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Scott Ott Calls on Don Cunningham to Sign Full-Term Pledge Lehigh County Executive Challenger Points Out Incumbent's History of 'Upward Mobility'

(July 1, 2009) -- Lehigh County Executive candidate Scott Ott today called on incumbent Don Cunningham to sign a pledge to serve a full, four-year term should he manage to get re-elected in November. Ott has already signed such a promise.

Cunningham announced Thursday that he had dropped his bid for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. During the 18 months he spent pursuing this ambition, Cunningham traveled extensively to court donors around the Commonwealth. He now sits on a \$727,000 campaign war chest, an amount far in excess of that needed to conduct a county executive race.

"If Don Cunningham continues to seek re-election to a four-year term," Ott said, "he should make a commitment to the voters of Lehigh County to serve that entire term. People shouldn't have to guess about his devotion to his duties."

Mr. Ott said voters have ample reason to want to "get it in writing" since Mr. Cunningham has a track record of "upward mobility" in the midst of public service.

- Don Cunningham served about half of a four-year term on the Bethlehem City Council before getting elected Mayor.
- He left his post as Mayor, with three years remaining in his second term, to serve as Gov. Ed Rendell's Secretary of General Services.
- He left the governor's cabinet two years later to run for Lehigh County Executive.
- Halfway through his term as executive, he began the quest for governor, which he abandoned this week.

Mr. Cunningham's announcement noted that "Neither the time nor the circumstances are right for me at this time" but he later acknowledged that "Someday, that may change."

"Lehigh County deserves the full-time attention of its executive," said Ott. "Don Cunningham's budget is \$12 million out of balance this year, and with the economic downturn, his revenue assumptions seem likely to come up short. That means the county may take in less than expected in real estate taxes, while Mr. Cunningham continues to spend more every year. I think it's fair to ask, if he's re-elected, is he willing to do the job when the going really gets tough in 2010 and 2011?"