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Former jury commissioner seeks House seat - Reading Eagle, 2010-03-11

ELECTION 2010

# Former jury commissioner seeks House seat

## Mohnton Republican says change is needed in Harrisburg

**BY MARY E. YOUNG**  
**READING EAGLE**

Mark M. Gillen of Mohnton figures he has a track record to back up promises he's making in his campaign for the Republican nomination in the 128th Legislative District for the state House of Representatives.

The seat is open because incumbent Rep. Samuel E. Rohrer of Robeson Township is seeking the Republican nomination for governor rather than re-election in the May 18 primary election.

Before Gillen was elected Berks County jury commissioner in 2001, he vowed to have the \$18,000-a-year, part-time post eliminated. He succeeded before the next year ended.

"I plan to challenge the system of perks and privileges just as I did when I ran for Berks County jury commissioner and eliminated my own job," Gillen said. "The Legislature needs to go on a fiscal diet.

"I will work to reduce the size and cost of Pennsylvania government."

He said he would not accept per diem payments for expenses as most legislators do and would not serve more than eight years.

"That's a reasonable amount of time to accomplish my goals," Gillen said. "I think career politicians are more prone to violate the public trust by focusing on their pay, pension and perks."

He said his agenda would include ending wasteful spending and examining all options and alternatives for eliminating property taxes.

Again, Gillen said, his track record speaks for itself.

When he was a Mohnton borough councilman, he raised money from residents and businesses to buy needed equipment so taxes would not have to be increased, he said.

His annual educational missions to Mexico would continue, but they would be done on his vacation time when the Legislature is not in session. Gillen said.

That experience along with the other jobs he has held give him a different world view that should be an asset for a state legislator, he said.

"This reform idea is largely untested rhetoric," Gillen said. "They don't know how to get it done. Real world experience helps. It requires some practical experience to accomplish the reforms."

Contact **Mary Young**: 610-478-6292 or [myoung@readingeagle.com](mailto:myoung@readingeagle.com).

### Meet the candidate

**Candidate:** Mark M. Gillen, 54, Mohnton. **Party:** Republican. **Office sought:** State House of Representatives, 128th Legislative District, made up of Mohnton, New Morgan, Shillington and Wyomissing, and Brecknock, Caernarvon, Cumru and Robeson townships, and parts of Exeter and Spring townships. **Annual salary:** \$78,315. **Background:** Bachelor's degree in secondary education from Bob Jones University, Greenville, S.C.; master's degree in education, Kutztown