MEMORANDUM

Date: May 30, 2012

To: All House Members

From: Rep. Babette Josephs

Subject: Co-sponsorship of Joint Resolution to amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to eliminate sine die
             session

I plan to reintroduce my legislation that would amend the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to eliminate legislative sessions after November elections.

As you know, the "lame-duck" session is the period just after elections and before a new legislative session begins. In that time, re-elected legislators have two years before they must again face voters at the polls and the same long stretch before their voting records become public knowledge.

Essentially, this practice allows lawmakers to postpone important and difficult decisions until they cannot be held accountable for them, allowing voters to cast their ballots with an incomplete or even inaccurate understanding of their legislator. In addition, it allows legislators who will not be returning to the General Assembly to continue making laws without fear of voter wrath.

Although Republican leaders Scarnati, Smith, Pileggi, and Turzai have publicly announced that they will not convene for a lame-duck session this year, they have refrained from making this a permanent rule. As long as the option for a lame duck session remains, the door is left open for future lawmakers to take advantage of this period to advance their own interests ahead of those of the people.

This legislation recognizes there may be exceptional circumstances that call for action by the General Assembly during recess; it therefore includes an emergency provision allowing special sessions if so deemed necessary by two-thirds vote of each House or through an order of the Governor.

Please join me in the effort to ensure that the Pennsylvania General Assembly always maintains focus on its primary purpose... representing the people of the Commonwealth.

If you would like to co-sponsor this Joint Resolution, please contact Jennifer Belz at jbelz@pahouse.net or 787-8529.