



Sen. Charles Smelser (D)

Fred., Carroll, Howard Cos (District 4)

Annapolis Office 130 James Office Building Annapolis, MD 21401 841-3704	District Office 130 James Office Building Annapolis, MD 21401 841-3704
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BIOGRAPHY

General Assembly Service

Starting seventh Senate term. First elected 1966.

General Assembly Positions (Present and Past)

- Senate Budget & Taxation (B&T) Cmte.
- Chair, B&T Subcmte. on Capital Budget
- B&T Subcmte. on Public Safety, Transportation, Ec. Dvpt., and Natural Resources
- Legislative Policy Cmte.
- Executive Nominations Cmte.
- Rules Cmte.
- Joint Cmte. on AELR
- MD Legislative Info. System Steering Comm.

Occupation

Retired dairy farmer

Political & Governmental Positions Held

- Frederick Co. Economic and Community Development (ex officio)
- Program Open Space Allocation Comm. (Past Member)

Memberships

- Frederick Co. Farm Bureau
- Capitol Milk Producers Cooperative (President 4 yrs.)
- Libertytown-Unionville Lions Club (President 1 yr.)

Business & Financial Interests (per 4/90 financial disclosure)

President and owner of New Windsor bank. Owns farm home jointly with wife, plus several other properties.

Honors and Awards

- Leadership Award, Omnicron Delta Kappa
- Legislator of the Year, MD Motor Truck Assoc., 1985
- Legislator of Year, Associated Builders & Contractors of MD, 1975
- Legislator of the Year, State House Press, 1960

Education

- Univ. MD, B.S. 1942
- Agronomy High School, 1937.

Personal Data

Born: July 4, 1920 in Uniontown, MD Spouse: Betty

Other Biographical Notes

Smelser retired as a dairy farmer in 1977.

1990 CAMPAIGN NOTES

Opponents: Had no opposition in either the primary or general election -- a happy state of affairs Smelser hadn't experienced since 1982. (In 1986, he had a stiff primary and general election battle.)

Endorsements: MCEA (primary, general); MSTA, LCV, Sierra Club, and MDPAC (no endorsements).

Finances: Raised only about \$700, all of which he spent. Almost all the campaign money came from PACs. Realtors PAC gave him \$500, and choice PAC donated \$150.

Results: Because of growth, and partly because of his own growing popularity, Smelser scored a "big count" in the general election -- 5,000 more votes than he had received in 1982, when he was unopposed, and 1986, when he encountered a tough Republican challenge.

Recent Election History		
1990 General		
Smelser	180,23	100%
1990 Primary		
Smelser	N.C.	
1986 General		
Smelser	12,673	56%
Thompson	9,805	44%
1986 Primary		
Smelser	4,214	52%
Byron	3,865	48%

Complete results in appendix A

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Mostly Frederick Co., a bit of Carroll Co., and a sliver of Howard Co.. See Elliott, page 29, for demographics.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS 1987-90

In 1987, the plain-spoken Smelser was against confirming the appointment of Dr. Torrey Brown as DNR Secretary. He said: "I don't think frankly he's the best person to correct" department problems.

In 1987, Smelser said that, while he'd try to get some of the \$166 million income tax windfall back to constituents through an increase in exemptions, one of the best ways to spend the money was in "pay as you go capital projects." As for a gas tax hike, Smelser said he had mixed emotions. But he did say he supported the idea of regional taxes where needed -- such as in Baltimore are to support its subway system.

Party Registration and Turnout: District 4					
DEMOCRATS	'90 registra.	% of voters	'90 gen. turnout	'86 registra.	'86-'90 change
District 4	21,458	44.77%	62%	20,268	5.55%
Subdistrict 4A	14,480	45.93%	62%	13,583	6.19%
Subdistrict 4B	6,978	42.54%	62%	6,685	4.20%
REPUBLICANS					
District 4	21,887	45.66%	55%	16,777	23.35%
Subdistrict 4A	13,780	43.71%	54%	10,319	25.12%
Subdistrict 4B	8,107	49.43%	57%	6,458	20.34%

91-94

from: Bruce Bartz - Yearbook of Maryland Legislators

In 1988, Smelser was critical of a plan to extend Baltimore's subway, the two-mile extension, from downtown to Johns Hopkins Hospital, would be better as a light rail project, he said. (Smelser had opposed the original Baltimore subway project, and was pleased that he had gotten people talking anew about it. MDOT secretary Trainor disagreed with Smelser, arguing that light rail there wasn't feasible, in part, because it couldn't handle the 15,000 people a day likely to use the subway extension continued as planned. He had hoped that the subway dollars would be used to pay for the Hunt Valley to Glen Burnie light rail line, and the state would not have to tap its transportation trust. The subway money was approved, and Smelser was critical of using the fund for light rail, contending it was earmarked for roads and bridges only.

Smelser said publicly that he was "not the man" to take the proposal to the governor -- the governor remained at odds with Smelser over his failure to endorse several administration programs and projects, most notably the Baltimore stadium.

In 1988, as the administration's higher education reform package was going before Smelser's committee, Smelser was in a minority saying that the reorganization should produce some results before major funding increases are approved. "I'm certainly not ready to throw a lot of money into it until I know what's going to happen," he said.

Campaign Finance Statistics (1986-1990)		
PAC Type	Amount	%/PAC Total
Cnst/Hsng/Real	\$500.00	76.92%
Unidentified	\$150.00	23.08%
Total PAC \$	\$650.00	100%
Spent. % PAC	\$593.96	109.43%

\$36 million, split evenly among the state, the city, and Frederick Co.. Smelser said he knew of no attempt by his committee to cut the funding.

In 1989, Smelser said he would like to cut more from the Schaefer administration's \$186 million capital budget request. About \$57 million had already been cut, largely through elimination of a \$20 million Annapolis parking garage, and a new \$23 million state office complex at Crownsville, 10 miles west of Annapolis. Of the garage, Smelser said derisively: "It figured out to \$30,000 per parking space, and we can do without that." Smelser said he hoped the administration would spend some of the \$57 million instead on more school construction, and \$20 million to retire some state debt, which he said "is getting to be a problem." From 1989-1997, said Smelser, "we're going from \$1.2 billion in debt to \$3.1 billion and anything we can do to reduce that will be important.

Later in the session, Schaefer said he'd direct DNR to cut from \$2.4 million a year to \$2 million a year its funding of the Carroll Creek project. Result? Stretch project out from 5 to 6 years. The move

was seen as a message to Smelser to loosen up on the Crownsville project.

Smelser was critical of the governor in 1988, suggesting that he was guilty of overcommitting to local capital projects.

District 4 Demographics			
Income		Education	
Under \$10,000	18.4% (22)	Not H.S. Grads	34.1% (16)
\$10,000-\$20,000	27.2% (25)	H.S. Grads	39.6% (15)
\$20,000-\$30,000	27.4% (9)	Some College	13.2% (30)
\$30,000-\$40,000	16.2% (18)	College Grads	13.6% (25)
Over \$40,000	11.5% (20)		
Household Types		Sex & Race	
Family Households	85.4% (3)	Population	92,909 (9)
Married Couples	76.0% (3)	White	95.9% (2)
Couples w/Children	47.0% (5)	Black	3.4% (44)
Female Headed	6.8% (38)	Hispanic	0.6% (20)
Feml-Headed w/Children	4.1% (35)	Female	50.1% (25)
Occupation		Age	
Agriculture	6.5% (4)	Birth - 14	25.8% (5)
Manufacturing	18.7% (15)	15 - 24	17.4% (26)
Retail	13.9% (24)	25 - 44	31.6% (13)
Professional Services	18.4% (32)	45 - 64	17.3% (29)
Government	9.0% (34)	65 & Over	7.9% (26)

In 1988, with administration backing and Smelser's help, the Senate approved a \$750,000 grant to the Washington Co. Museum of Fine Arts to expand, less than the requested \$1 million. But the rest was expected the following year. Smelser was a strong supporter of the project.

In 1988, Smelser sponsored a light rail resolution that would establish a task force to improve the time and cost of light rail construction versus that of heavy rail. The nine member task force would report its findings by December 1. The resolution failed to win House approval. Likewise losing in the House was a bill proposing a constitutional amendment. It would require the governor to include in his annual budget a lump sum capital project request. Legislators would be allowed to add, delete, or substitute projects from a list separately submitted by the governor.

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In 1988, Smelser won approval for a measure enabling the Carroll Co. commissions to borrow \$12 million for schools.

Long been critical of those he considers big spenders. Was saying in 1988 that all Schaefer "wants to do is spend money."

In 1989, relations with the governor mellowed somewhat, Smelser said "I think he has improved."

On typical session day, answers his phone beginning at 8:15 a.m.

Can be sarcastic, given to understatement, gruffness, and warmth. Often, grabs legislators to let them know which projects he's saved.

Knows the costs of capital projects almost down to the last dollar. Favorite phrases during budget-cutting session, "What's your pleasure?" or "Any objection to cutting it out?" His subcommittee generally agrees to all of Smelser's recommendations.

Smelser says it's easy to get carried away with needed, expensive projects, but the state doesn't have enough money to finance them all.

THUMBNAIL SKETCH

Real expertise -- fiscal matters. Real power -- capital budget and transit projects. Has not gotten along at all with Schaefer. Called a master of doing the doable.

Group Evaluations By Voting Record		
%	Organization	Years
100%	Mders for Right to Choose	88-90
86%	Natl. Fedtn. Independent Business	87-90
76%	MD Business for Responsive Govt.	86-90
65%	MD Conservative Union	80-90
33%	Family Protection Lobby	87-90
0%	MD League of Conservation Voters	87-90