MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Vanessa Lowery Brown

DATE: January 24, 2013

SUBJECT: Resolution Urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly to Support Youth Tobacco Prevention Initiatives

In the near future, I intend to introduce a resolution for the purpose of urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly to support youth tobacco prevention initiatives.

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the following statistics were reported for 2009: 80% of adult smokers begin smoking before 18 years of age; 19.5% of high school students and 5.2% of middle school students smoked one or more cigarettes in the previous month; and 8.9% of high school students and 2.6% of middle school students were current smokeless tobacco users. Additionally, the CDC has highlighted the prevalence of minors now utilizing sources other than retail outlets for the purposes of obtaining their tobacco products.

Despite the fact that youth tobacco usage is declining nationally, statistics like those stated above can be further improved upon through proper education, deterrent legislative measures, and through the denial of access to tobacco products. As such, it rests as the duty of both the legislators and educators of this Commonwealth to identify creative and effective ways to further influence and educate minors on positively changing their behavior and outlook with regard to their overall health and welfare.

Due to the foregoing reasons, I ask that you please join me in encouraging our General Assembly to support and encourage evidence-based youth tobacco prevention education by working to implement laws that address not only the illegal sale of tobacco to minors, but also the purchase and possession of tobacco products by minors, including both traditional tobacco products and tobacco-derived products.

If you should have any questions or concerns regarding this measure, please feel free to contact Mr. Brandon J. Flood at (717)772-6955 or Bflood@pahouse.net.