

**Joint Hearing of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness
FY 2009/10 Budget Proposal, Scotland School for Veterans' Children
March 11, 2009**

REMARKS FOR VSEP JOINT COMMITTEE
C. Frank Frame, President, SSSVC Foundation

INTRODUCTION: C. Frank Frame, President of Foundation For SSSVC: Retired educator of 37 years, 33 associated with SSSVC – teacher, coach, curriculum coordinator, academic principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent. I was serving as “Acting” Superintendent of one month when Governor Robert Casey proposed closing the school in February of 1991. I appeared before a similar committee in spring of same year. Thus as Yogi Berra would say, “This seems like déjà vu all over again!”

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM: It is my background as a science teacher and an attempt to live up to my name, that leads me to begin with the statement of the problem: **The proposed closure of Scotland School for Veterans' Children**, with an emphasis on “for Veterans' children!”

Some say it is too costly, I would counter with, “How much is acceptable and how do we get there?” Is \$35,800 acceptable, as this is the stated cost at VFMA, which some have mentioned as an alternative (although it would not meet the demands of SSSVC's 3rd thru 6th grade)? Also I believe VFMA is supported by an approximate \$10,000,000 endowment.

In other words, “Come let us reason together.”

PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW: If we look at the problem philosophically, as this glass of water (display glass of water), many would define the problem as, the glass is one-half empty, i.e. SSSVC is too costly, an expense the Commonwealth can no longer afford. Many others, myself included, would say, “The glass is half full, it provides the children of veterans, many from dysfunctional families an opportunity for a bright future, hope, if you will.” I would assert that it is a necessity; the Commonwealth can ill afford to lose!

Colin Powell, in the **AARP Magazine** emphasizes that young people are very much like pin balls in the game of life needing a responsible, committed adult to serve as bumpers to keep them in the game. That is exactly what Scotland School does.

All here are aware of the African proverb, “ It takes a village to raise a child. “ More recently, a noted author stated, “Community requires commitment.”

Scotland School exudes **commitment**. Its' motto is, “Committed to caring for the veterans' children”. How do I know this? For one, I lived it, along with hundreds of other dedicated employees. Secondly, having been involved with three Middle States School Accreditations, at Scotland I have seen countless student surveys, in which, the students themselves, state over and over that it is the committed and caring staff, that makes the difference. Finally, in my hand I possess some initial results from a research study the foundation began in late December and is ongoing, in which SSSVC grads from the period 1992 through 1997, indicate the very same point.

COMPARISON SHOPPING: Those who see the one-half empty glass also insist on comparing the cost of a public education to the cost of Scotland's residential education, a true case of comparing, "apples to oranges". Residential education entails the education of the whole child; academically, physically and spiritually, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This allows much to be accomplished, especially for children from dysfunctional families.

Thomas Friedman, in his book **The World Is Flat- Version 3.0**, explains how in India, they are building residential schools for their students in order to create a culture for learning. India is investing greatly in both basic and post secondary education to overcome their class differences. They realize that in a global economy, all citizens need the best education can provide.

Israel has been fostering state sponsored residential education for years and has been touted for their programs. I toured Israel, observing these programs in 1997 and came to the determination that Scotland was in deed, **world class**.

THE FUTURE FOR OUR VETERANS? Given the fact that, hopefully, we have the end of one war in sight, but an uncertainty with a second war, what can we expect? It is a known fact that our casualties have not been as great as some other wars, but this is because of our renowned medical abilities on the battlefield. However, this same ability has led to survivors who face insurmountable medical difficulties; traumatic head injuries and loss of limbs. Additionally, there are psychological issues, such as PTSD, increased suicides and spousal abuse. All of these lend themselves to the potential development of dysfunctional families.

Might not, a reasonable person, see a greater need for a Scotland School in the future, than a lesser!

POLITICAL FORESIGHT: It has been said by some that our politician's foresight today is no greater than the current crisis or the next election. I for one do not believe this. Our great country and commonwealth have not achieved their greatness for lack of "forward thinkers" and "doers". Our history is replete with example of those who when "confronted with the right thing to do", "did the right thing!"

That is where my faith rested in 1991 and that is where it remains today.

QUESTION OF JUSTICE: Is justice served by closing this school without exploring alternatives and solutions? Is it justifiable, in just 4.5 months (time remaining until June 30th) to; (1.) make these determinations or (2.) require parents and students to find their own placement ?

IN CLOSING – INTRODUCTION OF GUEST: In closing, I would like you to meet a special guest I have with me today; Nicole Tara Smith. Nicki, as we know her at Scotland is special in many ways, but coincidentally, it was she, who attended the hearing in 1991. At that time she as a senior with graduation four months ahead. She was the Battalion Commander for the school's JROTC unit. In reality, Nicki is here only in spirit, but not of her own volition, when we spoke by e-mail two weeks ago, she was in Kuwait awaiting her second deployment to Iraq. She readily consented to my using her story. **Pass picture at this point.**

As you can see Nicki is now LT. CMDR Smith of the U S Navy.

Nicki was admitted to SSVC in 1985 as a 6th grader. She came from a dysfunctional family; her father, honorably discharged from the US Army had divorced her incapacitated mother, who was in a nursing home suffering from Huntington's disease. Her aunt, Mrs. Watkins, who had learned about Scotland and had proceeded with an application, was caring for Nicki.

The rest is history; Nicki came to Scotland and blossomed!

It is Nicki's post Scotland story that I wish to tell today. Graduating in 1991 Nicki chose Shippensburg University, which would keep her close to "home"-SSVC and her "self-adopted" family, particularly, the Brands, Mr. Sam Brand her chemistry and physics teacher and Ms Florence Boggs, her houseparent. These folks provided "security" and a "fallback position" in the university's down time. Nicki completed an undergraduate degree in psychology.

Nicki went on to complete both her Masters and in December of 2000 her Doctoral degree from the University of Iowa. She entered the US Navy and from 10 October 06 thru 13 April 07 Nicki served with 113th Medical Company Combat Stress Control Unit in Iraq. For this service she was awarded the Bronze Star.

BOTTOMLINE: Nicki's 6 years at Scotland, some would say, cost too much!

The results, as evidenced by her life to date, I would say were, "**PRICELESS!** "

Madam Chairman and members of the committee, I could go on to list dozens or even hundreds of success stories regarding Scotland School students. My point is, this institution has enabled many, many young people to achieve success, when they might not otherwise have had that opportunity. Closing this school without giving us a chance to explore alternatives is a disservice to the military families who depend on the school now, and who would benefit from it in the future.