

## King, Farry discuss energy conservation, alternatives

*Both candidates agreed casino revenue should not be diverted to projects such as sports arenas.*

By CHRIS ENGLISH  
STAFF WRITER

Smart meters that would help consumers keep better track of and control over their energy use are favored by both state representative candidates in the 142nd District.

Democratic incumbent Chris King and Republican challenger Frank Farry talked about that and other proposed measures to conserve energy and explore alternatives at a debate last week at the Pennswood Village Retirement Community in Middletown.

King said the bill including smart meters has passed the House. He and several other legislators are trying to get it out of a Senate committee and onto the Senate floor for a vote, he said.

"We need to act now so that programs are in place before rate caps come off and residents become inundated with high utility bills," King said.

He said he supported the recent passage of a \$650 million state bond issue that will fund grants for things such as increased wind and solar power.

"Pennsylvania has a lot of coal and natural gas and we need to work on environmentally responsible ways to harvest those resources and also expand tax credits for things like installation of solar panels," Farry added. "I support things like running laundry and dishwashers during offpeak hours to conserve energy. We need to redefine the way people use energy and that has to start in the schools."

On health care, King said he supported the ABC plan that proposes using Pennsylvania's share of settlements of lawsuits against tobacco companies to extend health insurance coverage to 400,000 more state residents.

Farry has proposed a health care package that would push for a patients' bill of rights and responsibilities, increase tax credits and encourage health savings accounts, lower the regulatory burden to make health care more affordable, put incentives in place to make OB-GYN services more affordable and other measures.

Both candidates criticized recent legislative measures that have provided casino revenues for things such as a new arena for the Pittsburgh Penguins.

"Gambling revenue shouldn't be going to special pork projects and needs to be coming back to our area," said Farry.

"Some of the gambling revenues are being diverted and I voted against that," King added. "We need to make sure most of that money goes toward property tax relief."

Both candidates said they oppose the current proposal to lease the Pennsylvania Turnpike to a private company, and other turnpike issues came up as well.

"For too long, the turnpike commission has been a haven for patronage jobs," said King. "I would support the state auditor general doing an audit of the commission. I'm not thrilled with the job the turnpike commission has done to this point."

Farry agreed and added there should be regular audits of all state departments.

Both candidates said they support their respective presidential candidates, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama.

While abortion is an issue mostly out of the hands of state lawmakers, both candidates said they were pro choice when an audience member at the debate asked about their positions on a woman's right to choose.

"It's between a woman, her doctor and whatever God she chooses to believe in. It's an individual's right to choose," said King.

"I feel very similar," Farry said. "Roe v. Wade is the law, and until the Supreme Court

overturns it, which I don't think is coming anytime soon, that's a decision between a woman, her family and her doctor and their choice to decide what's in her best interest."

The candidates are working to finalize details on three more debates, including one that would be televised over Middletown's cable television government access channel.

King represents Langhorne, Langhorne Manor, Hulmeville, Penndel, most of Middletown and most of Lower Southampton.

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