A 21st Century Pennsylvania Government: Accountable, Responsive, Cost-Effective and Empowering Taxpayers
“Our government in Harrisburg is a relic of an early 20th Century bureaucracy: out of touch with the pace of change and technology advancement in our Commonwealth today. The time for incremental change is now past. We need nothing short of transformational change, and my plan will achieve it.”

— PAUL MANGO
Pennsylvanians have lost trust in our elected leaders to fulfill even the most basic constitutional responsibilities of government. Our Governor has not signed a budget since he took office in 2015. This year’s budget was 122 days late, and resulted in Pennsylvania’s credit rating being lowered to the third worst in the nation behind only Illinois and New Jersey. Critical issues such as pension reform, budget reform, education reform, health care, and creating an environment necessary for robust job growth have been stalled for years, while our budget gaps continue to grow from rising pension, health care, and borrowing costs. Meanwhile, the persistent trail of elected leaders convicted of crimes continues unabated.

Much of this is a function of our state government in Harrisburg being a relic of the past focused on centralized, one-size-fits-all programs and mandates with limited relevance to many Pennsylvanians’ lives. State government has continued to grow, and lacks the flexibility to adapt to the changing needs of modern society. It lacks a culture of innovation and service. Legacy programs persist, while new programs developed in isolation merely serve to heighten bureaucratic hurdles for even the simplest of tasks at even higher costs to taxpayers.

Some of this dysfunction can be attributed to our Governor, who is supposed to be our Chief Executive, but lacks the vision, the plan, and, most importantly, the sense of urgency to get things done on behalf of the people of Pennsylvania. His, and Harrisburg’s, inaction erodes the public’s trust and, more disturbingly, mortgages our children’s future.

The change required to transform Harrisburg must come from the outside. If those in government today had the capability to create the necessary change, we would already be on a path toward success. But, we are not. We are falling farther behind on nearly all things important to Pennsylvanians: lack of adequate job growth, loss of population, increases in drug overdose deaths, rises in healthcare premiums, poor achievement in our public school system, and the unwillingness to address the ~$70 billion pension deficit which led to a credit downgrade. That is why I developed and released my vision and plan to bring prosperity back to Pennsylvania titled Restore the Dream. Pennsylvanians deserve to know where I stand on the issues that matter, and how I would lead the Commonwealth in making these changes. As Governor, I would expect you to hold me accountable for results. This is what real leaders do, and such leaders are sorely missing in Harrisburg today.
The transformation of our government requires us to reconsider three existing assumptions about Harrisburg's role in our lives:

1. **Government must empower economic mobility, not perpetuate dependency.**

   Our current Governor has been called the most liberal, progressive governor in our nation. The last three years of his policies focused on addressing income inequality through redistribution and big government programs have destroyed economic growth and entrepreneurship at the top of our economy, have discouraged work and betterment at the entry level of our economy, and have created resentment among those in the working class striving to provide for their families without the assistance of government programs; only to find themselves buried in higher property taxes, higher healthcare premiums and deductibles, and rising college tuition payments for their children. His policies have unsurprisingly led to job and population loss, more Pennsylvanians locked into poverty, less ability to fund our most basic needs, and, paradoxically, more income inequality. He mistakenly measures his success by how many more Pennsylvanians become dependent on the government. I will measure my success by how many more Pennsylvanians support themselves, and their families, completely independent of the government.

   We must enable economic mobility by strengthening families, enhancing K-12 education with renewed emphasis on vocational training, restoring the dignity of work, and altering the culture of government agencies whose principal objective should be to make our entrepreneurs and businesses successful, thereby bringing prosperity back to Pennsylvania.

2. **Harrisburg must promote innovation.**

   We need to acknowledge the lack of innovation today in government-delivered services. Harrisburg is fundamentally incapable of innovating at a pace consistent with the changing needs, approaches, and technologies in today's society. Accordingly, it needs to deliver fewer social programs and services itself in areas such as anti-poverty, drug overdose, and education, and assume more of the role of stimulating innovation by engaging much more nimble, knowledgeable, and relevant local organizations. And when it finds something that works particularly well, the function of government should be to share these insights and approaches with other communities throughout the Commonwealth. Our ability in the future to effectively tackle such challenging social and service issues will correlate directly with the rate at which we achieve breakthrough innovations and then rapidly disseminate them.
We must address our most complex issues through organizations knowing their communities best.

It is not just about transforming the ideological grounding and functionality of government, it's also about altering the means by which change occurs. I have already developed working relationships with other executive problem solvers throughout the Commonwealth, including our Mayors, County Commissioners, and Township Supervisors, and Harrisburg should do the same. These leaders have the wherewithal to make change happen. Together, with both Democrats and Republicans alike, we can develop performance objectives, spending priorities, and budgets. We can convene regularly to assess progress and make course corrections. And we can host “best practice” forums where local leaders can showcase how they are addressing a priority successfully, and share this knowledge with those in similar positions around the Commonwealth.

Leadership requires accountability, and I believe that true leaders should identify clear, measurable goals by which others can measure success. I will measure our success by the following:

The reduction in the number of Pennsylvanians dependent on government welfare programs such as Medicaid, supplemental nutrition, housing support, and child support as a percent of the total population.

How well we are creating well-paying jobs (i.e., those above the median individual income) and how well we are attracting investment from around the country and the globe.

The percent of our children engaged in meaningful employment, enrolled full-time in a vocational apprenticeship program, or enrolled full-time in college one year after high-school graduation.

How well our health services programs lead to improved health status for beneficiaries as measured by such things as prevalence of substance abuse, percent of pre-diabetics and type II diabetes, and adherence to prescribed medications.

Whether we are reducing the overhead burden of government by at least 3% per year, and whether we have held increases in the growth of government program services below the level of growth in the Pennsylvania economy.
Beyond reimagining the role of Harrisburg in our lives to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, we should also address the nearer-term, less transformational reforms that can restore Pennsylvanians' confidence in our government. I would propose government reforms based on four principles:

1. **Improve transparency among those who hold the public’s trust.**

   **Ban sexual harassment settlements using taxpayer dollars:** As Governor, I look forward to signing legislation banning the use of public funds to settle sexual harassment claims. Asking taxpayers to pay for the inappropriate behavior of elected officials in Harrisburg is outrageous. Politicians engaging in sexual harassment should not only resign, they should be held personally liable for any settlements like any other Pennsylvanian.

   **Eliminate state government per diems:** We should eliminate per diems, which are specific amounts of money given to members and employees of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state government without receipts. All of state government should be required to reimburse only for actual expenses that are capped. The days of inflating and hiding expenses are over; if one wants to claim expenses, one should have no problem making them transparent for all

   **End pay to play:** Pay-to-play has become an all-too-common practice in Pennsylvania whereby individuals and businesses make campaign contributions to public officials in exchange for special favors and contracts. We should pass legislation allowing for more transparency and accountability in state, county, and local government contracting. This should limit political contributions from principals, businesses, spouses, family members, senior executives, and political action committees eligible to receive a bid or no-bid contract

   **Call for a constitutional convention:** I support a limited constitutional convention to reform the budget process and examine whether we can ensure adequate representation with fewer, or part-time legislators. We cannot continue to have the most expensive Legislature in the country, one that spends over $325 million per year. These reforms would provide the citizens of the Commonwealth the opportunity to exercise more control over state government and how it spends tax dollars

2. **Reform the way Harrisburg allocates and spends your money.**

   **Enact biennial budgeting:** Twenty states currently use a two-year budget cycle, which can provide better long-term planning and analysis of the effectiveness of government programs and the use of tax dollars

   **Require an honestly balanced budget:** As Governor, I will veto any budget spending more than anticipated revenues. Additionally, I will require any budget to have both a revenue and a spending plan before signing
Enact “No Budget, No Pay” legislation: I support legislation withholding pay for legislators, legislative staff, executive staff, and administration employees not covered by civil service agreements should the state budget not be done on time

End Unfunded Mandates on Local Government and Schools: I support legislation that will put into law a very simple principle. If it’s important enough to mandate then it’s important enough to fund, and if it’s not important enough to fund then it’s not important enough to mandate! We need to stop pushing costs to local property taxes

3 Restore trust in public servants as prudent stewards of our tax dollars.

Honestly reform state pension systems: It is shocking to see our pension deficit grow from $20 billion in 2008 to $70 billion in 2017 with no real answers in sight. I will support legislation that actually addresses this deficit and moves toward a 401K-style system for state employees and teachers. I will also support legislation to change the county municipal government code to allow counties and local governments to move to a defined contribution pensions system. A new pension plan would apply to all new hires and honor the commitment to all current state employees and teachers as well as local government employees

Prohibit state pension benefits for convicted felons: As Governor, I will support legislation prohibiting pension benefits for elected officials and public employees found guilty of a felony during their government service. This prohibition would include all members and employees of the three branches of state government, and those benefits covered by SERS and PSERS

Cap General Assembly leadership accounts: Each branch of state government should be separate but equal. Accordingly, the General Assembly should not be able to accrue surpluses that at times have reached over $200 million during the last decade. As Governor, I will work with the legislature to set a limited surplus protecting the independence of the Legislature, while limiting the number of tax dollars that can be held in reserve

4 Eliminate rampant conflicts of interest in Harrisburg.

Strengthen the “revolving door” lobbying ban: Pennsylvania currently bans public officials from lobbying the “governmental body” with which they are associated for one year after they leave government service. I will support legislation extending the lobbying ban to two years and covering all state government entities, not just the one with which a public official is directly associated
Ban lobbyists from running political campaigns: Registered lobbyists should be barred from being compensated by political campaigns or political action committees. Separating lobbying from political campaigns will help to eliminate ethical issues and potential conflicts of interest.

Eliminate contracting as a public official: Prohibit elected officials, or entities they own, from entering into any contracts with state, county, or local government during their time as a public official.

Harrisburg is broken and dysfunctional today, but we can only restore confidence in our government by fundamentally reimagining its role in our lives. I am the only candidate who has proposed that vision. We need to restore the confidence Pennsylvanians have in their state government. I am confident the changes we propose will move us toward rebuilding that trust.