 percent during the next two years, while demanding deep cuts in the executive budget.

Some might reason that when stacked against a \$9 billion-plus budget, spending \$200,000 on a trip to Philly looks like chump change.

You *are* a chump if you buy into that twisted logic. These "public servants" increased their legislative budget while many of you stood in line to file for unemployment. While you tried to figure out how to make a house payment, they declared independence from responsibility and lived the high life in Philly.

Legislators have turned "drop in the bucket" spending into an art form — and massive "shortfalls," as they like to say.

During the legislative session, these nickel-and-dimers raised your [taxes at the pump](#) by “only” 4 cents. After all, what’s 4 cents to hardworking taxpayers when the state needs new roads built and crumbling ones fixed?

You could argue that we at least *get* something – some new roads, perhaps – for the higher gasoline tax. Can you say the same for these lawmakers’ trip to Pennsylvania? While we’re at it, how have Williams’ trips to Ireland and Turkey benefited taxpayers? What ideas about how to cut the size of our bloated state government might the Senate president have discovered in Puerto Rico?

The next time we hear these pinheads whine about not having money to meet their constitutional requirements to balance the budget, I suggest we holler: “Live within your means. We’re not giving you one more red cent.”

These politicians want you to sacrifice. But what are they giving up?

Certainly not their [free food and coffee](#). During the last two years, taxpayers have spent \$45,000 additional dollars to provide their representatives free coffee, \$39,000 for soda, \$2,300 for baked goodies and more than \$18,000 just to buy dinner for legislators working late on the budget.

These charlatans always find a way to get their lunch paid for while we buy ours.

Oh, the irony of it all: Not only do the politicians meet at night in secret during budget sessions to decide how to further rip off us taxpayers. We then are forced to pick up the tab for their dinner!

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