

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2007

SESSION OF 2007

191ST OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

No. 12

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The House convened at 11 a.m., e.s.t.

**THE SPEAKER (DENNIS M. O'BRIEN)
PRESIDING**

PRAYER

HON. THADDEUS KIRKLAND, member of the House of Representatives, offered the following prayer:

Good morning.

Let us pray:

Our Father and our God, it is once again, O Lord, that we come into Your presence with thanksgiving: thanking You, O God, for life; thanking You, O God, for strength and health; thanking You, O God, for another day to just praise and magnify You.

We thank You this morning, O God, for You said in Your Word in all things give thanks. So therefore, God, we thank You for these men and women, these leaders of Pennsylvania, that You have placed in power. We thank You, O God, for endowing them with wisdom from on high, and we pray, O God, that You would order their footsteps to do Thy will. We thank You, O God, for this governing body, and we thank You for the strength to endure.

Now, O God, as we go through this process, this process of leading these, Your people, we pray, O God, that You would give us the strength, the understanding, and the wisdom to do that which is right. We ask these blessings in the mighty and miraculous name of Your son. Our soul says amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by members and visitors.)

JOURNAL APPROVAL POSTPONED

The SPEAKER. Without objection, approval of the Journal of Monday, February 5, 2007, will be postponed until printed. The Chair hears no objection.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

The SPEAKER. Turning to leaves of absence, there are none on either side.

MASTER ROLL CALL

The SPEAKER. The Chair is about to take the master roll. Members will proceed to vote.

(Members proceeded to vote.)

FILMING PERMISSION

The SPEAKER. For the information of the members, the Chair is giving permission for still photography and videotaping to the following organizations: the Commonwealth Media, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Harrisburg Patriot-News, the Associated Press, and the Senate Communications Office.

MASTER ROLL CALL CONTINUED

The following roll call was recorded:

PRESENT—203

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Adolph | Gabig | Markosek | Rohrer |
| Argall | Galloway | Marshall | Ross |
| Baker | Geist | Marsico | Rubley |
| Barrar | George | McCall | Sabatina |
| Bastian | Gerber | McGeehan | Sainato |
| Bear | Gergely | McI. Smith | Samuelson |
| Belfanti | Gibbons | McIlhattan | Santoni |
| Benninghoff | Gillespie | Melio | Saylor |
| Bennington | Gingrich | Mensch | Scavello |
| Beyer | Godshall | Metcalfe | Schroder |
| Biancucci | Goodman | Micozzie | Seip |
| Bishop | Grell | Millard | Shapiro |
| Blackwell | Grucela | Miller | Shimkus |
| Boback | Haluska | Milne | Siptroth |
| Boyd | Hanna | Moul | Smith, K. |
| Brennan | Harhai | Moyer | Smith, M. |
| Brooks | Harhart | Mundy | Smith, S. |
| Buxton | Harkins | Murt | Solobay |
| Caltagirone | Harper | Mustio | Sonney |
| Cappelli | Harris | Myers | Staback |
| Carroll | Helm | Nailor | Stairs |
| Casorio | Hennessey | Nickol | Steil |
| Causer | Hershey | O'Brien, M. | Stern |
| Civera | Hess | O'Neill | Stevenson |
| Clymer | Hickernell | Oliver | Sturla |
| Cohen | Hornaman | Pallone | Surra |
| Conklin | Hutchinson | Parker | Swanger |
| Costa | James | Pashinski | Tangretti |
| Cox | Josephs | Payne | Taylor, J. |
| Creighton | Kauffman | Payton | Taylor, R. |
| Cruz | Keller, M. | Peifer | Thomas |
| Curry | Keller, W. | Perry | True |
| Cutler | Kenney | Perzel | Turzai |
| Daley | Kessler | Petrarca | Veréb |
| Dally | Killion | Petri | Vitali |
| DeLuca | King | Petrone | Vulakovich |

| | | | |
|------------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Denlinger | Kirkland | Phillips | Wagner |
| DePasquale | Kortz | Pickett | Walko |
| Dermody | Kotik | Preston | Wansacz |
| DeWeese | Kula | Pyle | Waters |
| DiGirolamo | Leach | Quigley | Watson |
| Donatucci | Lentz | Quinn | Wheatley |
| Eachus | Levdansky | Ramaley | White |
| Ellis | Longietti | Rapp | Williams |
| Evans, D. | Mackereth | Raymond | Wojnaroski |
| Evans, J. | Maher | Readshaw | Yewcic |
| Everett | Mahoney | Reed | Youngblood |
| Fabrizio | Major | Reichley | Yudichak |
| Fairchild | Manderino | Roae | |
| Fleck | Mann | Rock | O'Brien, D., |
| Frankel | Mantz | Roebuck | Speaker |
| Freeman | | | |

ADDITIONS—0

NOT VOTING—0

EXCUSED—0

The SPEAKER. A quorum being present, the House will proceed to conduct business.

GUESTS INTRODUCED

The SPEAKER. The Chair would like to recognize and introduce Nick Ruth and Mike Rossi, who are the guests of Representative Ron Miller. Nick and Mike are both seniors at Dallastown High School. They will be serving as guest pages for Representative Ron Miller today. Let us welcome them to the House, please.

Please also welcome Michelle Renn and Adam Hake as guest pages today from Representative Bev Mackereth's district. They attend West York Area High School. Please welcome them to the hall of the House.

Here today serving as guest pages are Andy Dessel, student council president, ninth grade; Brittany May, historian for the ninth grade; Kacy Straub, treasurer of the ninth grade; Christa Sipes, secretary of the ninth grade. They are students at Faust Junior High School. They are the guests of Representative Rob Kauffman, and they are seated in the well of the House.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

GUESTS INTRODUCED

The SPEAKER. Ladies and gentlemen, I will ask for your attention, members of the House, for two very special guests.

Representative Vereb and the members of the Montgomery County delegation and numerous other legislators today attended a press conference for the introduction of HB 694. Six ninety-four was a special House bill number assigned by myself as the Speaker to recognize a very tragic day in Montgomery County. On June 23, 1994, Officer Paul Price was left for dead and disabled for life after a horrendous beating by a suspect that was never apprehended. It is important for all of us as members of the General Assembly to reflect our support for law enforcement throughout this Commonwealth, and today we are honored to have with us Officer Paul Price and his wife, Sue.

The House will be at ease awaiting the arrival of the Senate for today's joint session.

COMMITTEE TO ESCORT GOVERNOR

The SPEAKER. As soon as possible after the election of the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau, the three-member committee to escort the Governor will assemble to perform its function. The three members are Representatives Barbara McIlvaine Smith, Tony Payton, Jr., and Brad Roae.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. For the information of the members, Representative Rosita Youngblood is introducing HR 58, designating January 14 through January 20, 2007, as "Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Week." For the information of the members who would wish to cosign this, it is going to be laid over with the bill clerk for additional sponsorships.

The House will come to order. All members, please be seated. Members and guests will please be seated.

ARRIVAL OF SENATE

The SPEAKER. The Senate is entering the hall of the House. The Senate is entering the hall of the House. Members will please rise.

The Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms of the House.

The SERGEANT AT ARMS. Mr. Speaker, the Senate is now present in the hall of the House.

The SPEAKER. The Chair requests the Honorable Catherine Baker Knoll, the Lieutenant Governor, to preside over the proceedings of today's joint session.

The President pro tem, the Honorable Joseph B. Scarnati III, is invited to be seated on the rostrum.

The members of the House and Senate and all guests will please be seated. The Chair will ask our colleagues in the Senate to please be seated in the well of the House.

The Chair welcomes the Lieutenant Governor, Catherine Baker Knoll, to preside over this joint session.

JOINT SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (CATHERINE BAKER KNOLL) PRESIDING

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. Thank you.

This being the day and the hour agreed upon by a concurrent resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives to elect a Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau and to hear an address by His Excellency, the Governor, the Honorable Edward G. Rendell, this joint session will come to order.

We will start with the election of the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.

NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau. The nominations are in order.

The Chair recognizes the Senator from Delaware County, Senator Pileggi.

Mr. PILEGGI. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, it is my honor today to nominate Robert W. Zech, Jr., Esq., to continue serving in the position of Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.

Bob has served us in this position since 2003. His name is not widely known by the public, but he is widely respected by those who know how much work he puts in. No piece of legislation is introduced, amended, or passed without first being prepared by Bob and his team of fine lawyers in the Legislative Reference Bureau. Currently Bob is overseeing a major upgrade to the General Assembly's bill drafting computer system.

Bob graduated from the University of Scranton and is a native of Scranton. He is also a graduate of the Dickinson School of Law, and he graduated from the United States Army Transportation School in 1973.

Bob has been on the staff of the Legislative Reference Bureau for nearly 34 years. He was named Assistant Director in 1995 and, as I said, has served us ably as Director of LRB for the past 4 years. Bob does not have an easy job, but he does it well and with remarkable patience.

It is a pleasure for me to nominate Robert W. Zech for another term as Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.

Thank you, Madam President.

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. Thank you, Senator.

The Chair now recognizes the Representative from Dauphin County, Representative Sue Helm.

Ms. HELM. Thank you.

I second the nomination of my constituent, Robert Zech, to be Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau. Mr. Zech has served with distinction in the Director's post since 2003, and I strongly encourage my colleagues to support him for another term.

Thank you.

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. Thank you, Representative.

For a second again, Representative Bill DeWeese.

Mr. DeWEESE. Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to congratulate the United States Army for producing such a fine gentleman as Mr. Zech. I would like to laud the Jesuits, the University of Scranton, for honing his keen intellect and allowing his maturation as an undergraduate to be as solid as it has proved to be.

As my honorable colleague, Senator Pileggi, averred, Robert Zech is not a household name. Some of us wish we were not household names. The fact is, we have a very special talent in Bob, and he labors anonymously in the attic, literally and figuratively, of this structure. We take that team for granted and we should not, and I am very happy that our process allows us a few minutes today to project the name of Bob Zech, U.S. Army veteran, University of Scranton, Dickinson School of Law, but very importantly, a career public servant, and the adjective and the noun have never been better personified, "public" and

"servant," than in the name of Robert Zech, and I am pleased to second his nomination.

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. Thank you.

Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair declares the nominations closed.

The candidate for the office of Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau is Robert W. Zech, Jr., of Dauphin County. Those in favor of Robert W. Zech, Jr., for the office of Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau will please say "aye"; those opposed, "no." The ayes have it. Robert W. Zech is declared unanimously elected Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.

COMMITTEE TO ESCORT DIRECTOR-ELECT OF LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. The Senator from Delaware County, Senator Pileggi, and the Representative from Dauphin County, Representative Helm, will please escort Robert W. Zech to the front of the rostrum for the purpose of taking the oath of office.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. Please rise for the administration of the oath of office by the Honorable Richard A. Lewis, President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County. Judge Lewis.

JUDGE LEWIS. Robert Zech, do you care to take the oath of office as the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau?

Place your left hand on the Bible and raise your right hand and repeat after me: I, Robert W. Zech, Jr., do solemnly swear that I will support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this Commonwealth and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau with fidelity, so help me God.

(Mr. Zech asserted oath.)

JUDGE LEWIS. Congratulations.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ESCORTING GOVERNOR

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. The General Assembly will please come to order.

The Governor is entering the hall of the House. Members and guests will all please rise.

The Chair recognizes the chair of the committee to escort the Governor, the gentleman from Lancaster, Senator Armstrong.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Madam President, Mr. Speaker, members of the General Assembly, as chairman of the committee to escort the Governor, I wish to report that the Governor, His Excellency, is present and prepared to address this joint session.

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. The Chair thanks Chairman Armstrong and his committee.

Members of the General Assembly, I now have the honor and privilege of presenting His Excellency, the Governor, the Honorable Edward G. Rendell, who will now address this joint session.

**FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008
BUDGET ADDRESS OF
GOV. EDWARD G. RENDELL**

The GOVERNOR. Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for that nice greeting.

Mr. Speaker, Madam President, members of the 191st legislature, guests, distinguished guests, and my fellow Pennsylvanians:

It has become a solemn tradition for all of us over these last 5 years to pay homage to the tremendous sacrifices of the Pennsylvania service men and women who are deployed outside our Commonwealth, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The words that I will say here today and the things that we do here, important though they will be to the daily lives of our fellow citizens, pale in comparison to the life-and-death decisions that confront our fellow Pennsylvanians on patrol in Iraq and Afghanistan each and every day. To date, no State has sent more National Guardsmen and women to fight the global war on terror. Seventeen thousand Pennsylvania Guardsmen have served there; 35 of them have died there. Sadly, since the war began, 159 Pennsylvanians from all branches of our military have lost their lives in this fight.

So I ask you now to join me in a moment of silent tribute to these courageous Pennsylvanians. Let us remember them and their families in our prayers. Let us also keep those Pennsylvanians serving there now in our hearts each day, and most of all, let us pray for their safe return.

(A moment of silence was observed.)

We are gathered today to talk about the choices that we will make together this year and over the course of the next 4 years as we continue to put Pennsylvania on the road to enduring progress. As I said in my recent inaugural address, there is no question that we have come a long way together already, making the difficult decisions that were long overdue on a wide range of issues. Those decisions brought change to Pennsylvania and the promise of a better life for our citizens.

As we gather in this chamber, we all share the belief that much more remains to be accomplished. But I think it is important to pause for a few moments to recall briefly what we have achieved, for two reasons: first, as a reminder that we have demonstrated the ability to tackle issues that the naysayers said were just too difficult to address; and second, because it should remind us how much we can achieve if we put the people's interests ahead of personal or partisan agendas. I want to be clear about that point, too. The accomplishments of the last 4 years were the product of the work we did together.

Now, I do not recite these points to pat ourselves on the back, but think about it for a minute. We passed legislation expanding access to our terrific PACE (Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly) and PACENET (Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly Needs Enhancement Tier) programs. For seniors and all homeowners,

we enacted the most significant reduction in property taxes in the history of our Commonwealth.

We have made it possible for 55 percent of the students in this State to attend full-day kindergarten, to begin modernizing every high school classroom, and to help over 300,000 struggling students get the tutoring they need to achieve. And today Pennsylvania's public school students are making gains like never before, and they are better prepared than ever to join the work force and make a future for themselves and their families right here in Pennsylvania.

We invested \$3 billion in an economic stimulus package that offered a life line to many of the Commonwealth's smaller cities and towns, places that had not seen real economic growth in decades. These investments have triggered a significant economic recovery, and as a result, today more Pennsylvanians are working than at any point in the history of the Commonwealth, and IBM Global Services recently reported that there was more foreign and domestic investment in Pennsylvania in 2005 than in any other State in the nation.

And at a time when government spending seemed destined to spiral out of control forever, we acted together to control the costs of health care, social service programs, and the day-to-day administration of the government. In a process that still is very much ongoing, we have achieved reductions of \$1 billion in the cost of operating State government.

Together, we took a stand on the growing energy crisis that impacts the cost of almost everything we do in Pennsylvania, and as a result, we have made the Commonwealth a national leader in the development of biofuels and alternative energy sources. Pennsylvania is leading the States in this growth area of our national economy.

Last fall the people of Pennsylvania sent a strong and very clear message that they support the progress we have made over the last 4 years and that they want this progress to continue. They also demonstrated their desire for reform of both the election and legislative process. They want accountability, transparency, and a greater say in the work that we do right here. But we should make no mistake about the people's feelings about how that work gets done. Those feelings range from suspicion to outrage.

But led by the spirit of the 54 new legislators who sit among us and new leaderships on both sides of the aisle, both chambers have established impressive committees that are already hard at work on defining the steps that could be taken to improve our political and legislative process and meet the expectations of our citizens. I look forward to these committees reviewing my proposals for political reform that I outlined in my inaugural address. But for today, let me applaud the seed of reform that has taken root in this building. I urge both chambers and all caucuses to let it grow into real change.

The voters also resoundingly approved of the progressive agenda that we have developed together. We must continue to move forward through the new Agenda for Pennsylvania Progress, a comprehensive strategy to address the long-term challenges that still confront us, and with this budget, I intend to deliver on that agenda.

Four years ago, when we began to make the tough decisions that would shape Pennsylvania's future, we took action because we were in a crisis – a projected \$2.4 billion budget deficit, an education system that was critically and chronically underfunded, an economy worn threadbare for lack of

investment, an environment desperately in need of a renewed commitment to the protection of our natural resources.

Because we did these first things first, we turned the corner in Pennsylvania. But in many cases – on the budget, on public education, on controlling the spiraling costs of health care and other social services – the sense of crisis made the short-term choices clear if no less difficult. In that sense, the times were "on the side of progress." We had to act immediately in every case, and because we did, Pennsylvania has made great strides.

Having achieved a great deal already, the question now is whether we will demonstrate the commitment to continue to work to make Pennsylvania great for years to come. Can we sustain the momentum and avoid the detours of special interests and partisan politics that threaten Pennsylvania's future?

If we do, I believe that Pennsylvania's best days lie ahead of us. But the challenges ahead are also formidable indeed. My budget takes aggressive action to address these challenges. These actions include funding the cost of our recent successful collective-bargaining agreements with the Commonwealth's public employees, the rising costs of our prison system, coping with continued devastating cuts in Federal support for our social safety-net programs, and the looming crisis of rising State pension obligations.

Our pension obligations continue to grow, and if we do not act soon, they will spike so high in 4 years that they may well undermine the foundation of fiscal stability of this State and of our school districts. If we do nothing, in 5 years we will be paying an additional \$1.6 billion per year to meet our pension obligations and our school districts will be paying over \$800 million more each and every year. We have a plan to meet that challenge, and we need to begin to work this year to change the course we are on. I will be reaching out to the leadership of each caucus to select members of the legislature to review our plan and to work with us to develop a long-term solution to our pension problems that can be acted upon this fall.

And we face other challenges that are not of our own making. These challenges threaten the Commonwealth's long-term fiscal health and could have a catastrophic impact on Pennsylvania's social service and transportation funding needs.

They are focused in two major areas: first, funding for programs required by Federal mandates from Washington which force us to pay for programs even as the Federal government continues the cruel practice of cutting funds for many of the same services; and second, the spiraling cost of mass transit and highway and bridge repair – problems, as we all know, that have loomed on the horizon for years and for which the day of reckoning has finally arrived.

As I said, these challenges are largely not of our own making, though that does not relieve us of the obligation to address them. Let me briefly detail them for you.

The growing list of unfunded Federal mandates, cases in which Washington "passes the bill and then passes the buck" to the States to pay for it, represents at least \$700 million in additional obligations in this budget. Among others, we have been forced to cover the cost of these mandates.

Since 2003 we have absorbed a loss of over \$1 billion in the Federal IGT (intergovernmental transfer) transfer funds and a shrinking Federal match for medical assistance and child support programs. This budget absorbs an additional \$209 million to compensate for severe Federal funding changes. Like most States, Pennsylvania has historically used its

IGT funds to maintain nursing home payments and to address critical funding needs for health care for the indigent.

Next year's budget also includes \$369 million to pay for federally mandated services, increased rates for managed care, and increased Medicaid utilization services on top of the \$41 million of these Federal costs that have been built into our budget over the last 4 years.

We must also fund \$118 million in federally mandated services for disabled and special-needs children and the increased child-care costs necessary to meet the Federal welfare requirements. Again, these State funds are on top of \$221 million already built into the budget this year to absorb the cost of these Federal mandates over the last 4 years.

And for the second year in a row, we must fund part of the cost of the Medicare Part D program. The Federal government created this program and now, unbelievably, is requiring States to help pay for its cost. This so-called clawback, which a number of States are actually challenging in Federal court, costs Pennsylvania \$338 million in this fiscal year, and the Federal government expects us to pay \$325 million this coming year. They want us to write them a check for \$325 million.

Now, no one is suggesting for a minute that we should reduce or eliminate these services. Conscience and compassion demand that we provide services for our most vulnerable Pennsylvanians, and by Federal law, we must do so. But the point is clear: To meet the combined impact of these Federal cuts and underfunded Federal mandates, it will require Pennsylvania taxpayers to shoulder over \$2 billion in costs, it has required us to shoulder over \$2 billion in costs since 2003. This is an extraordinarily heavy load for us to bear, and it is the direct result of decisions made in Washington, which is trying to balance the Federal budget and the projected \$319 billion Federal deficit by foisting on the States the difficult choice between cutting services to our citizens or raising State revenues, while at the same time down in Washington, they are taking credit for cutting taxes.

That said, we have only one real option. By law, we must fund these obligations in this budget, and we must expand our revenues to do so.

I also propose today to expand our revenues to achieve another critically important objective. We can accelerate the delivery of property tax relief and begin to reduce property taxes for millions of Pennsylvanians this summer, a full year ahead of the schedule.

Without any additional revenue, the property tax relief fund balance will be about \$450 million this summer. Current law permits property tax relief to all Pennsylvania homeowners only when sufficient funds are available to cover the required reserve and there is at least \$400 million for homeowner tax relief in the fund. That means that no distribution can happen until at least \$570 million is in place. So if we do not add money to the fund, all nonsenior homeowners will have to wait another year for property tax relief.

I am proposing today that Pennsylvania enact accelerated property tax relief through a fundamental tax shift implemented through an increase of 1 percentage point in the Pennsylvania sales tax. This year's State budget proposes to use \$420 million of additional sales tax revenues to fund this accelerated property tax relief.

The tax shifting plan I am proposing today will provide nearly \$720 million in property tax relief this summer, in addition to the \$199 million of relief already planned to go to

our senior citizens. That is a full year ahead of schedule, and it finally gives all Pennsylvania homeowners real cuts in their property taxes.

Most importantly, this is not a 1-year benefit. I am asking you to agree to allocate \$700 million of the increased sales tax revenues to permanently reduce the Commonwealth's reliance on property taxes. This reduction would be over and above the relief that will arrive once Pennsylvania's new gaming facilities are fully operating and generating an estimated \$1 billion per year in additional property tax relief funds. So under the plan I am proposing today, property tax relief in Pennsylvania will double to at least \$1.7 billion a year.

The remaining portion of the sales tax increase collected in this budget is required to meet the cost of the Federal mandates that I have detailed today.

Like you, I fully appreciate the difficulty of any decision to increase taxes. I share the reluctance of everyone in this chamber to do so, but, ladies and gentlemen, I believe we have no choice. We must put our own house in order regardless of the fact that others are responsible for damaging it. We must fund the obligations imposed upon us by Federal law, and we must continue to provide services to our most vulnerable citizens.

How we respond to this challenge will define us for years to come. We can either lament the difficulties that confront us, hoping against hope that Washington will ride to our rescue, or we can decide to meet the problem head on by developing an effective long-range Pennsylvania strategy to address this issue. And so with this budget, I propose to implement a long-term plan to ensure Pennsylvania's progress for generations to come.

As you know, I have already introduced two important elements of this plan: the Prescription for Pennsylvania, a major new health-care initiative designed to improve the competitiveness of all businesses throughout the State while simultaneously providing health insurance coverage for an additional 800,000 Pennsylvanians; and the Pennsylvania Energy Independence Strategy, which builds on our progress in developing alternative energy sources that offer a Pennsylvania solution to America's energy crisis.

Thanks to our collective effort last fall, every child in this State is eligible for health insurance and every parent in this State can purchase that insurance affordably. The eyes of the nation are now upon Pennsylvania and a few other States because of the recent steps we have taken to eliminate the moral stain of hundreds of thousands of uninsured residents. Now, our approach differs from what most of the States embarking to solve the health-care crisis are doing. We not only address the need for universal access to coverage, but we also address the major cost drivers that are making health insurance less affordable for all of our residents and for our businesses.

The Prescription for Pennsylvania seeks to improve the competitiveness of businesses throughout this State by reducing the crushing burden of skyrocketing employee health-care costs. In fact, the Prescription for Pennsylvania is both a health-care and an economic development initiative. If we can successfully reduce employee health costs, we can greatly improve the bottom line for companies throughout this State.

Consider these facts: Over the last 6 years, from 2000 to 2006, the cost of health insurance premiums increased by over 75 percent. Inflation in the same period rose by 17 percent, and median wages rose only by 13 percent. In other words, health-care premiums rose nearly five times higher than wages

and the overall rate of inflation. Ladies and gentlemen, if these trends continue, we will face a disaster in Pennsylvania for our businesses and for our working families.

The cost of inaction is far too great, and the Prescription for Pennsylvania charts a long-term course for reform that promises greater affordability, greater access, and improved levels of care for all of us while improving the competitiveness of Pennsylvania businesses.

And while it is not a formal part of the Prescription for Pennsylvania, any serious effort to improve the health and safety of our fellow citizens must also include a comprehensive effort to address the epidemic of gun violence that is occurring throughout the Commonwealth. Just last week the front page of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported, "Pa.'s black homicide victim rate leads nation." A new report from the Violence Policy Center in Washington revealed that Pennsylvania's homicide rate among African-Americans is more than 1 1/2 times the national average and that nearly 86 percent of these homicides involve handguns.

But gun violence is not just a Pittsburgh problem or a Philadelphia problem. In fact, in 2005 the rate of gun violence rose twice as fast in the rest of the State than it did in Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties. Gun violence is destroying the sense of community that connects us all. Ladies and gentlemen, is this the way we want to lead the nation, as a national homicide headline?

As Governor, I have attacked the problem of gun violence on several fronts. Together, we have increased State funding to support the efforts of local police departments and law enforcement agencies to fight violence in our cities, with a particular focus on cities dealing with rising gun violence. We have also dramatically increased resources in public education, helping young people understand the consequences of violence and the need to make better choices.

But we must do more. I urge the General Assembly to address the issue of gun violence in the following ways: first, by upgrading possession of a stolen gun to a felony so that the penalties can be significantly upgraded. Today the penalty for possession of a stolen television is more severe than the penalty for possession of a stolen gun. Second, I urge passage of legislation making it mandatory to report the loss or theft of a gun to police, which will have a dramatic impact on illegal gun trafficking in Pennsylvania. We require you to report the theft of a car; we should do no less for the theft of a gun. Third, I will support legislation that enables local communities to enact their own restrictions on the flow, distribution, and use of handguns. And fourth, it is time for this State to end gun trafficking by enacting a one-handgun-a-month law. Such legislation, such legislation will put a stop to gunrunners who sell so many of our crime guns, and it will put no burden on lawful gun owners who can still purchase 12 handguns a year, 24 if they are married.

In a recent column in the Philadelphia Inquirer, an unnamed Pennsylvania legislator said that in a secret ballot in the General Assembly, one gun a month would pass by a 3-to-1 margin. So I call on you to show the courage of your convictions and, once and for all, rid Pennsylvania of the devastation of gun trafficking.

Last week, last week we unveiled a second element of the Agenda for Pennsylvania Progress, one that proposes to build on our status as a national leader in the development of alternative energy. The Pennsylvania Energy Independence

Strategy will save consumers \$10 billion in energy costs over the next decade. It calls for the expanded use of "smart meters" that conserve energy, greater use of solar energy, incentivizing consumers through product rebates to swap their old air conditioners and refrigerators for new, more energy-efficient replacements, helping our large industrial users purchase cheaper energy and locking in more stable, long-term energy prices, and finding new ways to reduce energy consumption during peak periods. And we will require that all fuels sold in the Commonwealth must include biodiesel or ethanol, which are made from the coal and agricultural products that we have in abundance right here in Pennsylvania.

Our goal, our goal is to ensure the use of 1 billion gallons per year of renewable fuels, which is enough to replace all of the fuels we currently import from the Persian Gulf. If we can achieve this goal, we will have gone a long way toward achieving energy independence, and for this reason I am so pleased that Bob and Seth Obez are with us today. Worely & Obez opened the first retail pump site for biodiesel in the entire northeastern United States, right here in Lititz. Their vision has led other wise entrepreneurs to follow in their footsteps. By the end of 2009, Pennsylvania companies will be able to produce 230 million gallons of biodiesel and 340 million gallons of ethanol. To put that in perspective, current national production of biodiesel amounts to only 225 million gallons a year. Bob and Seth, would you please stand up and be recognized.

The Energy Independence Strategy also calls for expanding our commitment to the development of a "clean energy" industry right here at home, helping local companies create and bring to market a whole range of energy products and technologies, creating thousands of jobs for Pennsylvanians in the process. We are already off to a great start by attracting Gamesa, Conergy, and Iberdrola, who are among the world's leaders in the production of wind and solar energy.

The centerpiece of this strategy is the creation of an \$850 million Energy Independence Fund, which will fuel this expanding market through strategic investments that provide access to critically needed seed money or venture capital, working capital, loans, and limited grants.

We propose to support the Energy Independence Fund without any impact on the State budget. The fund will be financed through the issuance of State bonds, and the interest on those bonds will be paid through a small "clean energy" assessment on the electric utility bills of all residential, commercial, and industrial customers. This assessment will cost the average household 45 cents per month, less than \$6 a year, while the Energy Independence Strategy will save the average household over \$70 per year. It will provide an opportunity for Pennsylvania to promote the development of energy alternatives that will reduce energy costs, boost the production of reliable energy products, and promote a clean energy economy.

The Energy Independence Strategy is a win-win for Pennsylvania. It provides strategic investments to support the development of alternative sources of clean energy, thereby reducing our dependence on foreign energy even as we create a growing clean energy industry that produces jobs and new opportunities for Pennsylvania residents.

In public education, this budget continues our policy of making strategic investments in the future of our children. This budget expands the accountability block grant with \$75 million to help Pennsylvania move closer to the goal of universal access

to prekindergarten. This first installment will make pre-K available for more than 11,000 additional Pennsylvania children next year. And I propose we also add, and I propose we also add \$25 million to the block grant to drive us closer to the goal of full-day kindergarten for every student. Study after study has proven what parents all over Pennsylvania already know and what they tell me and tell you: Quality prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten give young children the early skills they need to prepare them for a lifetime of achievement.

In addition to proposing a greater focus on very young children at the "front end" of our educational system, this budget also calls for a continued Classrooms for the Future investment of \$90 million to modernize our high schools and prevent older students from dropping out. In the next few weeks we will see another example of that progress, the progress that Pennsylvania is making in this regard, as Punxsutawney High School, the pride of Punxsutawney and the home of Minority Leader Sam Smith, becomes the latest Pennsylvania school to install laptops on the desks of its high school students.

Sunday night, after the Super Bowl, I watched our new President pro tem of the Senate, Joe Scarnati, on PCN (Pennsylvania Cable Network). Joe said that his top priorities for Pennsylvania are economic development and jobs. Well, Joe, I share those priorities, which is why we must continue to make investments in education to build a well-educated and highly skilled work force, which will allow us to attract companies that compete in the increasingly high-tech global marketplace.

I also ask that you fully support the terrific recommendations made by the Governor's Commission on College and Career Success. I ask you to enact into law the commission's recommendation that Pennsylvania join the vanguard of States that have adopted graduation requirements for every student. It sets the bar high, but I believe that Pennsylvania students will reach as high as we ask them to go.

Let me introduce you now to Alexander LaBant, a 12th grader at Greenwood High School in Perry County, who served as a member of that commission. At a tense moment when it seemed as if the commission was going to issue weak recommendations, Alex single-handedly turned the tide when he stood up and said, and I quote, "We need to make sure that all students are prepared to succeed after high school graduation. The best way to do this is to set a single statewide graduation requirement. Children from across Pennsylvania are counting on policymakers to be courageous enough to make this change." Alex was absolutely right then, and his words have even more importance today. Alex, would you please stand and be recognized.

This budget also proposes additional strategic investments to continue the momentum generated by Pennsylvania's growing economic recovery, including the enactment of the Jonas Salk Legacy Fund, a \$500 million initiative to fund capital investments in bioscience research under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Biosciences Institute. This fund, commemorating the memory of the man whose groundbreaking work in polio research has saved millions of lives, will support a renewed effort to recruit the nation's best researchers to Pennsylvania's leading university and private bioscience research facilities. Funding also will be used to upgrade these facilities, with the goal of creating truly topflight research capabilities among Pennsylvania's academic medical centers and our research centers and universities.

As I said last year, the Salk Legacy Fund will catapult Pennsylvania to the top of the class in scientific research, with the goal of supporting groundbreaking medical and scientific research while fostering dramatic growth in the business of science as well. This fund also would be established without any impact on the operating budget by securitizing only a small portion of the tobacco settlement proceeds. In short, we can leverage the power of the Tobacco Fund proceeds to create the chance for Pennsylvania to become a world leader in the field of scientific research. For all of these reasons, I once again call on the legislature to support the groundbreaking Salk Legacy Fund.

All the initiatives that I have outlined today will keep the Commonwealth on the road to progress and our citizens on the road to prosperity, but one major roadblock remains: the need to develop a comprehensive plan to fund mass transit and to repair the Commonwealth's massive network of highways and bridges.

To be sure, the need for new transportation funding strategies is not news to those of us who are gathered here in this chamber, nor for that matter to the riding and driving public. From my first day in office, transportation funding has been an issue that has defied easy resolution. During that time there has been a growing gap between the funding on hand and the amount required just to keep us from falling behind. Over time, the true magnitude of the problem emerged, particularly in the area of mass transit, as we faced the threat of massive service cuts, major fare increases, and layoffs.

Less obvious but no less critical has been the growing gap between our resources and the pressing need to repair our bridges – we have the third highest number of bridges in the nation – and the need to repair our over 44,000 miles of road. We have spent more on paving and repairing roads and bridges over the last 4 years than at any time in Pennsylvania's history. We have paved or repaired more than 19,000 miles of Pennsylvania's highways during that time, at a cost of almost \$16 billion. We have increased our overall spending on highways, roads, and bridges by nearly \$1 billion a year.

Yet the gap between what we can afford and what still needs to be repaired continues to widen, primarily because of the dramatic increase in the cost of basic road construction materials. PENNDOT estimates that the cost of highway construction has risen over 36 percent in the last 2 years alone. So even though we are doing more than ever before, the rising cost of repair makes it increasingly difficult to keep pace with the growing demand for repair and reconstruction. And that does not even include the growing backlog of road and bridge repairs that we need to do.

So today, despite the fact we have increased yearly spending on bridge repairs from \$259 million in 2002 to \$558 million in 2006, we still hold the dubious distinction of having more bridges in critical need of immediate repair than any other State in the nation – more than 5,900 in total. The bill for repairs to those bridges alone is nearly \$8 billion, and we just do not have the money.

With that said, today we do have a choice. We can continue to put off the day of reckoning, prioritizing the roads and bridges scheduled for repairs, waiting for someone to rescue us or, at the very least, waiting long enough to make this somebody else's problem. We could continue to allow regional differences to cloud the issue of providing a comprehensive funding solution for mass transit, or simply leave the transit systems to fend for themselves, which would almost certainly result in dramatic service cutbacks and fare hikes as

local governments struggle to assume the Commonwealth's obligation to help fix the problem.

Or we can act to put our own house in order, fix the transportation funding mess, and create a sensible long-term solution to this problem.

As many of you will remember, in 2004 we were able to temporarily infuse funding into both our transit and highway programs by taking advantage of some unexpected sources of funds at the Federal level and some here in Harrisburg. But as I said at that time, our momentary good fortune only put off the day when we would have to pay the piper.

To prepare for that day, in 2005 I created the bipartisan Transportation Funding and Reform Commission, whose members included Senators J. Barry Stout and Roger Madigan and Representatives Rick Geist and Keith McCall. For the better part of a year, the commission studied our transportation funding needs, both for mass transit and road and bridge repairs.

The conclusions were sobering. To keep pace with current wear and tear on our vast network of roads and bridges and transit systems while also addressing the backlog of outstanding repair needs, the commission concluded that Pennsylvania should be spending an additional \$965 million each year on roads and bridges and an additional \$760 million per year on transit, for a total of \$1.7 billion in new investment, each and every year.

For funding, the commission focused on the State's oil company franchise tax, a tax paid by gas stations in Pennsylvania. To cover our infrastructure repair needs, the commission recommended a 12.5-cent-per-gallon increase, which would generate \$965 million per year, which we need for roads and bridges. And while this tax is not collected directly from motorists, our prior experience demonstrates that any such hike in the oil company franchise tax would be passed on directly to motorists, who are already reeling from the high cost of gasoline in the post-Katrina marketplace. It would make our gas tax – paid for by our citizens – currently the eighth highest in the nation, the highest in the nation. This would be clearly unacceptable.

That is why in December I authorized PENNDOT to accept expressions of interest from parties with new ideas concerning the operation of one of Pennsylvania's most undervalued assets, the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Specifically, the question was whether and to what extent we could use the turnpike to address our long-term transportation funding needs.

As we all know, the highways operated by the Turnpike Commission span 514 miles, making our turnpike system one of the longest and most heavily traveled toll roads in the nation. Recently two other publicly owned American toll roads have gone down the lease path: one owned by the city of Chicago and the other owned by the State of Indiana. I wanted to see if there was an option for Pennsylvania as well, and I had two specific questions: First, could the turnpike generate enough revenue to meet our funding needs? And second, could we get a deal with terms that we would find acceptable?

The answer to the first question came through loud and clear. PENNDOT received nearly 50 responses from private firms. Without exception, these firms told us that the private sector would offer significant value for the right to lease the turnpike, with estimates averaging between \$10 and \$12 billion and some as high as \$16 billion. At this level the Commonwealth could invest this sum to provide an annual income stream that could

meet our funding target for roads and bridges of \$965 million per year.

But these responses did not provide an answer to the second question; that is, could such a transaction be structured to guard against spiraling toll increases while also ensuring acceptable maintenance and repair standards, worker protections, and other important policy goals? I believe we can make an arrangement that would allow us to maintain control over turnpike operations, but we will not know for sure until we begin to negotiate a transaction.

To be clear, there has been no final decision. Such action requires more investigation, considerable dialogue with you and the general public, passage of enabling legislation, and an aggressive negotiation with any potential future operator. But I am also certain that the plan holds tremendous potential with respect to funding our huge backlog of road and bridge repair needs without a tax increase. For this reason, for this reason I believe the time has come for the Commonwealth to take the next step in this process: to define a specific set of terms and conditions for future management of the turnpike that maximize public protection of this asset and then offer this plan to the market to see if we can get enough value in a long-term lease or some other financial arrangement to make the deal worthwhile for taxpayers and the driving public.

I will soon submit for your consideration a draft piece of legislation that will set forth the means by which the turnpike transaction could be structured and approved. Now, I know that some of you are enthusiastic about this prospect, and I know some of you are skeptical. But I hope all of us will agree on two things: First, given the amount of money at stake, we owe it to ourselves to take the next step; and second, that we should look before we leap. I look forward to working with you as we carefully consider the prospect of leveraging the value of the turnpike.

But even if we decide to pursue a transaction involving the turnpike, such a transaction likely would cover only the \$965 million of annual cost of highway and bridge repairs. It is unlikely to offer a solution that resolves once and for all the estimated \$760 million annual cost necessary to reliably operate mass transit systems throughout Pennsylvania.

In every corner of the State, our mass transit systems simply cannot fund operations through the fare box alone. And let us be clear about the impact of this problem. Mass transit is not simply somebody else's way to get to work in the morning, nor is it a southeastern or southwestern problem. It affects all of us, in every region of Pennsylvania. Without mass transit, many of Pennsylvania's largest companies have no way to get their employees to and from the job, and if that happens, those companies cannot generate the tax revenues that are so vitally important to the Commonwealth. Mass transit matters to all of us.

The Transportation Reform Commission concluded that local transit agencies must step up and continue to implement cost-cutting measures. I support that recommendation. I am pleased to report to you that Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato has proposed measures that will do exactly that. Of course, these measures are not without controversy, but the end result will be appropriate and significant belt tightening by the Port Authority of Allegheny County. We need to apply the same principles to mass transit agencies throughout the Commonwealth.

But the commission pointed out that these reforms alone would not come close to closing the funding gap. With respect to transit funding, the commission proposed two actions to raise revenues: a 0.9-percent increase in the realty transfer tax, a tax paid on the sale of a house, which would yield about \$576 million per year, and a contribution from local governments generating \$184 million per year. But neither option is very appealing, since both add to the tax burden of Pennsylvania citizens. But I believe that we have a credible alternative that does not burden them at all. To the contrary, it requires that those who profit handsomely from the operation of motor vehicles on Pennsylvania roadways must pay their fair share of our transportation funding obligations.

We propose a tax on gasoline, but for the first time, we propose a tax on those who make gasoline rather than those who buy it.

Here is how it works. In theory – here is how it works – in theory, Pennsylvania already has a method for taxing the profits of oil companies, because these companies are subject to the corporate net income tax. But the reality is that only a tiny fraction of the profits earned by the nation's major oil companies in Pennsylvania are subject to this tax. Like many other large corporations, the oil companies have gotten very good at structuring their profit reporting so that our taxes do not apply, even if the money they make comes directly from the pockets of Pennsylvania consumers.

It is nothing more than a sophisticated shell game, and we need to stop this practice now. This budget includes a proposal that excludes oil companies from the CNI (corporate net income) but makes them subject to a new oil company gross profits tax. This new tax is structured on a "combined reporting" basis, under which companies that operate in multiple States must provide us with data on all their profits so we can accurately determine what portion of their profits come from Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania profits would be taxed at a rate of 6.17 percent, or more than 33 percent lower than the current CNI rate of 9.9 percent. But even at this greatly reduced rate, the new tax will generate \$760 million per year as opposed to the approximately \$71 million we collect annually from the seven oil companies that pay the CNI. Let me repeat that. The seven oil companies that pay the CNI pay only \$71 million in taxes here in Pennsylvania; absolutely stunning.

What is more, I believe that the imposition of this tax places the burden squarely on the shoulders of those who enjoy tremendous benefits from the Commonwealth's operation of State highways and bridges. America's oil companies have earned record profits in the past few years, and these profits come from one source: the pockets of the American people. Since 2004, since 2004 the oil companies have reaped \$368 billion in profits nationwide. Last year ExxonMobil's profits alone – \$39 1/2 billion – were 50 percent larger than the entire \$26 billion Pennsylvania budget. And, even more amazingly, ExxonMobil's profits in each of the last 3 years have been the highest ever earned by any corporation in American history.

These numbers are mind-boggling. Just think about it for a second. Think about the implications of Exxon making a \$4.5 million profit each and every hour of each and every day, 365 days a year. More importantly, the numbers remind us that instead of asking our citizens to pay yet again to fund our transportation needs, it is time for the oil companies to finally pay their fair share of the transportation tax burden here in

Pennsylvania; \$4.5 million of profit per hour. The enabling legislation we will propose will grant to our fine Attorney General the power to ensure that these taxes are not passed on to our citizens at the pump.

Now, taken together, these two ideas, now, taken together, these two ideas will also – think about it; if they passed them on to the pump, they would make more profits and have to pay more taxes – taken together, these two ideas – you have got to think – taken together, these two ideas, a turnpike lease and the enactment of a new oil company gross profits tax, have the potential to fund our transportation needs in a way that it does not burden the average Pennsylvanian. For too long, the public debate has been about choosing between funding transit or highways and bridges. It has pitted region against region, 'urbs against 'burbs, Democrats against Republicans. On transportation funding, the time has come to put aside the special interest in favor of the common interest.

The challenges that we face in meeting our transportation funding responsibilities undoubtedly will require us to make difficult decisions in the months ahead. I ask you to weigh the options I have proposed and others that have been discussed, but I want to make it abundantly clear that we must choose one of them. I also want to emphasize to you that the Transportation Reform Commission option would place 100 percent of the burden of new taxes on Pennsylvania citizens, but the option I am proposing places no new tax burden on our citizens, and the option of doing nothing will destroy both our economy and our quality of life.

The budget I have introduced today charts a course for long-term growth, and I believe it positions Pennsylvania to regain its rightful place as a leader among States. I have outlined the challenges that confront us, this year and in the years to come, and I have set forth a detailed plan to address those issues.

The Agenda for Progress that I have set forth today includes many new initiatives that will no doubt – as we can hear today – stir considerable debate and controversy among members of the General Assembly, as well as among opinion leaders throughout the Commonwealth and the general public. I enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to engage on all of these issues, and I pledge to you and the public the complete cooperation of the administration in providing as much information and detail as possible in support of your comprehensive consideration of the budget.

I am confident that regardless of our political differences, we can all carry out our respective duties in the spirit of civility and collegiality that has long been a hallmark of State government. Let us work together and not let our differences pull us apart.

The people of Pennsylvania expect no less from us, because like us, they realize the stakes are enormously high with respect to the opportunities and challenges embodied in this budget.

Proud of our progress, yet mindful of the difficult challenges that lie ahead, our fellow citizens know that Pennsylvania is poised for greatness, if we only have the courage to try. Let us resolve to do exactly that, recognizing that together, we cannot fail.

Thank you.

JOINT SESSION ADJOURNED

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. The Chair asks the members of the House and visitors to please remain seated for

just a moment while the members of the Senate leave the hall of the House.

The business for which the joint session has been assembled having been transacted, the session is now adjourned.

THE SPEAKER (DENNIS M. O'BRIEN) PRESIDING

The SPEAKER. The House will be at ease as the members of the Senate and the Governor exit the hall of the House.

MOTION TO PRINT PROCEEDINGS OF JOINT SESSION

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the majority leader, who moves that the proceedings of today's joint session be transcribed in full and printed in today's Journal.

On the question,
Will the House agree to the motion?
Motion was agreed to.

The SPEAKER. The House will be at ease while the Senators and guests leave the floor.

For the information of the members, the House will be at ease for 2 minutes. We will have remarks from the floor leaders, and then we will have votes on resolutions.

Mr. D. EVANS. Mr. Speaker? We are ready, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER. For what purpose does the gentleman rise?

Mr. D. EVANS. Give a response to the Governor's budget address.

The SPEAKER. If the gentleman will be at ease for just one moment.

All the members will please take their seats. The aisles will be cleared. Members will take their seats. Members will clear the aisles.

STATEMENT BY MR. D. EVANS

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Philadelphia, Representative Evans, for remarks.

Mr. D. EVANS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time for 54 new members who are going through this particular process, and I would like to just take a little time, not a lot of time, to just explain to them, particularly the 54 new members. There are a lot of us who have been around here for a little while, and we have been through a number of speeches with the Governor, various Governors, but I particularly want to talk to the 54 members, because I think that for the first time, I consider this the most important vote you will make. As a good friend of mine likes to say, Bill Keller, constitutionally, it is the vote to make.

So I have listened carefully to the Governor's speech. That is what I did. I listened carefully to his speech. He talked about some worthy mutual goals and creative ways to reach them. There is something for just about everyone to support, Democrats and Republicans alike, whether it be initiatives to bolster the alternative energy and conservation efforts or provide better and more accessible health care, increasing money available for transit and transportation, or further

reduction of property taxes. There is a little bit in there for everyone.

I know that there are some things missing in this budget, programs and proposals supported by the General Assembly: tourism, supermarket development, some health- and education-related spending, a hand up for Pennsylvania working families, and community economic issues.

Included in today's request, for good or bad: a new energy assistance fund; a solid waste disposal fee increase; funding of \$32 million to reopen a prison because of rapid growth in prison population; recommendations from the Governor's Transportation Funding and Reform Commission; elimination or reduction of funding in numerous health research and treatment appropriations in the Department of Health, such as lupus, sickle cell; a 3-percent increase of cost-of-living adjustment in the following social services appropriations: mental health/mental retardation, domestic violence, rape crisis, breast cancer screening, legal services, and homeless assistance; increase in funding for early childhood development; a 3-percent increase in the basic education subsidy; special ed will also receive a 3-percent increase in this proposal; an increase of \$100 million for a total of \$350 million for the accountability block grant funding; elimination of the minority business development program.

I know that we face some serious financial challenges. As lawmakers, we face difficult decisions regarding how to mend a gap, a gaping hole in the Commonwealth's budget. As we deliberate on this budget, the predicament is, do we raise taxes, cut programs, or some combination of both?

The budget problem is not a new one – it was years in the making. Nor does it come as a surprise – we have been writing about this since 2004. We have a fiscal problem because the State budget continues to be plagued by significant cost drivers, such as health care, corrections, retirement, that are growing faster than revenue. The problem is so large and so complex, it is difficult to fix it in one shot. Rather, it has been addressed bit by bit in the past budgets that included very substantial cuts in State government and public programs and increases in State taxes and fees. However, these budgetary measures have not been enough to fully eradicate the gap between spending and revenue. Consequently, Pennsylvania has relied heavily on short-term revenue fixes to close the gap. These short-term fixes included using revenue from special funds, one-time windfalls, and other nonrecurring revenues to balance the budget.

This year – let me repeat – this year we are running out of short-term revenue fixes. The Federal government is phasing out the IGT, which will completely disappear in 2008-2009. The Federal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) reserves were exhausted in 2004-2005. Revenue windfalls, such as Federal fiscal relief and State General Fund surpluses, are random occurrences. Special funds do not have surpluses that can be raided year after year.

Another challenge: The Governor has proposed a large tax increase. Have we taken a look at the Rainy Day Fund? Are there other measures we can take? Before we consider increasing taxes or fees, or reducing them for that matter, we must look carefully at what is in place. To that end, as the new chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, we will make full use of our subcommittees. Following the budget hearings scheduled for the Capitol, the subcommittees will fan out across the State and listen to what others have to say about the budget.

What I am going to do is ask each chairperson of each one of these committees to stand, because this is a first. Never have we done this in the history of the time I have been in the House. The subcommittees focusing on their areas of responsibility: Chairman Jake Wheatley, Education; Kathy Manderino, chairperson of Health and Human Services; Greg Vitali, Fiscal Impact; and Mike McGeehan, Economic Development and Infrastructure. And Bill Keller is the vice chair of the Appropriations Committee. All of these individuals, all of these individuals will travel the State and listen to what the people have to say about this budget.

And I also want to say – and I was waiting for my colleague to come back – that I want to bring my olive branch out to Mario Civera, and I want to say to Mario, I am giving you an olive branch. I told Mario in private— This is the best olive branch I could find, Keith. He is getting on my olive branch. I said it is the best olive branch I could find. Keith looked at my olive branch. It is the best olive branch I could find. To my good friend, Mario Civera, whom I sat with yesterday, whom I sat with yesterday, and I said to Mario, Mario, we need you. We are going to work together. What we do on the Democratic side will be the same thing on the Republican side, so here is my olive branch.

I have made no commitments, no promises, except to say that everything will be given full consideration. We will be thorough, examine every line item and every alternative. We will welcome input and participation of standing committees. What I put out to every standing committee is, when we do the appropriation, I will invite the standing committee chairman and the other people to the appropriations hearing to be involved in that process. Before we ask this body to consider and the taxpayers to support tax increases, we need to know, have we left no stone unturned in finding a better way to pay for the programs in place as well as those newly proposed, such as the Energy Independence Fund and the Prescription for Pennsylvania.

A number of challenges face the Commonwealth. Our State agencies must maximize their performance and leverage their available resources to achieve maximum value while managing risk, examining State efforts to increase the focus on performance and experience in response to recent fiscal stress they have incurred. I raise this issue because all of us should be open and recognize that everybody is going to be needed in addressing these challenges. This week I will introduce legislation which will improve information and data used to determine State spending.

The first piece I will introduce is what you call the Pennsylvania Government Performance and Accountability Act, which will establish a system for State agencies to set goals for program performance and measure results of agency operation, including a 5-year strategic plan and annual performance audit of every State agency.

Secondly, I will introduce a piece of legislation for a nine-member performance evaluation committee to ensure that all State programs undergo regular evaluation.

Number three, I will introduce and establish a nine-member independent fiscal review board that will prepare regular advisory General Fund estimates, monitor the Commonwealth and local revenue systems, and act as an advisor to the Governor, to the General Assembly, and the public concerning revenue forecasts and economic conditions.

I will introduce those pieces of legislation so we simultaneously, while we are discussing the budget, we are attempting to put pieces in place that from a long-term standpoint change how we do business.

And I first introduced this legislation 13 years ago under the Casey administration, and the reason I tell you that is because that is just when I became chairman of the Appropriations Committee. And when I became chairman of the Appropriations Committee, at that time Governor Casey had introduced a tax increase in the ballpark of \$1.2, \$1.3 billion. After it went through this process on both sides of the aisle, it went up to \$3 billion. The Ridge administration embraced the ideas of the IMPACCT (Improve Management Performance and Cost Control Task Force) Commission, the ideas that I just told you about. Now, I will tell you something. Several States have these measures in place. Maryland has something called a Spending Affordability Committee, which is something that we should have here. If we had adopted the ideas then, we might have avoided the current fiscal crisis. The House has passed these bills on more than one occasion. It is my hope that we can convince the Senate that it is critical for anticipating budget needs for future years. It is important to deliver a clear understanding of what the Commonwealth gets in the way of results from each dollar and how it is expended.

As I said when I began, I have listened carefully to the Governor, and I have listened. Now, I will be carefully listening to everyone else. I am encouraging all of us to keep our ears open, to keep our eyes open, and to keep our minds open so that all of us can participate in this process. I make this commitment to all of you today as the chairman of this committee. You all will have a chance to participate, you all will be involved in this process, but what I am asking for is the willingness to give us a chance to go through this process. The Governor has made his proposal, and that is only his proposal. It is up to us in this House to come to some kind of conclusion, and at the end of the day, remember that we are representing the 12 million people. We can take off our Democratic hat and our Republican hat and figure out a way how we are going to address these challenges. And while we try to figure out a way of how we are going to address these challenges, we need to put things in place that change the way we do the budget process for the future.

So I have mentioned three, four ideas there to you. We are open for more ideas from this perspective. I have indicated that to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee on that side of the aisle. I have indicated to him that I want to work together. I have told the members on the Appropriations Committee, it is important for us to work together to do the people's business.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

Before the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware County, in the event that the gentleman is intending to reciprocate with a gift for the majority Appropriations chair, I will ask that the gift be reviewed by the Speaker so that we can refer it to the Rules Committee with Representatives Steil and Shapiro, so we can put an appropriate value or consideration to that.

STATEMENT BY MR. CIVERA

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware County, Representative Civera, for remarks.

Mr. CIVERA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to accept my gift from Representative Evans.

Mr. Speaker, this is a big job that I have been charged with, and it is a big budget that we are looking at. Yesterday I had the good opportunity to speak with Representative Evans to make it clear that we want to work together in a bipartisan way for a budget that has much demands, much tax increases, much new programs as we go further into the '07-'08 year.

But let me be cautious of what we are faced with. We are faced with many new programs that sound desirable, sound admirable, programs that when you go back to your local districts, you have to justify why you could vote for and why you could vote in favor, but those programs have a price to pay. It is no different than when you have a pocketbook at home and you are limited to the amount of dollars that you could spend, and then you go out into the various areas and you want to spend more and you want to buy a new car and you want to buy a new home and you want to buy more clothes for your children, but you are limited to what you can go to. Unfortunately, when you are a family, there are only two alternatives: either get another job or your wife goes out to work or your children start at a young age to work, to try to make these things balance. When you are in government, for some reason it comes a little bit different, that when you are short the money, you look to the taxpayer and you ask for the vote to increase the taxes.

In today's budget, as we listened to the Governor very carefully, some of those programs were admirable programs, when you look at the health-care situation and what was proposed there and what it is going to cost to get us there and what the impact on the small business community has on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We have looked at a deficit of \$2 billion, and we have heard the situation where it was passed from the Federal government to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and we have looked at an increase in the sales tax to promote property tax refund. These are the programs that the Appropriations Committees have to look at and seriously look at and how those moneys are going to be divided. Now, if it was an understanding where the true 1 percent was going to go clearly for property tax reduction, it might not be as controversial, but that is not the understanding today. The understanding is, is that some of that money is going to be used to take care of what our debt service is presently, and that is where the controversy comes in.

Budgets are policy documents driven by numbers. That is what budgets are, and each and every one, more so than any time in this legislature that I have been here for 27 years and what Representative Evans said this morning and what we have said privately in our caucuses, the individual members of this General Assembly have to be involved. We need your expertise. This is not an easy year. This is the year that the members of the General Assembly and the talent they bring to this chamber have to come forward. If not, we are just kidding ourselves. If not, we will be here till December, and the constituency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will then again look at the General Assembly and say, why?

We are here to take care of the people's business. We are here to do what we are supposed to be doing, but every new program that is adopted comes a price to pay, and it comes to the situation if that is the direction that we want to go into. We listen about the highways and the bridges and what it takes

to do that, a new idea, a new frontier, and so the committees, and I applaud Representative Evans with the subcommittees that are going to be on the road. I think that is most admirable, and I think that is what it needs to take.

We need to hear from every corner of this Commonwealth what the people of Pennsylvania expect from this General Assembly. This is a time to put all our differences aside. This is a time for us to be heard. This is a time for us to be accountable, because they are difficult times. If they were easy times, our speeches would be short, but they are not; unfortunately, they are not.

And so, as the days go on, we now have to make some effort, and as a new leadership team, both in the House, both in the Senate, when the four caucuses join together— But let me just say something to both Republicans and Democrats. Let us not be shy here. If you do not know the answer, ask the question. This has to be an open policy, and I look to the majority chairman of the Appropriations Committee. We want to be at that table when this budget is negotiated. And I thank you for reaching out to us.

Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

STATEMENT BY MINORITY LEADER

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the Republican leader, Representative Smith, for remarks.

Mr. S. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was just telling the gentleman from Greene County, just maybe a minute or two, but I realize for him to talk for a minute, that is only a couple words. I can throw a bunch of words in there, since mine are shorter.

Real quickly, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that the budget that the Governor has presented us with is a little bit stunning, to use the Governor's word of the day. The key thing that I observed, Mr. Speaker, is that budgets are about setting priorities. There are many things that he has presented in this budget that are worthy goals that I think we would like to work with this administration towards achieving. The idea that Pennsylvanians should have access to affordable health care, the idea that it is probably good for our Commonwealth's economy and maybe for our own security, in some minor way, to have alternative sources of energy, by example, are good goals that we would like to work with this administration towards achieving.

The challenge, as I see it, is that we do it without increasing taxes, we do it without these enormous borrowings that are a part of what the Governor has proposed. So as we try to work together, as we try to move towards the goal, I think it is important that we do the things we do really well before we try to do additional things, none of which are maybe being handled well, and the challenge really before us, as I said, was to try to do these things living within our means, to do them without increasing taxes and without the enormous increases in borrowing so that we can control the spending of this Commonwealth, and I think that is really what the taxpayers are looking for us to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

STATEMENT BY MAJORITY LEADER

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the majority leader, Representative DeWeese, for remarks.

Mr. DeWEESE. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Back in the mideighties, with the help of a friend who builds log cabins, on a legal pad I designed a 1400-foot, square foot, log cabin. It essentially was a great room and a sleeping loft, but underneath it I was quite ambitious and I wanted to put a two-car garage in. Well, the blueprints came back, and then the estimates came back, and I realized, back in the mideighties, that it was going to be a strenuous reach. I had been, as a young man, somewhat profligate in my travel, and I did not have much money in the bank, and I said to the friend of mine, I said, why do we not, why do we not take another look at this blueprint. And so the two-car garage became a one-car garage, and a few thousand dollars were saved, and the log cabin was constructed.

This is a blueprint, as every budget is, and the outlines and delineations of Governor Rendell's proposal will be scrutinized aggressively by reanimated Appropriations Committees. Mr. Evans and Mr. Civera are friends of all of us here. They are recipients of mutual respect, and the finest traditions of our chamber will inure to their benefit. The fact that the Appropriations Committee, with some hard chargers from the vice chairman down through the committee chair ranks, is going to take the committee on the road, Republicans and Democrats will get a chance to gather input from around the State. Because of the wide number of new people involved in this process, over 50 new members, we have some freshmen on the Appropriations Committee, which is an exciting and new dynamic. So I am looking forward to a blueprint that will come back refined and burnished and enhanced.

I laud the Governor and his Cabinet and his executive secretariat and budget director Masch for a laudable commencement. As my friend from Jefferson County used the word "stunning," I will also use the word "stunning." The developments that we have had fiscally in the Commonwealth over the past few years make me yearn, and I cannot help but – I want to close my remarks, especially for some of my good friends, the Republican freshmen that I have not gotten to meet, but I am sure somehow, some way, someday we will develop good fraternities and good feelings for each other – but this makes me long, and I am sure deep down you do, too, I know, I know that you long for the days of Bill Clinton when we had, when we had Governor Ridge at the helm and Governor Ridge was the happy beneficiary of three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and one time almost a nine hundred million dollar surplus. I would not be a floor leader on one side of the aisle if I did not just give him a little tweak, and that was even before, that was even before 9/11, when things started to change and multimillionaires in the United States started to get big tax breaks in Washington, DC.

So as we leave the room today, I think we should have at least as some contextual background the fact that over 700 million fewer dollars will be cascading into our Commonwealth from Washington, DC. That is a factor, and that is a fiscal factor that we will have in our thought process as we go forward and try to take a two-car garage and make it into a one-car garage.

I am with you, Sam, on trying to reduce some of the spending, and I am very happy to have Mario Civera as a part of this new dynamic.

Thank you very much.
The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

CALENDAR

RESOLUTIONS PURSUANT TO RULE 35

RESOLUTIONS PASSED OVER

The SPEAKER. Turning to today's calendar, resolutions pursuant to rule 35. Without objection, all the resolutions on page 1 will go over for the day. The Chair hears no objection.

* * *

Mr. WHEATLEY called up **HR 40, PN 142**, entitled:

A Resolution recognizing February 7, 2007, as "National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day" in Pennsylvania.

On the question,
Will the House adopt the resolution?

The following roll call was recorded:

YEAS—203

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Adolph | Gabig | Markosek | Rohrer |
| Argall | Galloway | Marshall | Ross |
| Baker | Geist | Marsico | Rubley |
| Barrar | George | McCall | Sabatina |
| Bastian | Gerber | McGeehan | Sainato |
| Bear | Gergely | McI. Smith | Samuelson |
| Belfanti | Gibbons | McIlhattan | Santoni |
| Benninghoff | Gillespie | Melio | Saylor |
| Bennington | Gingrich | Mensch | Scavello |
| Beyer | Godshall | Metcalfe | Schroder |
| Biancucci | Goodman | Micozzie | Seip |
| Bishop | Grell | Millard | Shapiro |
| Blackwell | Grucela | Miller | Shimkus |
| Boback | Haluska | Milne | Siptroth |
| Boyd | Hanna | Moul | Smith, K. |
| Brennan | Harhai | Moyer | Smith, M. |
| Brooks | Harhart | Mundy | Smith, S. |
| Buxton | Harkins | Murt | Solobay |
| Caltagirone | Harper | Mustio | Sonney |
| Cappelli | Harris | Myers | Staback |
| Carroll | Helm | Nailor | Stairs |
| Casorio | Hennessey | Nickol | Steil |
| Causer | Hershey | O'Brien, M. | Stern |
| Civera | Hess | O'Neill | Stevenson |
| Clymer | Hickernell | Oliver | Sturla |
| Cohen | Hornaman | Pallone | Surra |
| Conklin | Hutchinson | Parker | Swanger |
| Costa | James | Pashinski | Tangretti |
| Cox | Josephs | Payne | Taylor, J. |
| Creighton | Kauffman | Payton | Taylor, R. |
| Cruz | Keller, M. | Peifer | Thomas |
| Curry | Keller, W. | Perry | True |
| Cutler | Kenney | Perzel | Turzai |
| Daley | Kessler | Petrarca | Vereb |
| Dally | Killion | Petri | Vitali |
| DeLuca | King | Petrone | Vulakovich |
| Denlinger | Kirkland | Phillips | Wagner |
| DePasquale | Kortz | Pickett | Walko |
| Dermody | Kotik | Preston | Wansacz |
| DeWeese | Kula | Pyle | Waters |
| DiGirolamo | Leach | Quigley | Watson |
| Donatucci | Lentz | Quinn | Wheatley |
| Eachus | Levdansky | Ramaley | White |

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Ellis | Longiotti | Rapp | Williams |
| Evans, D. | Mackereth | Raymond | Wojnaroski |
| Evans, J. | Maher | Readshaw | Yewcic |
| Everett | Mahoney | Reed | Youngblood |
| Fabrizio | Major | Reichley | Yudichak |
| Fairchild | Manderino | Roae | |
| Fleck | Mann | Rock | O'Brien, D., |
| Frankel | Mantz | Roebuck | Speaker |
| Freeman | | | |

NAYS—0

NOT VOTING—0

EXCUSED—0

The majority having voted in the affirmative, the question was determined in the affirmative and the resolution was adopted.

* * *

RESOLUTIONS PASSED OVER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, HR 45 is over for today; HR 46 is over for today.

* * *

Mr. WILLIAMS called up **HR 47, PN 219**, entitled:

A Resolution recognizing February 1, 2007, as "National Freedom Day" in Pennsylvania.

On the question,
Will the House adopt the resolution?

The following roll call was recorded:

YEAS—203

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| Adolph | Gabig | Markosek | Rohrer |
| Argall | Galloway | Marshall | Ross |
| Baker | Geist | Marsico | Rubley |
| Barrar | George | McCall | Sabatina |
| Bastian | Gerber | McGeehan | Sainato |
| Bear | Gergely | McI. Smith | Samuelson |
| Belfanti | Gibbons | McIlhattan | Santoni |
| Benninghoff | Gillespie | Melio | Saylor |
| Bennington | Gingrich | Mensch | Scavello |
| Beyer | Godshall | Metcalfe | Schroder |
| Biancucci | Goodman | Micozzie | Seip |
| Bishop | Grell | Millard | Shapiro |
| Blackwell | Grucela | Miller | Shimkus |
| Boback | Haluska | Milne | Siptroth |
| Boyd | Hanna | Moul | Smith, K. |
| Brennan | Harhai | Moyer | Smith, M. |
| Brooks | Harhart | Mundy | Smith, S. |
| Buxton | Harkins | Murt | Solobay |
| Caltagirone | Harper | Mustio | Sonney |
| Cappelli | Harris | Myers | Staback |
| Carroll | Helm | Nailor | Stairs |
| Casorio | Hennessey | Nickol | Steil |
| Causer | Hershey | O'Brien, M. | Stern |
| Civera | Hess | O'Neill | Stevenson |
| Clymer | Hickernell | Oliver | Sturla |
| Cohen | Hornaman | Pallone | Surra |
| Conklin | Hutchinson | Parker | Swanger |
| Costa | James | Pashinski | Tangretti |

| | | | |
|------------|------------|----------|--------------|
| Cox | Josephs | Payne | Taylor, J. |
| Creighton | Kauffman | Payton | Taylor, R. |
| Cruz | Keller, M. | Peifer | Thomas |
| Curry | Keller, W. | Perry | True |
| Cutler | Kenney | Perzel | Turzai |
| Daley | Kessler | Petrarca | Vereb |
| Dally | Killion | Petri | Vitali |
| DeLuca | King | Petrone | Vulakovich |
| Denlinger | Kirkland | Phillips | Wagner |
| DePasquale | Kortz | Pickett | Walko |
| Dermody | Kotik | Preston | Wansacz |
| DeWeese | Kula | Pyle | Waters |
| DiGirolamo | Leach | Quigley | Watson |
| Donatucci | Lentz | Quinn | Wheatley |
| Eachus | Levdansky | Ramaley | White |
| Ellis | Longietti | Rapp | Williams |
| Evans, D. | Mackereth | Raymond | Wojnaroski |
| Evans, J. | Maher | Readshaw | Yewcic |
| Everett | Mahoney | Reed | Youngblood |
| Fabrizio | Major | Reichley | Yudichak |
| Fairchild | Manderino | Roae | |
| Fleck | Mann | Rock | O'Brien, D., |
| Frankel | Mantz | Roebuck | Speaker |
| Freeman | | | |

NAYS-0

NOT VOTING-0

EXCUSED-0

The majority having voted in the affirmative, the question was determined in the affirmative and the resolution was adopted.

* * *

RESOLUTIONS PASSED OVER

The SPEAKER. HR 48 is over for today. HR 52 is over for today.

* * *

Mr. SHAPIRO called up **HR 54, PN 225**, entitled:

A Resolution designating the week of February 11 through 17, 2007, as "Long QT Syndrome Awareness Week" in Pennsylvania.

On the question,
Will the House adopt the resolution?

The following roll call was recorded:

YEAS-203

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Adolph | Gabig | Markosek | Rohrer |
| Argall | Galloway | Marshall | Ross |
| Baker | Geist | Marsico | Rubley |
| Barrar | George | McCall | Sabatina |
| Bastian | Gerber | McGeehan | Sainato |
| Bear | Gergely | McI. Smith | Samuelson |
| Belfanti | Gibbons | McIlhattan | Santoni |
| Benninghoff | Gillespie | Melio | Saylor |
| Bennington | Gingrich | Mensch | Scavello |
| Beyer | Godshall | Metcalfe | Schroder |
| Biancucci | Goodman | Micozzie | Seip |
| Bishop | Grell | Millard | Shapiro |
| Blackwell | Grucela | Miller | Shimkus |

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Boback | Haluska | Milne | Siptroth |
| Boyd | Hanna | Moul | Smith, K. |
| Brennan | Harhai | Moyer | Smith, M. |
| Brooks | Harhart | Mundy | Smith, S. |
| Buxton | Harkins | Murt | Solobay |
| Caltagirone | Harper | Mustio | Sonney |
| Cappelli | Harris | Myers | Staback |
| Carroll | Helm | Nailor | Stairs |
| Casorio | Hennessey | Nickol | Steil |
| Causer | Hershey | O'Brien, M. | Stern |
| Civera | Hess | O'Neill | Stevenson |
| Clymer | Hickernell | Oliver | Sturla |
| Cohen | Hornaman | Pallone | Surra |
| Conklin | Hutchinson | Parker | Swanger |
| Costa | James | Pashinski | Tangretti |
| Cox | Josephs | Payne | Taylor, J. |
| Creighton | Kauffman | Payton | Taylor, R. |
| Cruz | Keller, M. | Peifer | Thomas |
| Curry | Keller, W. | Perry | True |
| Cutler | Kenney | Perzel | Turzai |
| Daley | Kessler | Petrarca | Vereb |
| Dally | Killion | Petri | Vitali |
| DeLuca | King | Petrone | Vulakovich |
| Denlinger | Kirkland | Phillips | Wagner |
| DePasquale | Kortz | Pickett | Walko |
| Dermody | Kotik | Preston | Wansacz |
| DeWeese | Kula | Pyle | Waters |
| DiGirolamo | Leach | Quigley | Watson |
| Donatucci | Lentz | Quinn | Wheatley |
| Eachus | Levdansky | Ramaley | White |
| Ellis | Longietti | Rapp | Williams |
| Evans, D. | Mackereth | Raymond | Wojnaroski |
| Evans, J. | Maher | Readshaw | Yewcic |
| Everett | Mahoney | Reed | Youngblood |
| Fabrizio | Major | Reichley | Yudichak |
| Fairchild | Manderino | Roae | |
| Fleck | Mann | Rock | O'Brien, D., |
| Frankel | Mantz | Roebuck | Speaker |
| Freeman | | | |

NAYS-0

NOT VOTING-0

EXCUSED-0

The majority having voted in the affirmative, the question was determined in the affirmative and the resolution was adopted.

SENATE MESSAGE

RECESS RESOLUTION
FOR CONCURRENCE

The clerk of the Senate, being introduced, presented the following extract from the Journal of the Senate, which was read as follows:

In the Senate,
February 5, 2007

RESOLVED, (the House of Representatives concurring), Pursuant to Article II, Section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, that when the Senate recesses this week, it reconvene on Monday, February 12, 2007, unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, Pursuant to Article II, Section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, that when the House of Representatives recesses this

week, it reconvene on Monday, February 12, 2007, unless sooner recalled by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ordered, That the clerk present the same to the House of Representatives for its concurrence.

On the question,
Will the House concur in the resolution of the Senate?
Resolution was concurred in.
Ordered, That the clerk inform the Senate accordingly.

HOUSE BILLS INTRODUCED AND REFERRED

No. 243 By Representatives PICKETT, BAKER, MAJOR, R. STEVENSON, CAPPELLI, BIANCUCCI, CALTAGIRONE, CARROLL, CAUSER, CLYMER, EVERETT, FLECK, GEORGE, GINGRICH, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, HESS, M. KELLER, KILLION, McILHATTAN, MILLARD, R. MILLER, PETRONE, PHILLIPS, RAPP, SCAVELLO, SOLOBAY, SONNEY, STABACK, STERN, TRUE, WATSON, YOUNGBLOOD, RUBLEY and BOYD

An Act providing for determination of a rural area in certain laws, programs and studies.

Referred to Committee on LOCAL GOVERNMENT, February 6, 2007.

No. 244 By Representatives HALUSKA, ARGALL, BASTIAN, BELFANTI, BENNINGHOFF, BEYER, BOYD, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, CLYMER, CREIGHTON, CURRY, DeLUCA, FABRIZIO, FAIRCHILD, GEORGE, GINGRICH, GODSHALL, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HARHAI, HARPER, HERSHEY, HESS, HUTCHINSON, JAMES, W. KELLER, RAPP, READSHAW, REICHLEY, ROHRER, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SOLOBAY, KOTIK, KULA, LEVDANSKY, MARKOSEK, McGEEHAN, McILHATTAN, O'NEILL, PALLONE, PAYNE, PETRONE, PHILLIPS, STABACK, R. STEVENSON, SURRA, SWANGER, TRUE, WANSACZ, WOJNAROSKI, YOUNGBLOOD, HANNA and MURT

An Act amending the act of June 13, 1907 (P.L.560, No.373), entitled "An act designating the official flag of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and describing the same; providing for the carrying of such flag by the regiments of the National Guard of Pennsylvania; authorizing the Secretary of the Commonwealth to provide, and have deposited in the office of Secretary of the Commonwealth, a model of said flag, and making an appropriation therefor," further providing for specifications for the official flag of the Commonwealth and for the duties of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Referred to Committee on STATE GOVERNMENT, February 6, 2007.

No. 245 By Representatives GODSHALL, S. H. SMITH, BAKER, BOYD, CAPPELLI, CARROLL, CASORIO, CAUSER, CLYMER, COX, CUTLER, DALEY, DeLUCA, DERMODY, FABRIZIO, FAIRCHILD, FLECK, FRANKEL, GALLOWAY, GEIST, GIBBONS, GOODMAN, GRELL, GRUCELA, HALUSKA, HARHAI, HARRIS, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, HESS, HORNAMAN, KAUFFMAN, M. KELLER, KULA, MACKERETH,

MARSHALL, MARSICO, McILHATTAN, MELIO, MILLARD, R. MILLER, MOUL, MOYER, NAILOR and D. O'BRIEN

An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for personal injuries sustained by perpetrators of criminal conduct.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 246 By Representatives GODSHALL, CALTAGIRONE, FRANKEL, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, MOYER, SCAVELLO and SIPTROTH

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for restraint systems.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 247 By Representatives GODSHALL, CALTAGIRONE, GALLOWAY, MOYER and SIPTROTH

An Act establishing a pilot program to provide for automated enforcement of meeting or overtaking school bus requirements in a selected school district.

Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION, February 6, 2007.

No. 248 By Representatives GODSHALL, CLYMER, CREIGHTON, CURRY, DALEY, FLECK, GILLESPIE, HARHAI, HARPER, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, HESS, JAMES, LEACH, MACKERETH, MELIO, MENSCH, R. MILLER, MOYER, NAILOR, NICKOL, PETRI, PYLE, REICHLEY, RUBLEY, SAINATO, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH, SWANGER and WATSON

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, providing for State reimbursement for mobile classroom facilities; and making editorial changes.

Referred to Committee on EDUCATION, February 6, 2007.

No. 249 By Representatives GODSHALL, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, COX, CREIGHTON, EVERETT, HESS, HUTCHINSON, SONNEY, YOUNGBLOOD and HANNA

An Act amending Title 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for the term of office of commissioners.

Referred to Committee on GAME AND FISHERIES, February 6, 2007.

No. 250 By Representatives GODSHALL, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, COX, CREIGHTON, EVERETT, HESS, SONNEY, YOUNGBLOOD and HANNA

An Act amending Title 30 (Fish) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for the term of office of the commissioners.

Referred to Committee on GAME AND FISHERIES, February 6, 2007.

No. 251 By Representatives GODSHALL, BAKER, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, COX, DALEY, GERGELY, GOODMAN, HALUSKA, HARHART, HARRIS, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, HESS, HUTCHINSON, KILLION, MOYER, PHILLIPS, REICHLEY, STABACK, STERN, YOUNGBLOOD, HANNA, SIPTROTH and MENSCH

An Act amending Title 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, prohibiting hunting in and around game feeders and game feeding areas.

Referred to Committee on GAME AND FISHERIES, February 6, 2007.

No. 252 By Representatives GODSHALL, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, COX, EVERETT, GEIST, GEORGE, ROHRER, SAINATO and SONNEY

An Act amending Title 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for certain activities by persons holding disabled person permits.

Referred to Committee on GAME AND FISHERIES, February 6, 2007.

No. 253 By Representatives GODSHALL, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, GEIST, SAINATO, SONNEY, SURRA and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending Title 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for the limited hunting of woodchucks on Sundays.

Referred to Committee on GAME AND FISHERIES, February 6, 2007.

No. 254 By Representatives GODSHALL, BELFANTI, CAPPELLI, CARROLL, COHEN, DALEY, DeLUCA, GERGELY, GOODMAN, M. KELLER, MOYER, NAILOR, STURLA, SURRA and WALKO

An Act providing for licensure of electricians; establishing the State Board of Licensed Electricians; providing for powers and duties of the board; establishing fees, fines and civil penalties; and making an appropriation.

Referred to Committee on PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE, February 6, 2007.

No. 255 By Representatives GODSHALL, BARRAR, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, DERMODY, EVERETT, FRANKEL, GEORGE, GOODMAN, HARPER, HENNESSEY, JAMES, KILLION, KOTIK, MARSICO, MUSTIO, PYLE, SCHRODER, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, WATSON and J. WHITE

An Act amending the act of April 12, 1951 (P.L.90, No.21), known as the Liquor Code, providing for direct shipment of wine to certain consumers.

Referred to Committee on LIQUOR CONTROL, February 6, 2007.

No. 256 By Representatives GODSHALL, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, COSTA, DERMODY, FRANKEL, GRUCELA, HENNESSEY, KILLION, KOTIK,

MARKOSEK, MUSTIO, PETRONE, RAPP, SAINATO, SANTONI, SIPTROTH, WALKO, YOUNGBLOOD and HANNA

An Act amending the act of December 19, 1988 (P.L.1262, No.156), known as the Local Option Small Games of Chance Act, regulating the lawful conduct of bingo; prescribing penalties; making a related repeal; and making editorial changes.

Referred to Committee on GAMING OVERSIGHT, February 6, 2007.

No. 257 By Representatives GODSHALL, ARGALL, BASTIAN, BENNINGHOFF, BLACKWELL, BOYD, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, CARROLL, COHEN, COSTA, COX, DALEY, DALLY, DeLUCA, DePASQUALE, FABRIZIO, FRANKEL, GEORGE, GERGELY, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, HARHART, HARPER, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, HESS, JAMES, M. KELLER, W. KELLER, KOTIK, LEACH, MANN, MARSICO, MELIO, MICOZZIE, MILLARD, R. MILLER, MOUL, MOYER, MUNDY, MURT, NAILOR, NICKOL, O'NEILL, PETRARCA, PETRI, PHILLIPS, PYLE, REICHLEY, ROAE, ROEBUCK, ROHRER, ROSS, RUBLEY, SAMUELSON, SANTONI, SCAVELLO, SCHRODER, SHIMKUS, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, SONNEY, STERN, STURLA, SURRA, SWANGER, TRUE, VEREB, WALKO, WATSON, WHEATLEY, J. WHITE and MENSCH

An Act providing for unannounced inspections of certain facilities and persons that provide child day care; and conferring powers and duties on the Department of Public Welfare.

Referred to Committee on CHILDREN AND YOUTH, February 6, 2007.

No. 258 By Representatives GODSHALL, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, COSTA, DALEY, DeLUCA, DERMODY, FRANKEL, FREEMAN, HENNESSEY, JAMES, KILLION, MANDERINO, McGEEHAN, MUSTIO, PETRONE, PICKETT, SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH, STERN, WALKO, YOUNGBLOOD, PEIFER and HANNA

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, changing provisions relating to school terms and sessions.

Referred to Committee on EDUCATION, February 6, 2007.

No. 259 By Representatives D. EVANS, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, CURRY, DePASQUALE, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY, HARHAI, HARPER, JAMES, JOSEPHS, W. KELLER, KING, LEACH, MARSHALL, PARKER, PASHINSKI, SHAPIRO, SOLOBAY, STURLA, THOMAS, WANSACZ, WHEATLEY and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act establishing the Pennsylvania Performance Evaluation Commission and providing for its powers and duties.

Referred to Committee on APPROPRIATIONS, February 6, 2007.

No. 260 By Representatives D. EVANS, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, CURRY, DePASQUALE, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY, HARHAI, HARPER, JAMES, JOSEPHS,

W. KELLER, KING, LEACH, MARSHALL, PARKER, PASHINSKI, SHAPIRO, SOLOBAY, STURLA, THOMAS, WANSACZ, WHEATLEY and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act requiring executive agencies to prepare and submit strategic plans, performance plans and performance reports; and imposing additional powers and duties on the Office of the Budget.

Referred to Committee on APPROPRIATIONS, February 6, 2007.

No. 261 By Representatives D. EVANS, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, CURRY, DePASQUALE, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY, HARHAI, HARPER, JAMES, JOSEPHS, W. KELLER, KING, LEACH, MARSHALL, PARKER, PASHINSKI, SHAPIRO, SOLOBAY, STURLA, THOMAS, WANSACZ, WHEATLEY and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175), known as The Administrative Code of 1929, further providing, in budget procedures, for revenue estimates, for transmission of budget information to legislature, for budget implementation data and for electronic access to information; and establishing the Independent Fiscal Review Board.

Referred to Committee on APPROPRIATIONS, February 6, 2007.

No. 262 By Representatives TRUE, CALTAGIRONE, MUNDY, MAJOR, FRANKEL, BARRAR, BELFANTI, BEYER, BOYD, CAPPELLI, CLYMER, COX, CREIGHTON, CURRY, DeLUCA, DePASQUALE, EVERETT, FABRIZIO, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY, GEIST, GEORGE, GIBBONS, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRELL, GRUCELA, HARHART, HARPER, HARRIS, HENNESSEY, HESS, HICKERNELL, JOSEPHS, M. KELLER, KENNEY, KILLION, LEACH, MACKERETH, MANN, MARSICO, MILLARD, R. MILLER, MURT, NAILOR, M. O'BRIEN, PETRARCA, PETRI, PHILLIPS, PICKETT, QUIGLEY, RAPP, ROSS, RUBLEY, SAINATO, SAMUELSON, SANTONI, SCAVELLO, SCHRODER, SIPTROTH, SONNEY, STERN, STURLA, TANGRETTI, WATSON, J. WHITE, YOUNGBLOOD, YUDICHAK, JAMES, PEIFER and MENSCH

An Act amending Title 23 (Domestic Relations) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing, in child protective services, for definitions, for release of information in confidential reports, for investigating performance of county agency, for reports to the Governor and General Assembly, for services for prevention, investigation and treatment of child abuse and for reports to Department of Public Welfare and coroner.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 263 By Representatives TRUE, CALTAGIRONE, BOYD, MUNDY, HICKERNELL, BEYER, CLYMER, COX, CUTLER, DeLUCA, FRANKEL, FREEMAN, GEIST, GINGRICH, HARPER, HENNESSEY, JOSEPHS, KILLION, LEACH, MACKERETH, MAJOR, MANN, MARKOSEK, MARSICO, MELIO, MURT, NAILOR, O'NEILL, PETRONE, PHILLIPS, PICKETT, SCAVELLO, SCHRODER, SIPTROTH, STABACK, STERN, WALKO, WATSON and JAMES

An Act amending Title 23 (Domestic Relations) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for education and training.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 264 By Representatives TRUE, CALTAGIRONE, HICKERNELL, DePASQUALE, BAKER, BARRAR, BASTIAN, BELFANTI, BEYER, BOYD, CAPPELLI, CAUSER, COX, CREIGHTON, CUTLER, DALLY, DeLUCA, FABRIZIO, FAIRCHILD, FREEMAN, GEIST, GILLESPIE, GINGRICH, GODSHALL, GOODMAN, GRELL, GRUCELA, HARHART, HARPER, HARRIS, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, HESS, M. KELLER, KILLION, LEACH, MACKERETH, MAJOR, MANN, MARSICO, McILHATTAN, MILLARD, R. MILLER, MUNDY, MURT, NAILOR, M. O'BRIEN, O'NEILL, PETRARCA, PHILLIPS, PICKETT, RAPP, REICHLEY, ROAE, SANTONI, SCAVELLO, SCHRODER, SIPTROTH, M. SMITH, SONNEY, STABACK, STERN, SWANGER, WALKO, WATSON, WOJNAROSKI, YOUNGBLOOD, YUDICHAK, PEIFER and MENSCH

An Act amending Titles 18 (Crimes and Offenses) and 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for the offense of child abuse resulting in death; and further providing for sentences for offenses against infant persons.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 265 By Representatives GODSHALL, CALTAGIRONE and MOYER

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for special hauling permits as to weight and size and for conditions of permits and security for damages.

Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION, February 6, 2007.

No. 266 By Representatives GODSHALL, BIANCUCCI, BOYD, CALTAGIRONE, CLYMER, CREIGHTON, GALLOWAY, GILLESPIE, GRUCELA, HARPER, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, KILLION, MACKERETH, R. MILLER, MOYER, MUSTIO, O'NEILL, REICHLEY, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SCHRODER, SOLOBAY, SWANGER and WATSON

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, further providing for payments on account of instruction.

Referred to Committee on EDUCATION, February 6, 2007.

No. 267 By Representatives GODSHALL, BARRAR, BELFANTI, BEYER, BOYD, CAPPELLI, CLYMER, GINGRICH, HENNESSEY, HESS, KILLION, MOYER, O'NEILL, PETRI, PRESTON, ROSS, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO and WATSON

An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, adding and changing definitions; further providing for the unified judicial system; establishing the appellate division of Medical Professional Liability Court; further providing for transfers between intermediate appellate courts, for lien of judgments for money, for direct appeals to the Supreme Court from courts of common pleas, for allowance of appeals

from intermediate appellate courts, for appeals to Superior Court from courts of common pleas, for original jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Court and for appeals to the Commonwealth Court from courts of common pleas; providing for the jurisdiction of the appellate division of Medical Professional Liability Court and for the organization and jurisdiction of the Medical Professional Liability Court; establishing the Medical Professional Liability Court Qualifications Commission and prescribing its powers and duties; further providing for selection of judicial officers, for vacancies in judicial offices and for retention election of judicial officers; providing for selection and retention of judges of the Medical Professional Liability Court and for salaries of judges of the Medical Professional Liability Court; establishing the Medical Professional Liability Court Fund and providing for receipts and payments; and further providing for right to appellate review and for appeals generally.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 268 By Representatives CAPPELLI, BEYER, CALTAGIRONE, COX, CREIGHTON, DALEY, GALLOWAY, GEIST, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HENNESSEY, HORNAMAN, MANN, MILLARD, O'NEILL, PAYTON, PHILLIPS, RAPP, REICHLEY, SCAVELLO, STERN, SWANGER, VEREB and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending Title 23 (Domestic Relations) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing, in support matters, for attachment of income.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 269 By Representatives CAPPELLI, BARRAR, CALTAGIRONE, CAUSER, COX, CREIGHTON, FABRIZIO, FAIRCHILD, GRUCELA, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, JAMES, KILLION, MARKOSEK, McILHATTAN, NAILOR, PHILLIPS, READSHAW, SABATINA, SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH, SONNEY, R. STEVENSON, SWANGER and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971, providing for a personal income tax credit for blood donors.

Referred to Committee on FINANCE, February 6, 2007.

No. 270 By Representatives CAPPELLI, BAKER, EACHUS, HARRIS, PHILLIPS, SIPTROTH and STERN

An Act amending the act of October 15, 1980 (P.L.950, No.164), known as the Commonwealth Attorneys Act, further providing for legal advice and civil matters.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 271 By Representatives CAPPELLI, BARRAR, BELFANTI, BENNINGHOFF, BEYER, BOYD, BROOKS, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, CREIGHTON, GEIST, GEORGE, HARPER, HERSHEY, MARKOSEK, PAYNE, PETRARCA, PICKETT, REICHLEY, SAINATO, SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, SONNEY, STERN, SWANGER, WANSACZ, WATSON and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending the act of May 17, 1956 (1955 P.L.1609, No.537), known as the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority Act, further providing for administrative powers.

Referred to Committee on COMMERCE, February 6, 2007.

No. 272 By Representatives CAPPELLI, BAKER, BENNINGHOFF, BEYER, BOYD, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, CASORIO, CREIGHTON, FABRIZIO, GEIST, GINGRICH, HARPER, JAMES, MANN, MELIO, MUSTIO, PAYNE, PETRONE, PHILLIPS, SCAVELLO, SOLOBAY, SONNEY, SWANGER and WOJNAROSKI

An Act amending the act of June 23, 1931 (P.L.932, No.317), known as The Third Class City Code, further providing for residency requirements for vacancy appointments.

Referred to Committee on LOCAL GOVERNMENT, February 6, 2007.

No. 273 By Representatives CAPPELLI, BAKER, BASTIAN, BELFANTI, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, CLYMER, DALEY, FAIRCHILD, FRANKEL, GEIST, HARRIS, HENNESSEY, MAHONEY, MANDERINO, MELIO, R. MILLER, PHILLIPS, PICKETT, SCAVELLO and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending the act of July 16, 1968 (P.L.351, No.173), referred to as the Prisoner Pre-release Plan Law, further providing for release plans.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 274 By Representatives CAPPELLI, BENNINGHOFF, BOYD, CALTAGIRONE, CREIGHTON, CURRY, DeLUCA, GEIST, GINGRICH, HENNESSEY, PETRARCA, PHILLIPS and REED

An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing, in matters affecting government units, for exceptions to sovereign immunity for Commonwealth parties.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 275 By Representatives CAPPELLI, BROOKS, CALTAGIRONE, JAMES, PETRARCA, PHILLIPS, WALKO and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for limitations on damages in cases of sovereign and governmental immunity.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 276 By Representatives BISHOP, BLACKWELL, CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, CREIGHTON, CURRY, DALEY, DeLUCA, FAIRCHILD, GERGELY, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HENNESSEY, HESS, JAMES, KOTIK, MAHONEY, McILHATTAN, MELIO, PHILLIPS, READSHAW, RUBLEY, SCAVELLO, STABACK, THOMAS, WATSON, YOUNGBLOOD and FRANKEL

An Act amending the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971, providing, in personal income tax, for contributions for sarcoidosis treatment research.

Referred to Committee on FINANCE, February 6, 2007.

No. 277 By Representatives BISHOP, BLACKWELL, CURRY, DONATUCCI, FRANKEL, JAMES, JOSEPHS, MELIO, PARKER, SOLOBAY, WILLIAMS, YOUNGBLOOD, MYERS and PAYTON

An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for trigger locks and for handgun identification requirements.

Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY, February 6, 2007.

No. 278 By Representatives BISHOP, BELFANTI, BLACKWELL, CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, CURRY, DALEY, DeLUCA, FRANKEL, HENNESSEY, KULA, MAHONEY, MELIO, PARKER, PRESTON, STABACK, J. TAYLOR, WALKO and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending the act of May 16, 1891 (P.L.75, No.59), entitled "An act in relation to the laying out, opening, widening, straightening, extending or vacating streets and alleys, and the construction of bridges in the several municipalities of this Commonwealth, the grading, paving, macadamizing or otherwise improving streets and alleys, providing for ascertaining the damages to private property resulting therefrom, the assessment of the damages, costs and expenses thereof upon the property benefited, and the construction of sewers and payment of the damages, costs and expenses thereof, including damages to private property resulting therefrom," further providing for powers of municipal corporations.

Referred to Committee on LOCAL GOVERNMENT, February 6, 2007.

No. 279 By Representatives BISHOP, BELFANTI, BLACKWELL, CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, FRANKEL, GEORGE, GRUCELA, HENNESSEY, JAMES, KULA, MELIO, PARKER, PRESTON, STABACK, J. TAYLOR, WALKO, WILLIAMS and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending the act of March 28, 2000 (P.L.23, No.7), known as the Fair Credit Extension Uniformity Act, further providing for unfair and deceptive acts and practices.

Referred to Committee on CONSUMER AFFAIRS, February 6, 2007.

No. 280 By Representatives DALLY, BELFANTI, BIANCUCCI, CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, CURRY, DALEY, DERMODY, FABRIZIO, FRANKEL, FREEMAN, GEIST, GEORGE, GIBBONS, GRUCELA, HARHART, HARPER, JOSEPHS, KULA, LEACH, MAHONEY, MANN, McGEEHAN, MELIO, D. O'BRIEN, PHILLIPS, REED, REICHLEY, ROEBUCK, SANTONI, SCAVELLO, SONNEY, STERN, R. STEVENSON, STURLA, SWANGER, TANGRETTI, WALKO, WATSON, WHEATLEY, YOUNGBLOOD, BEYER, GERGELY, RUBLEY, SIPTROTH, ROSS and PAYTON

An Act amending the act of October 27, 1955 (P.L.744, No.222), known as the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, further providing for findings and declaration of policy, for right to freedom from discrimination, housing and public accommodation; defining "marital status"; and further providing for unlawful discriminatory practices.

Referred to Committee on STATE GOVERNMENT, February 6, 2007.

No. 281 By Representatives PETRONE, BARRAR, BROOKS, CALTAGIRONE, CLYMER, COX, DALEY, DALLY, EVERETT, FABRIZIO, GEIST, GIBBONS, GOODMAN, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, HESS, JAMES, KENNEY, KOTIK, LONGIETTI, MANN, McCALL, MENSCH, MILLARD, MUSTIO, PETRARCA, PYLE, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, SURRA, WALKO, J. WHITE and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for pedestrians soliciting rides or business.

Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION, February 6, 2007.

No. 282 By Representatives PETRONE, BISHOP, CALTAGIRONE, COSTA, CURRY, DALEY, DeLUCA, DENLINGER, EACHUS, FABRIZIO, FRANKEL, FREEMAN, GEORGE, GERGELY, GIBBONS, GOODMAN, GRELL, GRUCELA, HENNESSEY, JAMES, JOSEPHS, KING, KOTIK, KULA, LEACH, LEVDANSKY, MANN, McILHATTAN, MURT, MUSTIO, NAILOR, O'NEILL, PETRARCA, ROAE, SAMUELSON, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, STABACK, STURLA, SURRA, TANGRETTI, YUDICHAK, WALKO and WHEATLEY

An Act providing for Commonwealth support for a Mental Health and Mental Retardation Staff Member Loan Forgiveness Program and an Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counselor Loan Forgiveness Program for Commonwealth residents who graduate from institutions of higher education and who apply their degrees to careers as mental health and mental retardation staff members in this Commonwealth.

Referred to Committee on HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, February 6, 2007.

No. 283 By Representatives PETRONE, CALTAGIRONE, COSTA, DeLUCA, GERGELY, HENNESSEY, JAMES, KOTIK, KULA, MANN, MURT, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, STABACK, STURLA, SURRA, WALKO and WHEATLEY

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, defining "biometrics," "fingerprint imaging" and "smart card technology"; and further providing for issuance and content of driver's license and for commercial driver's license.

Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION, February 6, 2007.

No. 284 By Representatives MARKOSEK, BENNINGHOFF, BOYD, CALTAGIRONE, FREEMAN, GEORGE, GERGELY, GOODMAN, HERSHEY, HORNAMAN, KULA, MAHONEY, MENSCH, MUNDY, PALLONE, SAINATO, SIPTROTH, STABACK, R. STEVENSON, WHEATLEY, WOJNAROSKI and YOUNGBLOOD

An Act amending the act of November 24, 1992 (P.L.732, No.111), known as the Pennsylvania Quality Improvement Act, further providing for legislative findings and intent, for establishment of the Pennsylvania Quality Leadership Awards, for the Pennsylvania Quality Leadership Awards Council, for board of examiners and panel of judges, for establishment of the foundation and for awards; and repealing provisions relating to restriction on funds from Commonwealth.

Referred to Committee on COMMERCE, February 6, 2007.

RULES COMMITTEE APPOINTED

The SPEAKER. The Speaker announces that the following members have been appointed to the Rules Committee by the Speaker and minority leader respectively. In accordance with House rule 46, the following majority members have been appointed to the Rules Committee for the 2007-2008 legislative session:

Representative Phyllis Mundy;
 Representative Jewell Williams;
 Representative P. Michael Sturla;
 Representative Joseph Preston;
 Representative Babette Josephs;
 Representative Robert Belfanti;
 Representative Camille George;
 Representative Mark B. Cohen;
 Representative Frank Dermody;
 Representative Dan Surra;
 Representative Todd Eachus; and
 Representative Michael McGeehan.

The following members are appointed to the Rules Committee for the 2007-2008 legislative session from the minority party:

Representative Sam Smith;
 Representative Dave Argall;
 Representative Mario Civera;
 Representative Rick Geist;
 Representative Merle Phillips;
 Representative Ron Raymond;
 Representative Stan Saylor;
 Representative John Taylor;
 Representative Robert Godshall;
 Representative Bill Adolph;
 Representative Craig Dally;
 Representative Bob Bastian; and
 Representative Steve Cappelli.

COMMUNICATIONS

The SPEAKER. The Speaker announces receipt of the following reports, a description of which the clerk will read.

The following communications were read:

The annual report of the status of the Catastrophic Loss Benefits Continuation Fund, which is submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Act 24 of 1989.

The annual public report issued by the Public Employee Retirement Commission to summarize its findings, recommendations, and activities for 2006.

(Copies of communications are on file with the Journal clerk.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes Representative Freeman for an announcement.

Mr. FREEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce the meeting of the House Local Government Committee for 3 o'clock this afternoon. It will be in room G-50 of the Irvis Building; that is 3 o'clock this afternoon, a brief but important organizational meeting; 3 o'clock, G-50, Irvis Building.

Thank you.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

The Local Government Committee will be meeting in the Irvis Building in room G-50 at 3 o'clock.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MEETING

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman, Representative Caltagirone, for an announcement.

Mr. CALTAGIRONE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to call for a brief meeting of the House Judiciary in the Ryan Office Building in room 205 at the call of the break or recess.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

At the call of the recess, the Judiciary Committee will meet in room 205 of the Ryan Office Building.

Are there any caucus announcements?

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

The SPEAKER. Representative Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, House Democrats will caucus on the budget at 2 p.m.; 2 p.m., caucus on the budget. We are deliberately setting it at 2 so that members will have time to get lunch before the caucus, but we expect the caucus to go on until about 3 o'clock.

REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady, Representative Major, for an announcement.

Miss MAJOR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Republicans will caucus immediately at the call of the adjournment; that is immediately at the call of the adjournment.

Thank you.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the lady.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman, Representative Thomas.

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Appropriate notice has been given, but I would just like to remind the members of the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee that we will be meeting in the morning at 9 o'clock in room 302; organizational meeting in the morning, 9 o'clock, 302.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the gentleman.
The Intergovernmental Affairs Committee will meet tomorrow at 9 o'clock in room 302.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Again, for an informational announcement, the Chair will remind the members that the resolution sponsored by Representative Rosita Youngblood commemorating Martin Luther King Week is still on the desk over here if any member would like to add their name as a cosponsor.

Is there any other business to come before the House?
For the information of the members, there will be no votes tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes Representative Carroll from Luzerne County, who moves that the House do now adjourn until 11 a.m., e.s.t., on Wednesday, February 7, 2007.

On the question,
Will the House agree to the motion?
Motion was agreed to, and at 1:32 p.m., e.s.t., the House adjourned.