POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR
Enlightened
LEADERSHIP

Some things won't change

Commentary by
Tom Hylton

On Tuesday, we pointed to one of the most extraordinary times in the history of civilization: In 1681, the greatest idealist of the 17th century, William Penn, was given 45,000 square miles of land in the New World (Pennsylvania) and the right to establish just about any kind of government he wanted there.

The Native Americans were cooperative and few in number, and there was no existing infrastructure: just rivers, streams, lakes, and lots of forests.

Truly, a blank slate, and an opportunity for an enlightened system of government to be created.

But that's not where we find ourselves today. We have an enormously complicated system of government — President, Congress, Supreme Court, states, counties, municipalities, school districts, and special authorities.

In the evolution of our country, a lot of inequities have become engrained in the system and practically impossible to change.

Because all 13 colonies evolved in different ways, for example, the framers of the Constitution had to make a deal with the little states — Delaware and Rhode Island — to create the Senate as we know it today to get everyone to sign on.

As the country grew, lots of western states were admitted to the Union with big open spaces and few people, who enjoy far more clout than is fair.

Think of it: Wyoming has two senators, just like California, which has nearly 60 times more people!

Our Montgomery County has more people than five states. If we were a state, our top two elected officials — Val Arkoosh and Ken Lawrence Jr. — could be U.S. Senators and change the balance of power in Congress!

Even without Montgomery County, Pennsylvania would still be one of the most populous states in the Union.

A lot of our states should merge, from 50 to, say, 35, which would be much more fair. But that would take a Constitutional amendment, and there's no way our multitude of over-represented states would ever vote themselves out of power.

That's the point of this column. There are many inequities from the past we must live with, and we should concentrate on the things we have a reasonable chance to change.

In Pottstown, there are a few ways we can influence our own destiny. Let's concentrate on those.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, at right in red, has more people than five states. Each of these states has two U.S. senators, but we have to share our two Pennsylvania senators with 11 millon more people in the state's 66 other counties.

Vermont

North Dakota

South Dakota

Alaska

Wyoming

Name	Population
Montgomery County	**820,656**
South Dakota	814,180
Alaska	710,231
North Dakota	672,591
Vermont	625,741
Wyoming	563,626