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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Angel Cruz

DATE: August 7, 2012

SUBJECT: Prohibiting Elected Officials and their Staff from Serving on the Board of Certain Civic Organizations

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation amending Title 65 (Public Officers) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes for the purpose of prohibiting public officials and their staff from serving on the boards of civic organizations that are registered within or that serve the residents of their state legislative district or political subdivisions.

Traditionally, the mission of nonprofit organizations has been to serve the needs of communities, individuals, and political subdivisions. Sadly, the purpose of these entities has been demonized by self-serving individuals who have sought to stifle the voices and input of community stakeholders in an effort to serve their own agenda. These acts have been perpetrated by public officials that have established new charities, or usurped the power of existing entities by electing service or appointing members of their staff to the board of directors.

Permitting public officials and members of their staff to serve on the board of directors of certain non-for-profits gives rise to a potential conflict of interest. This is especially problematic as these groups are lawfully permitted to engage in lobbying and other political activities. In an effort to remove any existence of a conflict of interest or the appearance thereof, and ensure that nonprofits continue to fulfill their mission, additional safeguards must be implemented and enforced. For all of these reasons, I will be introducing legislation that bans public officials and their staff from serving on the boards of civic organizations that are registered within or that serve the residents of their state legislative district or political subdivisions.

If you would like to join me in co-sponsoring this legislation, please contact Christina Consylman at (717) 787-1407 x 6478 or CConsylm@pahouse.net.