



ELDER VOGEL

To a young boy born and raised in the verdant farmlands of New Sewickley Township, the State Capitol of Harrisburg seemed worlds away. In the sixties and seventies when Elder Vogel Jr. was a Freedom Bulldog, his landscape was dotted with thriving dairy farms and laced with winding roads like Glen Eden and Taffy Run. He grew up helping to milk the cows on the land he still tends and calls home today, more than half a century after he wore the colors red and white.

Born to farmers Elder and June Vogel, Elder Jr. graduated from Freedom Area High School in 1974, with the spires of the State Capitol still nowhere in his sights. But that would change as he soon immersed himself in politics first at the local and ultimately at the state level.

The Vogel farm had been in the family for four generations, so Elder's destiny evolved naturally. But he was not content to farm alone. Though proud to join his ancestors in this agrarian life, Elder possessed a civic consciousness from his earlier years. In short, he soon became both farmer and patriot.

Elder Vogel first experienced a taste of politics when he served as a New Sewickley Township supervisor. It was a position he maintained until his election to the State Senate. In his pre-Senate years he also served as president of the Beaver-Lawrence County Farm Bureau, blending his love of the land with his love of leadership. But bigger and better political roles were in store for him.

Elder succeeded State Senator Gerald Lavelle and has represented the citizens of the 47th Senatorial District since 2009. His jurisdiction encompasses all of Lawrence County and parts of Beaver and Butler Counties. He serves as Chairman of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee and is a member of the Appropriations, Banking & Insurance, Communications & Technology, Environmental Resources & Energy, Local Government and Majority Policy Committees.

In his years in the Senate, Elder has introduced several measures that have been signed into law. Among them:

- Criminalizing the possession or sales of concentrated bath salts and synthetic marijuana.
- Eliminating the statutory requirements for costly low Reid Vapor Pressure "Summer Gas" gasoline in seven southwestern Pennsylvania counties.
- Extending the life of the First Industries Program, an initiative that focuses on saving and creating jobs in the Tourism and Agriculture sectors.

- Eliminating the ability of the Department of Agriculture to cite non-profit community groups such as volunteer fire companies, churches, and school booster clubs for selling non-hazardous home-baked foods at fundraisers.
- Giving school districts and school bus contractors the option to choose the most appropriate school buses based on their needs.

In addition, Elder has authored legislation to reduce the size and the costs of the General Assembly. Under this proposal, the Legislature would be reduced from 50 to 45 senatorial districts and from 203 to 153 representative districts.

He also has championed efforts to protect and bolster Pennsylvania's horse racing industry and has provided critical updates to the state Race Horse Industry Reform Act.

Elder's effort to promote economic development and job creation also has included his sponsorship of Senate Bill 1563, a bill providing a tax credit for a petrochemical plant in Beaver County which became law through the 2012 Tax Code revisions.

He also introduced measures to alleviate the burden on motorists by exempting light passenger vehicles ten years old or newer and alternative fuel vehicles from vehicle emissions inspections and eliminating outdated gasoline requirements, making gasoline cheaper for Western Pennsylvania motorists.

Elder's untiring efforts are not limited to the State Senate alone. Ever mindful of his Western Pennsylvania roots, he serves on the Board of Directors for the Lawrence County Community Action Partnership and served on the Board for the Penn State Beaver and Cooperative Extension of Beaver County. He is an active member of the Beaver, Lawrence, and Butler County Chambers of Commerce; the Beaver-Lawrence County Farm Bureau, the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, the Pennsylvania Holstein Association, and the Big Knob Antique Tractor and Equipment Association. He also is a member of the National Rifle Association.

All of Elder Vogel's initiatives and actions have not gone unrewarded. He has been awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association; the Future Farmers of America Honorary Degree; the Distinguished Service Award by Penn AG Industries. He also has been named a Guardian of Small Business by the National Federation of Independent Business for his work in the legislature.

The young boy from New Sewickley Township whose horizons once reached only the crest of Big Knob and the valley that swept below it has broadened his sights, and his vision has impacted Western Pennsylvania considerably. He is still the humble farmer who tends the cattle. He is still the family man who makes his home in his native land with his wife Sue and his two stepdaughters Madison and Lynnsey. But he also is representative, advocate, and champion of his constituents in three counties, all who have fared better because of him. The map of Elder Vogel's world has unfolded and broadened and traversed the mountains and river valleys from New Sewickley to Harrisburg. And we all are the richer for that.