

# COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

## LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2008

SESSION OF 2008

192D OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

No. 10

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The House convened at 10:30 a.m., e.s.t.

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

#### PRAYER

HON. GORDON R. DENLINGER, member of the House of Representatives, offered the following prayer:

Please join me in prayer:

Eternal and loving God, as we begin a very important day in this House, an important day for all of the State government, we pause to thank You for Your many gifts to us as individuals and as a Commonwealth. Truly You have poured out Your blessings on all of us, and we give You glory in return. We praise You as the God who knows everything about us – our strengths and our weaknesses, our points of promise and our failings. Father, we ask that You may bless our efforts where they result in benefit for our fellow citizens and where they are righteous and just, and, Father, we ask for Your forgiveness when we fall short in our dealings with each other and with the citizens of this land.

We come today asking for Your strength and Your wisdom as we begin the process of the annual State budget. Within the budget lie the priorities of this government, and we pray for guidance as we discuss, debate, and vote on our spending plan for the upcoming year. We further pray that though we sometimes disagree on matters of policy, we may never stoop to personal slights or a spirit of rancor. Father, guide our deliberations.

As Governor Rendell comes to address us in a few minutes, we ask that Your hand of blessing would be upon him and his family. We know that the burdens of his office are many, and we pray that You will sustain him and all those who work in the executive branch. And as we welcome the Senate to this chamber, we pray for Your blessing on each man and woman who serves in that body and that You would make their labors fruitful.

And, Father, though our minds are consumed with matters close to home, we also bring before You those who serve in our Armed Forces in foreign lands, and particularly those who are in harm's way. We thank You for their important service and pray that You will place a hedge of protection around them this day and every day until we welcome them home. Father, in a spirit of thankfulness and humility, we submit our prayers before Your eternal throne. 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 4, 2008, will be postponed until printed. The Chair hears no objection.

### LEAVES OF ABSENCE

The SPEAKER. The Chair turns to requests for leaves of absence. The Chair recognizes the majority whip, who requests that Representative LENTZ of Delaware County and Representative PRESTON of Allegheny County be placed on leave for today. The Chair sees no objection. The leaves will be granted.

The Chair turns to the minority whip, who requests that Representative SAYLOR of York County be placed on leave for the day. The Chair sees no objection. This leave will also be granted.

Members will report to the floor.

### MASTER ROLL CALL

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

The following roll call was recorded:

PRESENT—199

|             |           |            |           |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Adolph      | Freeman   | Mantz      | Roebuck   |
| Argall      | Gabig     | Markosek   | Rohrer    |
| Baker       | Galloway  | Marshall   | Ross      |
| Barrar      | Geist     | Marsico    | Rubley    |
| Bastian     | George    | McCall     | Sabatina  |
| Bear        | Gerber    | McGeehan   | Sainato   |
| Belfanti    | Gergely   | McI. Smith | Samuelson |
| Benninghoff | Gibbons   | McIlhattan | Santoni   |
| Bennington  | Gillespie | Melio      | Scavello  |
| Beyer       | Gingrich  | Mensch     | Schroder  |
| Bianucci    | Godshall  | Metcalfe   | Seip      |
| Bishop      | Goodman   | Micozzie   | Shapiro   |
| Blackwell   | Grell     | Millard    | Shimkus   |
| Boback      | Grucela   | Miller     | Smith, K. |
| Boyd        | Haluska   | Milne      | Smith, M. |
| Brennan     | Hanna     | Moul       | Smith, S. |
| Brooks      | Harhai    | Moyer      | Solobay   |
| Buxton      | Harhart   | Mundy      | Sonney    |

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

ADDITIONS—0

NOT VOTING—0

EXCUSED—4

|       |         |        |          |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|
| Lentz | Preston | Saylor | Siptroth |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|

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

**GUESTS INTRODUCED**

The SPEAKER. Here today as the guests of Representative Rob Kauffman and serving as guest pages are Andy Dessel and Kacey Staub. Andy and Kacey are in the 10th grade at Chambersburg Senior High School. They are located in the well of the House. Would you please stand and be recognized.

**BILLS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE, CONSIDERED FIRST TIME, AND TABLED**

**HB 674, PN 761** By Rep. GEORGE

An Act amending the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.769, No.240), referred to as the Commonwealth Documents Law, further defining "administrative regulation" in relation to the Department of Environmental Protection.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY.

**HB 1735, PN 2313** By Rep. GEORGE

An Act amending Title 27 (Environmental Resources) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for coal.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY.

**COMMUNICATION FROM GOVERNOR**

REQUEST FOR JOINT SESSION

The Speaker laid before the House the following communication in writing from the office of His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth:

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Office of the Governor  
Harrisburg

January 10, 2008

To the Honorable, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

If it meets with the approval of the General Assembly, I would like to address the Members in Joint Session for the annual budget address on Tuesday, February 5, 2008, at a time convenient to the General Assembly.

Sincerely,  
Edward G. Rendell  
Governor

**SENATE MESSAGE**

JOINT SESSION

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,  
January 29, 2008

RESOLVED, (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Senate and House of Representatives meet in Joint Session on Tuesday, February 5, 2008, at 11:30 a.m., in the Hall of the House of Representatives for the purpose of hearing an address by His Excellency, Governor Edward G. Rendell; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a committee of three, on the part of the Senate, be appointed to act with a similar committee, on the part of the House of Representatives, to escort His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to the Hall 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.

**RESOLUTION**

COMMITTEE TO ESCORT GOVERNOR

Mr. DeWEESE offered the following resolution, which was read, considered, and adopted:

In the House of Representatives  
February 5, 2008

RESOLVED, That the Speaker appoint a committee of three to escort the Governor to the Hall of the House for the purpose of attending a Joint Session of the General Assembly.

**COMMITTEE APPOINTED**

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as a committee to escort the Governor, the gentleman from Bucks County, Representative Chris King; the gentleman from Berks and Schuylkill Counties, Representative Tim Seip; and the gentelady from Bucks County, Representative Marguerite Quinn.

The committee will proceed with the performance of its duties.

**FORMER MEMBER AND GUESTS INTRODUCED**

The SPEAKER. It gives great pleasure to the Chair to recognize a special guest in the gallery, a former member and majority leader of this House, Representative Sam Hayes, and he is here with a group of students from Juniata College. Sam and your guests, would you please stand and be recognized. Welcome back to the House.

**GUESTS INTRODUCED**

The SPEAKER. The Chair would also like to recognize, as the guests of Representative Mike Fleck, George Conrad and Jim Book Leimer, who are seated in the balcony. Would you please stand and be recognized.

**CALENDAR**

**RESOLUTIONS PURSUANT TO RULE 35**

Mr. HERSHEY called up **HR 545, PN 3040**, entitled:

A Resolution designating February 6, 2008, as "Ronald Reagan Day" in Pennsylvania.

On the question,  
Will the House adopt the resolution?

The following roll call was recorded:

**YEAS—198**

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

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

NAYS—0

NOT VOTING—1

Freeman

EXCUSED—4

Lentz                      Preston                      Saylor                      Siptroth

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

\* \* \*

Mr. ROAE called up **HR 564, PN 3136**, entitled:

A Resolution designating February 7 through 14, 2008, as "Congenital Heart Defect Week" and February 14, 2008, as "Congenital Heart Defect Day" in Pennsylvania.

On the question,  
Will the House adopt the resolution?

The following roll call was recorded:

**YEAS—199**

|        |          |          |         |
|--------|----------|----------|---------|
| Adolph | Freeman  | Mantz    | Roebuck |
| Argall | Gabig    | Markosek | Rohrer  |
| Baker  | Galloway | Marshall | Ross    |

|             |            |             |              |
|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Barrar      | Geist      | Marsico     | Ruble        |
| Bastian     | George     | McCall      | Sabatina     |
| Bear        | Gerber     | McGeehan    | Sainato      |
| Belfanti    | Gergely    | McI. Smith  | Samuelson    |
| Benninghoff | Gibbons    | McIlhatten  | Santoni      |
| Bennington  | Gillespie  | Melio       | Scavello     |
| Beyer       | Gingrich   | Mensch      | Schroder     |
| Bianucci    | Godshall   | Metcalfe    | Seip         |
| Bishop      | Goodman    | Micozzie    | Shapiro      |
| Blackwell   | Grell      | Millard     | Shimkus      |
| Boback      | Grucela    | Miller      | Smith, K.    |
| Boyd        | Haluska    | Milne       | Smith, M.    |
| Brennan     | Hanna      | Moul        | Smith, S.    |
| Brooks      | Harhai     | Moyer       | Solobay      |
| Buxton      | Harhart    | Mundy       | Sonney       |
| Caltagirone | Harkins    | Murt        | Staback      |
| Cappelli    | Harper     | Mustio      | Stairs       |
| Carroll     | Harris     | Myers       | Steil        |
| Casorio     | Helm       | Nailor      | Stern        |
| Causer      | Hennessey  | Nickol      | Stevenson    |
| Civera      | Hershey    | O'Brien, M. | Sturla       |
| Clymer      | Hess       | O'Neill     | Surra        |
| Cohen       | Hickernell | Oliver      | Swanger      |
| Conklin     | Hornaman   | Pallone     | Tangretti    |
| Costa       | Hutchinson | Parker      | Taylor, J.   |
| Cox         | James      | Pashinski   | Taylor, R.   |
| Creighton   | Josephs    | Payne       | Thomas       |
| Cruz        | Kauffman   | Payton      | True         |
| Curry       | Keller, M. | Peifer      | Turzai       |
| Cutler      | Keller, W. | Perry       | Vereb        |
| Daley       | Kenney     | Perzel      | Vitali       |
| Dally       | Kessler    | Petrarca    | Vulakovich   |
| DeLuca      | Killion    | Petri       | Wagner       |
| Denlinger   | King       | Petrone     | Walko        |
| DePasquale  | Kirkland   | Phillips    | Wansacz      |
| Dermody     | Kortz      | Pickett     | Waters       |
| DeWeese     | Kotik      | Pyle        | Watson       |
| DiGirolamo  | Kula       | Quigley     | Wheatley     |
| Donatucci   | Leach      | Quinn       | White        |
| Eachus      | Levdansky  | Ramaley     | Williams     |
| Ellis       | Longietti  | Rapp        | Wojnaroski   |
| Evans, D.   | Mackereth  | Raymond     | Yewcic       |
| Evans, J.   | Maher      | Readshaw    | Youngblood   |
| Everett     | Mahoney    | Reed        | Yudichak     |
| Fabrizio    | Major      | Reichley    |              |
| Fairchild   | Manderino  | Roae        | O'Brien, D., |
| Fleck       | Mann       | Rock        | Speaker      |
| Frankel     |            |             |              |

NAYS-0

NOT VOTING-0

EXCUSED-4

|       |         |        |          |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|
| Lentz | Preston | Saylor | Siptroth |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|

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

\* \* \*

Mr. HESS called up **HR 574, PN 3167**, entitled:

A Resolution designating the week of February 10 through 16, 2008, as "National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week" in Pennsylvania.

On the question,  
Will the House adopt the resolution?

The following roll call was recorded:

YEAS-199

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

NAYS-0

NOT VOTING-0

EXCUSED-4

|       |         |        |          |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|
| Lentz | Preston | Saylor | Siptroth |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|

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

**RESOLUTION**

Mr. PAYTON called up **HR 501, PN 2815**, entitled:

A Resolution directing the House of Representatives Health and Human Services Committee to develop recommendations for sports nutrition and sports nutritional supplements.

On the question,  
Will the House adopt the resolution?

Mr. **KAUFFMAN** offered the following amendment No. **A05196**:

Amend Title, page 1, lines 1 and 2, by striking out all of line 1 and "Committee" in line 2 and inserting

Urging the Department of Health

Amend First Resolve Clause, page 2, lines 21 and 22, by striking out "Health and Human Services Committee" and inserting  
urge the Department of Health to

Amend First Resolve Clause, page 2, line 23, by inserting after "the"

Health and Human Services Committee of the

Amend Second Resolve Clause, page 2, line 25, by striking out "Health and Human Services Committee" and inserting

House of Representatives urge the department to

Amend Third Resolve Clause, page 2, line 30, by striking out "Health and Human Services Committee shall" and inserting

House of Representatives urge the department to

Amend Fourth Resolve Clause, page 3, line 13, by striking out "Health and Human Services Committee" and inserting

House of Representatives urge the department to

On the question,  
Will the House agree to the amendment?

The **SPEAKER**. The Chair recognizes Representative Kauffman on the amendment.

Mr. **KAUFFMAN**. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. I was in the back of the House.

The **SPEAKER**. If the gentleman will suspend.

This is a good time to remind the members to take their seats. The noise level is entirely too loud. The gentleman is entitled to be heard.

The gentleman is in order and may proceed.

Mr. **KAUFFMAN**. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have been in discussions with some folks on this amendment and on this resolution, and I wondered, prior to the possibility of my withdrawing this amendment, if I could just question the maker of the resolution just to clarify a few things prior to withdrawing that. Would that be in order, Mr. Speaker?

The **SPEAKER**. That would be in order.

**RESOLUTION PASSED OVER TEMPORARILY**

The **SPEAKER**. The resolution will be over temporarily.

**BILLS REMOVED FROM TABLE**

The **SPEAKER**. The Chair recognizes the majority leader, who moves that the following bills be removed from the tabled bill calendar:

HB 295;  
HB 1786;  
HB 1841; and  
SB 917.

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

**BILLS RECOMMITTED**

The **SPEAKER**. The Chair recognizes the majority leader, who moves that the following bills be recommitted to the Committee on Appropriations:

HB 295;  
HB 1786;  
HB 1841; and  
SB 917.

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

The **SPEAKER**. It is the intention of the Chair to recess regular session and go into special session at 10:56.

**RECESS**

The **SPEAKER**. Regular session is now in recess.

**AFTER RECESS**

The time of recess having expired, the House was called to order.

**BILLS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEES, CONSIDERED FIRST TIME, AND TABLED****HB 2054, PN 2891**

By Rep. BELFANTI

An Act amending the act of October 6, 1998 (P.L.705, No.92), known as the Keystone Opportunity Zone, Keystone Opportunity Expansion Zone and Keystone Opportunity Improvement Zone Act, providing for work performed on deteriorating property.

**LABOR RELATIONS.****HB 2200, PN 3176 (Amended)**

By Rep. BRENNAN

An Act amending Title 66 (Public Utilities) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for definitions; and providing for adoption of energy efficiency and demand-side response.

**CONSUMER AFFAIRS.****CONSIDERATION OF HR 501 CONTINUED**

The **SPEAKER**. The Chair returns to HR 501 and recognizes Representative Kauffman. He has asked Representative Payton if he will stand for interrogation. Representative Payton

indicates that he will stand for interrogation. The gentleman is in order and may proceed.

Mr. KAUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, just a few clarifying questions.

First of all, maybe for the benefit of the body, because some folks have been saying, what is that resolution on and what is going on here, could you just give a brief explanation of what we are trying to do here with HR 501?

Mr. PAYTON. Absolutely.

The SPEAKER. If the gentleman will suspend.

The Chair will ask again that the members take their seats. The noise level is entirely too loud.

Representative Payton is in order and may proceed.

Mr. PAYTON. This resolution would call on the staff of the committee along with some Representatives from some of our great research universities to study the impact of sports drinks and sports nutrition products in the Commonwealth.

Mr. KAUFFMAN. Okay. Thank you.

So the great amount of work that would be involved in putting forth recommendations, primarily where do you see that work being done? Within the House staff, or is that research and information already available at some of these institutions that may come before the committee?

Mr. PAYTON. It is going to be done with a combination of both. A number of associations have reached out with input on how to go about this study, and also primarily with the House committee staff, the well-qualified staff in the House Human Services Committee.

Mr. KAUFFMAN. I believe they are well qualified. My concern is, are they well qualified on this particular issue to offer the expertise that I think is necessary to put forth this kind of information?

Is this going to be done within the full standing committee of the House, or is there going to be a subcommittee created for this purpose?

Mr. PAYTON. It will be done with the chairs of the committee, and you know, this is not a new thing. The committee is called upon to study many different things, and this has been done plenty of times before, and I think that a number of health experts that will be assisting in this research will allow for this study to happen successfully.

Mr. KAUFFMAN. All right.

Well, Mr. Speaker, out of deference to some—

The SPEAKER. Has the gentleman finished his interrogation?

Mr. KAUFFMAN. Yes; I am sorry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman is in order and may proceed.

Mr. KAUFFMAN. Out of deference to some folks who have contacted me, my amendment actually was to move this investigation and this study and these recommendations over to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, where I think if we are going to be doing it within government, that is where it belongs rather than in the Health and Human Services Committee of the House. Nonetheless, it is my understanding that the Department of Health has no desire to get involved in this.

AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN

Mr. KAUFFMAN. So with that in mind, I am going to withdraw my amendment, but I will be opposing the final resolution, which was discussed in committee, because very frankly, I believe we who believe in limited government, I am

not certain where this plays in to have the House standing committee on Health and Human Services providing health and nutrition recommendations. I know, for one, I am not qualified in that area and I know many others on our committee are not qualified in that area, and very frankly, as great as our staff is on the issues surrounding health and human services, I do not know that our staff is qualified in the area of sports nutrition either.

So with that, I withdraw my amendment and will be opposing the resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

On the question recurring,  
Will the House adopt the resolution?

The following roll call was recorded:

YEAS—175

|             |            |             |                         |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Adolph      | Galloway   | Marshall    | Samuelson               |
| Argall      | Geist      | Marsico     | Santoni                 |
| Baker       | George     | McCall      | Scavello                |
| Barrar      | Gerber     | McGeehan    | Schroder                |
| Bastian     | Gergely    | McI. Smith  | Seip                    |
| Bear        | Gibbons    | McIlhattan  | Shapiro                 |
| Belfanti    | Gingrich   | Melio       | Shimkus                 |
| Bennington  | Godshall   | Mensch      | Smith, K.               |
| Biancucci   | Goodman    | Micozzie    | Smith, M.               |
| Bishop      | Grucela    | Millard     | Smith, S.               |
| Blackwell   | Haluska    | Milne       | Solobay                 |
| Boback      | Hanna      | Moyer       | Sonney                  |
| Boyd        | Harhai     | Mundy       | Staback                 |
| Brennan     | Harhart    | Murt        | Stairs                  |
| Buxton      | Harkins    | Mustio      | Steil                   |
| Caltagirone | Harper     | Myers       | Stern                   |
| Cappelli    | Harris     | O'Brien, M. | Stevenson               |
| Carroll     | Helm       | Oliver      | Sturla                  |
| Casorio     | Hennessey  | Pallone     | Surra                   |
| Causer      | Hershey    | Parker      | Swanger                 |
| Civera      | Hess       | Pashinski   | Tangretti               |
| Clymer      | Hickernell | Payne       | Taylor, J.              |
| Cohen       | Hornaman   | Payton      | Taylor, R.              |
| Conklin     | James      | Peifer      | Thomas                  |
| Costa       | Josephs    | Perzel      | True                    |
| Cruz        | Keller, W. | Petrarca    | Turzai                  |
| Curry       | Kenney     | Petri       | Vereb                   |
| Cutler      | Kessler    | Petrone     | Vitali                  |
| Daley       | Killion    | Phillips    | Vulakovich              |
| Dally       | King       | Pickett     | Wagner                  |
| DeLuca      | Kirkland   | Pyle        | Walko                   |
| Denlinger   | Kortz      | Quigley     | Wansacz                 |
| DePasquale  | Kotik      | Quinn       | Waters                  |
| Dermody     | Kula       | Ramaley     | Watson                  |
| DeWeese     | Leach      | Rapp        | Wheatley                |
| DiGirolamo  | Levdansky  | Raymond     | White                   |
| Donatucci   | Longiatti  | Readshaw    | Williams                |
| Eachus      | Maher      | Reed        | Wojnaroski              |
| Ellis       | Mahoney    | Reichley    | Yewcic                  |
| Evans, D.   | Major      | Roae        | Youngblood              |
| Evans, J.   | Manderino  | Roebuck     | Yudichak                |
| Fabrizio    | Mann       | Rohrer      |                         |
| Fairchild   | Mantz      | Sabatina    | O'Brien, D.,<br>Speaker |
| Frankel     | Markosek   | Sainato     |                         |
| Freeman     |            |             |                         |

NAYS—24

|             |           |            |         |
|-------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Benninghoff | Fleck     | Keller, M. | Nickol  |
| Beyer       | Gabig     | Mackereth  | O'Neill |
| Brooks      | Gillespie | Metcalfe   | Perry   |
| Cox         | Grell     | Miller     | Rock    |

|                      |                        |                |                |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Creighton<br>Everett | Hutchinson<br>Kauffman | Moul<br>Nailor | Ross<br>Rubley |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|

NOT VOTING—0

EXCUSED—4

|       |         |        |          |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|
| Lentz | Preston | Saylor | Siptroth |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|

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 4, 2008

RESOLVED, (the House of Representatives concurring), Pursuant to Article II, Section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, that when the Regular Session of the Senate recesses this week, it reconvene on Monday, February 11, 2008, 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 Regular Session of the House of Representatives recesses this week, it reconvene on Monday, February 11, 2008, 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.

The SPEAKER. The House will be temporarily at ease.

### GUEST INTRODUCED

The SPEAKER. The Chair would like to welcome to the hall of the House the newly elected mayor from the city of Philadelphia, Michael Nutter. I believe he is standing in the rear of the House. Mayor, welcome to the floor of the House.

The House will come to order.

### BILL REMOVED FROM TABLE

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the majority leader, who moves that HB 2200 be removed from the tabled bill calendar.

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

### BILL RECOMMITTED

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the majority leader, who moves that HB 2200 be recommitted to the Committee on Appropriations.

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

### FILMING PERMISSION

The SPEAKER. The Chair advises members that he has given permission to Terry Way of the Commonwealth Media Services to take still photographs during the budget address.

The House will be at ease.  
The House will come to order.

### FILMING PERMISSION

The SPEAKER. The Chair advises members that he has given permission to Bradley Bower of the Associated Press to take still photographs during the budget address of Governor Rendell.

The Chair advises members also that he has given permission of Gary Dwight Miller of the Patriot-News to take still photographs during the budget address.

The House will come to order. Members and guests will please take their seats. The House will come to order. Conferences in the rear of the House, side aisles, center aisles, well of the House will break up immediately.

### ARRIVAL OF SENATE

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

The Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms of the House.

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

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

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

The members of the House and Senate and guests will please be seated.

The House will come to order.

The Chair asks that all members and guests please take their seats. Members and guests will please take their seats. The Sergeants at Arms will clear the aisles. Caucuses will break up. Members and guests will please take their seats. Members will take their seats.

**JOINT SESSION OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
(CATHERINE BAKER KNOLL) PRESIDING**

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. This being the day and the hour agreed upon by a concurrent resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives to hear an address by His Excellency, the Governor, the Honorable Edward G. Rendell, this joint session will now please come to order.

The General Assembly will be at ease while it awaits the arrival of the Governor.

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE  
ESCORTING GOVERNOR**

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

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

The Chair recognizes the chair of the committee to escort the Governor, the gentleman from Schuylkill, Senator Rhoades.

Mr. RHOADES. Good morning.

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

Thank you.

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. The Chair thanks Chairman Rhoades and the 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 our joint session.

**FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009  
BUDGET ADDRESS OF  
GOV. EDWARD G. RENDELL**

The GOVERNOR. Thank you all. Thank you all very, very much. Thank you.

Before I begin, I want to say that in this year's escort committee, Senator LaValle and Senator Madigan were chosen to help Senator Rhoades escort me up, and I said to them as we were standing outside, guys, this is it, this is the last time you will ever have to listen to this, and then they both promised in the years to come to listen on PCN (Pennsylvania Cable Network).

So good luck to Roger and Gerry. They have served us enormously well, and we thank them for their service.

Good morning. I am pleased to be with you today to present my proposed 2008-2009 FY (fiscal year) State budget.

We are gathered here once again to begin the fundamental task of governing: setting priorities, making choices, and allocating resources in the budget to keep Pennsylvania moving forward. Today marks my seventh budget address – counting 2003, when it was so much fun we did it twice. Working together, we turned the many crises that we faced into

tremendous opportunity for the people of Pennsylvania, and I am proud of the bipartisan spirit that has, in the end, always prevailed and allowed our Commonwealth to move decisively ahead.

Now, it is true that we do not agree on everything and our bipartisanship can be pretty spirited at times. But make no mistake; it has been the key to the success that we have enjoyed over the last 5 years.

Back in 2003, when it was clear that we needed to take dramatic action to jump-start the Pennsylvania economy, we enacted an Economic Stimulus Program that resulted in the investment of nearly \$3 billion in Pennsylvania's economy – investments that, when combined with the Commonwealth's other economic development programs, have helped provide assistance to more than 78,000 Pennsylvania businesses; attracted more than \$19 billion in private capital; and helped create 189,000 net new jobs – and so today we have the highest number of jobs in the Commonwealth's history and an unemployment rate at or below the national average for 51 of the last 60 months, and all of this was achieved in just 5 years.

While other States were maintaining the status quo, we made the difficult choice together to invest in Pennsylvania's future. Today, at a time when the national economy seems to be spiraling into a recession and many other States are struggling to deal with the impact of the national downturn on their budgets, Pennsylvania is in much better shape.

As you will see, the budget that I present today is tight, but we are not confronted with the overwhelming budgetary problems that challenge many other States. California is facing a deficit of \$14 billion; our neighbor, New Jersey, is trying to close a gaping \$3.5 billion hole in their budget; Florida has a \$2 billion deficit; Illinois, \$2.5 billion; New York, \$4.4 billion; Arizona, \$1.3 billion; Virginia, \$1.2 billion; Ohio, \$733 million, and the list goes on. At least 24 States face State budget deficits that total over \$34 billion. At the end of January, Pennsylvania's General Fund revenues are \$199 million over the estimate, and we are projecting at the end of this fiscal year our revenues will exceed the estimate by over \$427 million. So stop and think about that for a second. While those other States are facing daunting deficits in the billions, we in Pennsylvania have and by year end will have a surplus of more than \$400 million.

That we are positioned to protect Pennsylvania's progress is no accident. It is the result of hard work, tough choices, and a willingness to focus not just on the challenges that we face, but to think about the road ahead. I commend you for that vision, and I look forward to continuing in that spirit this year.

Sadly, over the last 5 years we have honored another, far more solemn tradition as well – paying homage to the thousands of Pennsylvanians who stand in harm's way in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world. It is worth remembering that what we say and do about the budget has important consequences for all of us in Pennsylvania, but for the Pennsylvania service men and women on duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, their actions and their decisions each and every day can mean the difference between life and death.

No other State in the nation has sent more National Guardsmen and women to serve in the global war on terror. Sixteen thousand members of the Pennsylvania Guard have served, and 39 have died, including 4 in the last year alone. Since the start of the war, thousands of Pennsylvania soldiers from all the branches of the service have answered the call in



the war-torn regions of the world, and 195 have given their lives.

They deserve our deepest thanks, and I ask you now to join me in a moment of silence to honor those who have given the ultimate sacrifice. We should remember them and their families in our prayers, and let us keep the Pennsylvanians currently serving abroad in our hearts each day, and let us pray that they will be back home in Pennsylvania, safe and sound, one day.

(A moment of silence was observed.)

The GOVERNOR. Thank you.

Despite our progress, we face uncertain economic times both in Pennsylvania and throughout the nation. While the talk of recession alone may make it inevitable, I am heartened that both parties in Washington are working together to spur the economy with hopes that a recession never takes hold. The White House and the Congress appear close to finalizing an economic stimulus package. It is an important step that, when combined with the emergency interest rate reductions enacted by the Federal Reserve Bank, may yet rally the nation's flagging economy. Coming on the heels of the biggest national spike in unemployment since 9/11 and growing crises in both the housing and banking industries, we should commend our leaders in Washington for working to try to head off this downturn.

But we should do more and do our part here in Pennsylvania.

It is incumbent upon us to follow the Congress's bipartisan example by doing all that we can to help those who will be hurt by the downturn in the nation's economy. I believe that we must act here at home to help the thousands of Pennsylvania working families who are being hit the hardest. We have come too far in the last 5 years to allow the national economic trends to stop us now.

That is why the budget I am presenting today incorporates a comprehensive plan called Protecting Our Progress, one that calls for immediate action to stimulate the Commonwealth's economy and keep us moving forward. This budget outlines a series of steps to achieve this goal. Just as the economic stimulus program we created together in 2003 has worked to revitalize and strengthen our economy, this short-term economic stimulus program will protect that progress and will keep us strong.

First and foremost, I am asking that we immediately follow Washington's lead by enacting a one-time Protecting Our Progress tax rebate of up to \$400 per household for 470,000 working families in Pennsylvania. We can issue this tax rebate within 8 weeks of your action because we know who these families are. They are the hardworking families who currently take advantage of our Tax Back program. While they do not pay any State personal income tax, they do pay a disproportionate amount of their income in sales, gas, and local taxes, and they need our help and they need it now.

Lending a hand to our fellow citizens in need helps all of us in two very important ways. First, it will bring stability to these households, which have been hard hit by recent increases in the cost of energy, fuel, health care, and even food. Helping them pay their bills will keep their credit sound, and that keeps the economy stable. Second, the families we are targeting have limited resources, and they are more likely to spend these funds in the consumer sectors of the economy, and when they do, that spending will help stimulate our economy, and that helps each

and every one of us. It is my hope that this one-time rebate will be the precursor of a Pennsylvania earned income tax credit to be created in next year's budget.

In addition to this critically important short-term relief for working families, the Protecting Our Progress initiative also includes the following elements, all designed to pump new momentum into Pennsylvania's economy:

First, encourage businesses that are nervous about the economy to proceed with their plans to add jobs by increasing our job creation tax credit from \$1,000 to \$3,000 for each employee hired for 1 year.

Next we will lower the cost of business expansion by substantially cutting the interest rates on Commonwealth loans offered through the Small Business First program, the Machinery and Equipment Loan Fund, and the industrial development programs. It is my intention to enact this component of the plan immediately, and I will order the interest rate reduction effective tomorrow.

We will boost funding for the Infrastructure Development Program to provide urgently needed infrastructure upgrades to help businesses expand or reduce the costs of operation. At least 30 projects are currently in the pipeline that could apply for the IDP assistance if we had the funds, and this includes two new corporate headquarters, two new manufacturing facilities, and the expansion of two existing manufacturing facilities, all of which could break ground this year.

Next we will invest our resources to clear old industrial sites and make them ready for planned business development. We must refund our enormously successful Business in Our Sites program. Right now we have \$50 million in applications for site preparation which could begin almost immediately and pave the way for business expansion.

We need to expand our successful Keystone Opportunity Zone Program to accelerate the reuse of abandoned land and former industrial sites. For existing land within a zone that has not been developed, we should extend the tax abatement period for another 7 years. This extension will do for other cities what the Keystone Opportunity Zone Program did for Towanda. Had it not been for the KOZ incentives, the DuPont Corporation would have closed its plants in Bradford County and moved those jobs to Asia. That KOZ saved us 600 high-quality Bradford County jobs.

We should immediately pass legislation that will release \$750 million in capital funds to help hospitals expand, construct new community-owned facilities and improve our towns and cities. Right now there are over \$200 million in projects that could break ground before the end of this calendar year if the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program legislation is passed – projects like the new Emergency Department at St. Clair Hospital in Allegheny County or the great Union Station redevelopment project so critical to the revitalization of Pottsville.

Not only is it long past the time for action on these and the many other worthwhile projects, we can use these redevelopment funds to stimulate our economy and put more Pennsylvanians to work. To ensure these funds will impact our economy quickly, of the \$750 million in capital redevelopment assistance that we are asking the legislature to lift the fund on, \$250 million will be awarded only to projects that can begin construction before the end of 2008.

We need to enact the Pennsylvania Energy Independence Strategy, which will permit the investment of \$850 million in

one of the most promising sectors of our economy: the emerging new technologies and innovative ideas that can help us lower our energy bills and reduce America's dependence on foreign oil. Our investment will attract \$3.5 billion in new private capital, and it will create 13,000 high-paying new jobs in a true growth sector of the economy. Last spring Senator Brubaker introduced me to Seth Obetz and Herb Flosdorf, who hoped to build an ethanol plant in Coney Township in Lancaster County. This project is ready to go right now. Pennsylvania has the potential to be a major player in the alternative fuels sector if we invest our resources wisely to attract companies just like this one.

At long last, we should pass the Jonas Salk Legacy Fund to provide \$500 million in seed capital and support for Pennsylvania's nationally renowned health science research centers. These funds include support for \$1 billion in health-related research and treatment facilities such as the Penn State Cancer Research Center and the Children's Hospital Disease Center in Philadelphia. It is money that will create jobs and ultimately save lives, and it is available at no expense to the taxpayers because it will be funded by redirecting a portion of the existing Tobacco Fund revenues. At a time when it is critically important to stimulate the Pennsylvania economy, the Salk Fund can provide the bricks-and-mortar support for over \$750 million in planned medical research facilities that are shovel-ready right now.

We need to launch a new initiative called Rebuild Pennsylvania – a plan to speed up the revitalization of our infrastructure – with over \$270 million this year to repair our aging bridges, address our unsafe high-hazard dams, expand capacity at several regional airports, improve the State's rail lines, and complete scores of critically important flood mitigation projects throughout the Commonwealth. Over 3 years, Rebuild Pennsylvania will take 1,000 bridges off the structurally deficient list, and these 1,000 will be our most dangerous, and we will cut that list in 10 years by almost half of the bridges in need of repair. It will remediate every State-owned high-hazard, unsafe dam and help counties and local government repair their unsafe dams as well. The repair of these dams is a moral and physical imperative, and I am determined to get it done in the next 3 years.

Finally, we must find a way to repair our infrastructure at the lowest cost to the taxpayers. So to those who want to repeal the authority to impose tolls on I-80, I want to be clear that I will not sign any repeal unless we replace the vital funding those tolls will provide. Now, leasing the turnpike may achieve this goal, and for that reason I believe this concept deserves your very serious consideration. Let me also acknowledge the efforts of Senate President Pro Tem Joe Scarnati, who has made it clear that he is committed to finding new ways to work together on this important issue. I will continue to work with Joe and others to make sure funding is in place to address the urgent repair and upgrade needs of our roads, our highways, and our bridges.

The economic stimulus initiatives that I have set forth represent a comprehensive effort to move forward in spite of the economic challenges that confront us. Some of these initiatives are new, particularly those that call for immediate short-term help for our working families. But several of these ideas – the Salk Fund, for example, and the Energy Independence Strategy – have been introduced before, and in many cases, Redevelopment Assistance projects that will have an immediate positive impact on the economy have languished on the drawing

board for years. We have discussed and debated many of these ideas for months and months, and it is now time to act. Our State's economy and the millions of lives that are tied to it demand that we take the necessary steps as quickly as possible.

Now, I realize some of you have staked out a position that the Commonwealth should do nothing that increases its debt. This stimulus plan, including the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program, Rebuild Pennsylvania, and the Business in Our Sites will add, by 2010, \$11.7 million to the debt service expense in the General Fund budget. That is an amount that is less than 1 percent of our total General Fund debt service expense, and I ask all of you when you are considering this issue to keep in mind that Pennsylvania ranks lower than 26 other States in terms of its ratio of State General Fund debt to personal income. Our debt service is equal to 3.3 percent of all State revenues. Standard & Poor's considers any debt level under 5 percent of revenues to be a "low debt burden." So Standard & Poor's considers Pennsylvania to be a low-debt-burden State. And remember, as Ben Bernanke has said, with the lowest interest rates in years, it is truly a propitious time to invest in the future.

So I urge you to act right away to provide the tax rebates to the working families who today are finding it difficult to make ends meet. I propose that we immediately borrow the necessary \$130 million to pay for these rebates from the nearly three-quarters-of-a-billion-dollar balance of the Rainy Day Fund. Upon final budget passage, we can repay the Rainy Day Fund and restore the balance to exactly where it stands today. The job creation tax credit threshold can be changed immediately without any impact on our budget, and of course, Jonas Salk, our Energy Fund, and raising the debt limit on our Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program are all worthy of your immediate action before the budget, and they will help to start energizing our economy prior to the passage of the budget.

Now, in many ways this plan offers a more strategic targeting of stimulus resources than the Federal program because its approach stimulates our economy by creating jobs that cannot be outsourced and will result in orders for construction and related materials from Pennsylvania's suppliers. All in all, this stimulus program in its first year will pump over \$2.3 billion into our economy but tap only \$149 million of General Fund resources.

In his first 100 days in office, Franklin Delano Roosevelt called the U.S. Congress into special session to address the horrific economic conditions of the nation. They responded with great rigor and speed. The New Deal paved the way for the last 75 years of economic progress. In urging its passage, President Roosevelt said, "This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper." While our fate is not nearly as bad today, the trends do look awfully bleak, and that is why I urge swift passage and swift action on these economic stimulus initiatives so we can be assured that our economy will continue its revival and our citizens will continue to prosper.

Ironically, the Great Depression grew out of a banking crisis. Today our nation also confronts a banking crisis of significant proportions. To address the crisis he faced, President Roosevelt said, "We must work against a return of the evils of the old order; there must be strict supervision of all banking and credits and investments; there must be an end to speculation with other people's money." His words have striking relevance today, and that is why I urge all of you to undertake the swift passage of the package of mortgage banking reforms that are championed

by Representative Pete Daley and Senator Pat Browne. We have all learned our lesson the hard way. Our laws and regulations need to be tightened to protect homeowners and communities. Nothing is more important to Pennsylvania families than their homes, and we should move swiftly to secure them.

Doing nothing is not an option if we want to protect the gains we have made together since 2003. But by acting now, we can stimulate Pennsylvania's economy, protect our citizens from the impact of a national downturn, and continue to make the Commonwealth more competitive in the battle for jobs and opportunities.

This is not a Democrat or Republican crisis, and the response in Washington should serve as an example to us all. So let us follow their lead. I welcome suggestions from all four caucuses on how to supplement, modify, or improve this stimulus plan, just as President Bush did to the Congress. I am willing— That is worthy of applause. I am willing to incorporate reasonable legislative suggestions into this vital effort, but let us once again put Pennsylvania ahead of partisanship, recognizing that when we do, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

This budget calls for Pennsylvania to husband its resources and to make the same kind of strategic investments that grow key sectors of our economy. We need to prioritize our investments and focus on our economic strengths to maximize the return for the taxpayers. One of the best ways to do this, as I said earlier, is through renewed support for Pennsylvania's burgeoning alternative energy industry.

Ladies and gentlemen, the fact is that Pennsylvania's economy is growing greener every day. Since 2003, with the help of more than \$120 million in State funds and nearly \$300 million in Federal funding, Pennsylvania is now a national leader in the field, and we are home to some of the world's leading renewable energy companies.

One of our goals is to produce in Pennsylvania at least 18 percent of all the clean renewable energy sold in this State by the year 2021, and we are going to do it, because working together, we passed the Advanced Energy Portfolio Standards legislation in 2004, which has set off a rush of economic activity in the production of renewable energy.

But we also must do the same thing for our fuel consumption and reduce, once and for all, our dependence on foreign oil. I call on you once again to pass the PennFuels Initiative bill, which requires that 1 billion gallons of Pennsylvania-grown biofuels, including ethanol, be produced and consumed in Pennsylvania by 2017. In the recently passed Federal energy bill, conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats alike voted to increase the Federal ethanol standard sixfold, but they also did something visionary: requiring that a substantial percentage of that ethanol come not from corn but from cellulosic materials such as switchgrass, wood chips, wood fiber, and agricultural waste. Pennsylvania has these feedstocks for cellulosic ethanol in abundance. So I ask you to follow their lead and require that a significant percentage of our ethanol requirement come from these sources as well. It does not take much imagination to see Pennsylvania's energy economy booming when we become to cellulosic ethanol what Iowa has been to corn-based ethanol.

The time for action is long overdue. We can and we must achieve independence from fossil fuels in general, and we can and we must reduce our dependence on foreign oil in particular. It is good for the environment and good for the Pennsylvania economy, too. The State that becomes a leader in renewable

energy will be the State that will have a vibrant economy for decades to come.

Protecting Pennsylvania's progress requires that one of our highest priorities must be to reduce the cost of health care for all businesses across the State, even as we meet our moral obligation to ensure access to affordable health insurance for all Pennsylvanians. That is why I once again ask the legislature to enact the Prescription for Pennsylvania, the comprehensive health-care plan that I originally introduced a year ago. The Prescription for Pennsylvania will lower the cost of health care for all of us, and it will improve our quality of care at the same time.

I am pleased that we have made steady progress on this initiative, and I commend the members for working diligently to address these critical issues. It is important to remember that before MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) became a household word in America, we had taken action with the best legislation in the nation to curb its spread. We enacted Act 52 of 2007, which requires health-care facilities to report all incidents of health-care-associated infections and requires them to adopt plans that incorporate "best practices" to reduce or eliminate them. It is the first law of its kind in the history of the Commonwealth and one that actually incentivizes the hospitals to reduce infections by rewarding "performance payments" when these institutions reduce their infections by at least 10 percent. The first funding of these lifesaving incentives is included in this budget.

Working together, we have also enacted new measures to ensure that all licensed health-care providers, including nurses, midwives, physician's assistants, and dental hygienists, can be more fully utilized. They have dramatically increased the accessibility of health care for many of our citizens, and they have helped to reduce and constrain cost. We must also improve the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases, like heart disease, diabetes, and asthma, which together account for nearly 78 percent of all health-care costs in Pennsylvania.

The savings here are enormous, \$2 billion in 2005 alone, simply through better management of chronic conditions. This budget launches our chronic-care management efforts, and it also launches perhaps the most ambitious statewide electronic medical records system in the nation.

The budget includes other elements of the Prescription for Pennsylvania plan: prescription drug coverage for the poorest Pennsylvanians who today receive health care but no drug coverage; targeted funds to increase access to primary health care in underserved areas throughout the State; and our first-ever funding of health equity strategies aimed at eliminating racial and ethnic disparities and access to quality health care.

These programs, together with the tremendously successful Cover All Kids initiative to provide universal health insurance to all Pennsylvania children, which, incidentally, has resulted in a 20-percent increase in enrollment in under 2 years, these programs will extend the health-care safety net to many more of our most vulnerable citizens, and thanks to your efforts earlier, the safety net also includes the expansion of our great prescription drug programs PACE (Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly) and PACENET (Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly Needs Enhancement Tier), which, compared to 2002, now helps 42 percent more senior citizens.

And finally, the medical malpractice reforms enacted over the last 4 years are clearly working: The number of practicing physicians in Pennsylvania has remained stable; malpractice insurance rates are decreasing; malpractice claims are down by more than one-third since 2002; and the dollar value of claims paid last year from the Mcare Fund (Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error Fund) was the lowest in more than a decade. In fact, for the last 3 years, our two largest private insurers have not only not increased their rates, but this year reduced them by 7 and 11 percent. Together, I believe we can drive these costs down even further, and we must ensure that as we cover the uninsured, we maintain our commitment to help health-care providers purchase medical malpractice liability insurance.

There is no question that we made a good start in addressing health issues in general and the Prescription for Pennsylvania in particular, but I urge you to work with me to finish the job and ensure access to health care that is affordable to all.

It should shock the conscience of all of us and of every Pennsylvanian to know that nearly 800,000 of our fellow citizens lack health insurance. They pay a terrible price, but we do, too, because when they arrive at a hospital emergency room in need of treatment for which they cannot pay, we all pay the bill.

Expanding affordable health care makes sense, and investing in ways to provide it while reducing its cost for Pennsylvania companies is a vitally important way to improve our economy. In the first 6 years of this decade, health-care premiums skyrocketed by more than 75 percent. During that same period, 450,000 workers lost employer-provided health insurance in Pennsylvania, more than any other State in the Union except California. And at the same time, three States have already enacted plans to make affordable health-care coverage available to all their citizens.

We cannot kid ourselves any longer. The cost of escalating health coverage is crippling small business in Pennsylvania, and for growing numbers of our citizens, lack of health insurance can literally be a death sentence. If you are a working Pennsylvanian without health insurance and you get cancer, you may be able to get sporadic treatment in hospital emergency rooms, but you will never be able to get access to the consistent treatment and the extraordinarily expensive medications to win the battle to stay alive.

There really is only one answer: We must tell our sickest Pennsylvanians that we are going to help them by ensuring access to health care for every citizen, and we are going to do it this year.

Cover All Pennsylvanians is the means to achieve this objective. When I introduced it last year, I said that the program would be supported by the State and offered through private insurance companies. The key is that all uninsured adults in Pennsylvania, no matter what their employment status or income level, will have the chance to purchase affordable health insurance under our program.

And let me be clear about how we intend to pay for it. When I introduced the program last year, I said the funding support could come through Federal Medicaid funds and enrollee premiums, redirecting current funds that are used for our adultBasic program, and new and increased taxes on tobacco products – a tax widely supported by our citizens. I also called for the creation of a fair share assessment. But to help achieve consensus in support of the program, earlier this year I proposed

an alternative funding approach that taps the surpluses from the State's Health Care Provider Retention Account, which helps physicians defray the cost of their medical malpractice premiums. Now, let us be clear about this. We can both help our doctors meet their medical malpractice costs and give working Pennsylvanians access to affordable health insurance with these funds.

Four years ago I asked you to help the medical malpractice situation by creating an abatement for doctors from their Mcare requirements to pay under the Mcare Fund. You did so, and we did it by raising the cigarette tax 25 cents. If we raise the cigarette tax 25 cents to help our doctors – and we should have – can anybody here say no to raising our cigarette tax 10 percent to help uninsured Pennsylvanians get health care?

So while we can discuss alternatives about how to pay for it, it is well past the time to commit to providing affordable health insurance to all of our citizens. It is the right thing to do, and it is also the smart thing to do. Providing coverage for all at reasonable rates means that taxpayers and the ratepayers themselves will not be saddled with having to pay for uncompensated care. It provides a way for small businesses to offer coverage they can afford, positioning themselves to be more competitive than ever before.

Finally, I urge the legislature to enact the other elements of the Prescription for Pennsylvania. Once and for all, let us protect public health by banning smoking in public places. Let us smooth out the spikes in health-care premiums through better management of the individual and small group insurance market. And most of all, let us protect our health consumers by making it illegal, let us protect our health consumers by making it illegal to refuse to insure them at reasonable rates because of a preexisting medical condition. Other States have done it and we can, too, because this reform will ensure that in the future, a diagnosis of cancer will no longer be an automatic death sentence for any Pennsylvanian.

Now, I recognize that there will be those who argue that health-care reform is too intrusive or too expensive or their concerns about the expanding role of State government compels us to resist implementing these reforms. The fact is that Cover All Pennsylvanians and our entire Prescription for Pennsylvania will add no more than 100 State employees. And the facts make it perfectly clear that when it comes to health-care reform, the most expensive option remains doing nothing. Added together, health-care inefficiencies last year cost Pennsylvanians more than \$7 billion, an amount equal to more than 25 percent of our entire State General Fund budget.

So let us act to ensure greater affordability, greater access, and improved level of care for all of us, while improving the competitiveness of Pennsylvania business.

The great strides that we make in Protecting Our Progress – through strategic short- and long-term investments in our economy, establishing Pennsylvania as a national leader in the effort to reduce American dependence on nonrenewable energy sources and foreign oil, and in seizing the initiative to control spiraling health-care costs – all of these measures bode well for Pennsylvania's ability to survive and thrive in a time of national economic recession.

But I do not want to mislead you. The truth is, no matter how well we prepare, we are not out of the woods by any means. Despite our progress, ours is a boat that can still be swamped by the shifting tides of the national economy. As a result, this State

budget is very challenging, and it requires that we spend our resources as wisely as possible.

For these reasons, it is a low-growth budget with an increase of just 4.2 percent over the current year's budget, keeping pace with the current 4.1-percent inflation rate. And the majority of these increases are for the funding of mandated and essential services like medical assistance and corrections. Moreover, this budget makes it clear that as a government, we must lead by example in a challenging economy, and so we must continue to squeeze every nickel of waste and inefficiency from the cost of our government.

Today I am happy to report to you the Commonwealth's administrative spending is still 2.3 percent lower than it was 5 years ago. That means we are spending over 2 percent less in real dollars on the business of running the government, without even adjusting for inflation, and we have implemented a variety of cost-saving measures to drive down the cost of government by \$1.2 billion annually – savings that we redirected into expanding and improving citizen services.

And we have done so with no discernible reduction in productivity. To the contrary, all signs point to higher productivity levels at a wide variety of State agencies. For example, the Governor's Action Team, under the great leadership of Secretary Yablonsky, whose mission it is to retain and attract new business to Pennsylvania, assists 25 percent more companies today than it did in 2002.

The Department of Environmental Protection issues more than 2,000 additional permits each year than it did in 2003. And for the first time in decades, DEP now regularly issues permits in less than a month, and they have done it without any staff increases.

More than 17,000 additional applications for PACE and PACENET benefits were processed in 2007 by the Department of Aging than were processed in 2002.

But recognizing that State government has become significantly more productive and efficient as a result of those initiatives, we nevertheless understand that we must do more in this regard. For these reasons, I have asked our agencies and departments to cut their preliminary budgets by \$100 million.

Now, let me make one— Please.

Let me make one final point on the subject of State spending. The critics have made something of a sport out of attacking the amount that the Commonwealth spends each year on "welfare." The clear implication of those attacks is that we are pursuing an agenda that seeks to expand the "welfare State."

Well, the time has come to stop demonizing the welfare budget. The fact is, the fact is, its growth is not fueled by welfare recipients. I want you to listen carefully to these facts. Since 2003, the Commonwealth has been recognized and awarded cash prizes repeatedly by the Federal government for its effective oversight of the food stamp program, the child support enforcement program, and other welfare programs. Today, our welfare rolls are lower than any time since 1961 – since 1961. The principal reason for the increasing Department of Public Welfare's budget is rising medical assistance costs, incurred through programs that care for the elderly and disabled in communities all across the Commonwealth. But let me tell you, those costs would rise even higher were it not for the terrific work of Estelle Richman and her team, Secretary Richman, in trying to hold down those costs. And we will be presenting, and we will be presenting, we will be presenting to you a lot of cost containment measures that you

have to act on, that Secretary Richman has found will help us keep over \$600 million of potential increases off the budget. And all of you who rail at the increases in the welfare budget, I want to see those hands go up and vote "yes" for allowing Secretary Richman to make those cuts and constrain those costs. If you vote "no," I am going to report it, and your ability to criticize that welfare budget should be ended once and for all. These are necessary and appropriate expenses— Thank you. These are necessary and appropriate expenses to be sure, and it is our obligation to fund them.

If you think the widow of a World War II veteran in a nursing home is not entitled to medical assistance, you are sorely mistaken, and if you do not, then by no means can you justify attacks on our medical assistance increases. So let us pledge today, so let us pledge today to stop misleading our citizens about these costs, because the inaccurate attacks on these vital social programs strike fear in the hearts of seniors and the disabled whose lives depend on these very programs.

On a happier note, finally and proudly, I want to turn to the investments that we have set forth for public education in this budget. We have made historic progress in improving the opportunities for young people across the Commonwealth to obtain a quality public education. Teachers and administrators all over Pennsylvania have worked diligently to maximize the benefit of the wise investments we have made together in pre-K and early childhood education, tutoring, high school reforms, Classrooms for the Future, and the accountability block grant.

Back in 2003, critics said that money alone would never solve the problems of public education, but the fact is that many of our public schools back then were desperately short of the funding they needed to even have a slight chance at improving quality education. But working together, we are closing that gap, and the results demonstrate that our investments have been worthwhile.

The percentage of students who have grade-level or better skills has increased in every grade since 2002. In fact, according to the most respected national experts who annually produce the Nation's Education Report Card, Pennsylvania is one of only nine States that have made significant improvement in both elementary reading and math skills since 2003. And I know that each and every one of you was as excited as I was to read the "Quality Counts" reports recently issued by Education Week that found only three States in the nation doing better than Pennsylvania on a whole host of key achievement indicators, including our number one ranking in early childhood education improvement.

Our progress is undeniable, but so is the challenge before us. Forty percent of our high school graduates still cannot do 12th grade work. We have collectively made a commitment that by 2014, every student in our schools will be able to read, write, and do math at grade level. I am determined to work with you to live up to that commitment.

This budget continues that commitment to place a high priority on Protecting Our Progress in education and in building a funding system that rewards achievement and makes strategic investments in proven programs that enhance our children's future. This budget continues to support the many successful innovations that we have implemented together since 2003, including the extraordinarily impactful Classrooms for the Future, which has parents, teachers, and students abuzz with excitement about the new way of learning in our high schools; the dual enrollment programs that offer high school students the

chance to earn college credits; Pre-K Counts, which together with our other childhood resources means that next year 35 percent of our eligible children will be enrolled in a quality pre-K program; the nationally respected "Science: It's Elementary" program; and our especially effective accountability block grant, which is responsible for boosting our full-day kindergarten rate up to 63 percent.

This budget also provides a 5.9-percent increase in the basic education subsidy and \$30 million more for the special education subsidy.

But most importantly, this budget begins the process of building a new school funding formula that will finally provide all Pennsylvania public schools with the resources they need to provide a quality education, and it is built, and it is built on the study that was done at the direction of the General Assembly.

As you know, the General Assembly's recently released costing-out report provides specific school funding targets for every Pennsylvania school district, remarkably, the first such document of its kind in State history. The study found that the adequacy gap for basic education funding is \$4 billion, of which we believe \$2 billion is the State's fair share.

I am proud to report that this budget incorporates the findings of your costing-out study and includes a new funding formula that phases in over 6 years the funds to help all Pennsylvania school districts reach the funding targets established by this groundbreaking research.

This new approach to school funding accomplishes three goals:

One, it ensures adequate resources for every school district.

Two, it demands the establishment of new measures to provide strict accountability to Pennsylvania taxpayers.

And three, it charts a course for future funding that is both responsible and sustainable, subject to challenges of the State budget or the national economy.

This proposal anticipates that it will take 6 years to phase in the State share of adequacy funding, and it relies on strict accountability controls for the use of these new resources. I strongly agree with the sentiment voiced by a Representative of the House Republicans who said in Sunday's Philadelphia Inquirer that we cannot continue to give new funds to districts without holding them accountable. We must ensure that more money means more and better educational services for our students. So I am proposing that we require that new State funds over the Act 1 index rate – and that is the funding that is going toward year 1 of the phase-in of the costing-out study – that that new funding be spent on programs that improve student achievement, such as extra time for learning, new and more rigorous courses, advanced teacher training, early childhood education, bolstering the recruitment of more effective teachers and administrators, and then making sure that the compensation for these school leaders is tied to performance as well.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly with respect to accountability, this plan calls for the Department of Education to serve as a special watchdog for 55 school districts identified statewide as needing improvement on the No Child Left Behind standards. For these districts, the department must approve all individual school district plans for investing new taxpayers' dollars so that we can be confident that the resources are being targeted in the most effective manner for the children of these schools.

Ladies and gentlemen, your costing-out study makes good sense, and it sets targets that we must achieve if we are to meet

the 2014 goals of No Child Left Behind. I have incorporated the study's findings and recommendations into the budget because they help protect the historic progress we have already made – we have come so far – and because they offer what may be our best chance in a generation to adequately fund public education in Pennsylvania. For the sake of our children's future and for the sake of Pennsylvania's continued competitiveness in the global economy, which depends so much on the availability of highly skilled workers, we must come together to achieve the goals of the study as incorporated in this budget.

In the final analysis, good government is about finding ways to meet the challenges that we face each year and respond to them in ways that serve the interests of the taxpayers without losing sight of the long-term consequences of our actions. In other words, it is our job to move the Commonwealth forward and then protect that progress.

The budget I propose to you today confronts the looming prospect of a national recession by proposing a series of economic stimulus initiatives that will prevent, or at least mitigate, its impact on Pennsylvania families and businesses.

It is a slow-growth budget, one that keeps a tight rein on State spending even as it calls for renewed efforts to reduce the cost of government. But it also focuses on our future, calling for strategic investments in energy, health care, and education to ensure that Pennsylvania is positioned both now and in the future to take its rightful place among the leading States in the nation.

But in the end, as always, it is a budget that compels us to work together to address the challenges that we face. Over the last 5 years that it has been my honor to serve as your Governor, I have consistently been reminded in ways large and small that while we disagree, and at times disagree passionately, on a variety of issues, on the things that really matter, we share remarkably similar views.

We all want to strengthen our economy to create new jobs and opportunities for our fellow citizens. We all share an abiding commitment to improving the lives of individuals and families in every corner of the Commonwealth, and we all want a better future for our children.

We have the power to achieve all of these objectives, and the time to start is right now. Because of the conditions that exist today, the people of Pennsylvania are watching us more closely than ever to see if we can put aside our differences and get things done. I am certain that working together, we can prove that Harrisburg can and will be the catalyst for the change that allays their fears and brightens their future.

Thank you.

### JOINT SESSION ADJOURNED

The LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. The Chair asks the members of the House and Senate to please remain seated for just a moment while the members of the Senate and the Cabinet 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 come to order.

### MOTION TO PRINT PROCEEDINGS OF JOINT SESSION

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the majority leader, who moves that the proceedings of the joint session of the Senate and the House of Representatives held this 5th day of February 2008 be printed in full in this day's Legislative Journal.

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

### SENATE BILL FOR CONCURRENCE

The clerk of the Senate, being introduced, presented the following bill for concurrence:

#### SB 497, PN 1610

Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, February 5, 2008.

### SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

The SPEAKER. For what purpose does the lady, Representative Youngblood, rise?

Ms. YOUNGBLOOD. To announce an Information Technology Subcommittee meeting at the call of the Chair in room 121, East Wing.

The SPEAKER. At the call of recess?

Ms. YOUNGBLOOD. Yes.

The SPEAKER. The Chair thanks the lady.

Ms. YOUNGBLOOD. You are welcome.

The SPEAKER. Members will please take their seats. Caucuses will break up. The Chair is about to recognize the leaders for comments.

Members will take their seats. Members will please take their seats. Conferences will break up. Sergeants at Arms will clear the aisles.

### STATEMENT BY MR. D. EVANS

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes Representative Dwight Evans.

Mr. D. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, the Governor throughout this process and his speech talked about acting now, and this is just the beginning of the process. But I would like to do something that is highly unusual. Last year I offered an olive branch to my colleague, Representative Mario Civera. This year I would like to take a much more direct action, something that the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania deserve.

The Governor said that he would like to deliver rebates up to \$400 per household for 475,000 working families. I have said consistently we need to put money in people's pockets. As a result of that comment, I have here today the blue-back for members to sign on to this. I will introduce it today. I will bring it up in committee tomorrow. We will send a message to 475,000 Pennsylvanians. The message we will send to them, the message we will send to them is that we want to put \$400 in

their pocket. The Governor has laid out very specifically the need to get this started.

We in this process must act, so I am asking members on both sides of the aisle – both sides of the aisle – there will be a form down here you can sign and you can sign on to this bill today. We are here to demonstrate to the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that we can work together, that we can move this process, that we need to begin to say to them that we want to change the lives of the people in this State, and the only way we can change it is if we act together. No more of this partisanship and this one-upmanship; this is about us working together. This is us working for 475,000 Pennsylvanians.

I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, not as a Democrat and not as a Democrat from Philadelphia but as a Pennsylvanian prepared to work together. We want to do that and we want to do it now. We recognize that this slowdown in the economy or recession is not the fault of the 475,000 people. The reality of it is, we must act and we must act now.

It is clear from the Governor's proposal that he also wants to act, and we as a General Assembly, as Pennsylvanians, need to recognize the importance of us working together. We can no longer have those kinds of petty differences. We all must recognize, if we are to move this State forward, it will take a collective effort. It will take an effort like we have never had before. But we here in Pennsylvania must begin to recognize that we must invest in our people, we must invest in programs, and we must invest in policies that will keep this State strong.

With this budget, we will increase education spending by 6 percent. Imagine that, a 6-percent increase, or \$291 million for all our school districts. With this budget, we will renew our commitment to affordable health care for all Pennsylvanians. I did not say Republicans, I did not say Democrats; I said all Pennsylvanians.

With this budget, we will continue our economic stimulus plan that impacts communities across the State. We will redevelop old industrial sites; fix our roads, our bridges, our dams; invest in research; and help the business community. With this budget, we will continue to move our energy independence. Pennsylvania is a national leader in this effort.

With this budget, we will make Pennsylvania safer by spending \$20 million on our policing and patrol program. That means we will have police officers throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And, Mr. Speaker, with this budget, we will be putting \$130 million into the pockets of 475,000 working families. That is up to \$400 for 475,000 people.

Let us show the people of Pennsylvania that we are not a Democrat or a Republican but that we are Pennsylvanians. Let us show those 475,000 Pennsylvanians that we are prepared to work together. These working families are bearing the brunt of the economic slowdown – the increase in gas prices, energy, and other necessities – representing a much larger portion on the working families of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. These families need a break. These are the families we should be helping. Let us give 475,000 working families a break today. We have the money; we need to put it in their pockets. This is not our money; this is the people's money.

So I am asking you, I am asking you, first time ever, I have been chairman of the Appropriations Committee for 18 years. I have gone through 26 budgets. Here is the blue-back. We are asking all of you, I hope I get 203 members to sign this,

203 members to sign to say we want to put in the pockets of 475,000 Pennsylvanians \$400.

So support me on this gesture so we can move this forward, and then we will immediately begin to start the budget process. We will have an open budget process. It will be a transparent process. We are going to do an aspect on what we call the ordinary citizens. We are going to allow the ordinary citizens to testify before the Appropriations Committee in addition to the members. So we are going to do the citizens, we are going to do the members, and we are going to be taking the Appropriations Committee on the road.

We will be having subcommittee meetings all throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – in rural Pennsylvania, in urban Pennsylvania, and in suburban Pennsylvania. We are going to make sure that all Pennsylvanians are involved in this political process. And we recognize, we recognize that this is a process that we need to work together. So I am asking all of you as Pennsylvanians, not as Democrats, not as Republicans, but as Pennsylvanians, let us move this State forward and let us start now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### STATEMENT BY MR. CIVERA

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the minority Appropriations chairman, Mr. Civera.

Mr. CIVERA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I come to this podium this afternoon with some sense of sadness, some sense of misdirection as far as how the State government should operate, and some sense of a lack of enthusiasm to what we should be providing for the people of Pennsylvania.

The majority chairman of the Appropriations Committee has mentioned today that he has a bill that he wants us to cosponsor, a bill that goes out across the State to give a rebate, and as both of us sit here and listen to that idea, what about the working-class people of Pennsylvania that go to work every single day, raise three and four children, and pay taxes?

Mr. Speaker, they are the ones with the strong voice. They are the ones that guide us in the direction that this Commonwealth, through our schools, through our churches, through our form of religion, they are the ones that are the backbone of the Commonwealth. And today is a day that basically I was waiting to hear from the Governor about a different approach in how we present the people's business and how we spend the taxpayers' money in this chamber – \$1.2 billion of spending; since 2003, over \$7 billion of spending; and sooner or later, all these initiatives and all these programs are not going to be reality.

My approach, as the minority chairman of the Appropriations Committee and our committee, is to go back this year to evaluate the programs that have been put in these budgets for the last 7 years, the programs that mean something to Pennsylvanians. And as we looked at last year's budget, as we looked and we looked and we set a new turn in how we do the people's business from what we learned from last year, we went through a situation that we could not get a budget done that was on a timely basis, that our people that worked for this great Commonwealth were told that they were going to be laid off or furloughed for no reason with a \$550 million surplus, and again we are looking at another controversial document that is going

to drive this General Assembly, and hopefully not, into extra weeks where we do not have to be.

Mr. Speaker, we want to do what is right for the public of Pennsylvania. We want to properly educate our citizens, and we want to do the right thing when it comes to our dollars. We just cannot afford to spend the money that we have been spending in the past years. We just do not have those resources; we just do not have those resources, and that is something that we all need to be in tune to in how we do this, in what we do, and what we accomplish.

The gentleman from Philadelphia mentions the idea of police, and we have had some of our own members in the General Assembly, whether it would be the local police departments or whether it would be the State Police departments, where money has been put into past budgets to add on to our State Police, and until today, we have not done that. But this police initiative, I happen to represent Upper Darby Township, which most of you know that because I bring that up in this chamber many days. It borders the city of Philadelphia. The city of Philadelphia has major problems when it comes to crime. We looked at this initiative. A hundred new police officers go to the city of Philadelphia, and the city that has 80,000 people, that borders the city of Philadelphia, might get 5 – might get 5. Is that what we are all about? Is that what we are supposed to be doing as members of the legislature? Do we not cover every boundary, every different area of the Commonwealth, as far as law enforcement is concerned? I realize that that city, being so close to it and close to the media market, has a major problem, but so do other towns in Delaware County and in the southeastern part of Pennsylvania. So when you look and you are saying that you are going to put more policemen on the street, let us look at the entire 67 counties and the other towns that we have to do.

The other situation is, when we go back to the \$1.2 billion, a 4-percent increase in our revenue growth, we cannot keep continuing to do that. We have to be responsible, because as our Constitution says, we have to balance a budget, and it has to be a balanced budget. We do not have the luxury that the Federal government has, that they do not need to do that. So when they come out with different types of programs, they can raise the money or do what they have to do. We have to be accountable. That is what we are here for. That is what we take our oath of office for.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I see those kinds of ideas being put forward to this General Assembly, is it realistic? Is it realistic in our estimates of spending? Is it realistic in our estimates of income? I do not believe it is. I believe that we have to be looking at different ideas.

When we had the Appropriations hearing last week, and as proud as I was of our Republican members that serve on that committee and the direct questions that were asked, we were able to expose different ideas other than what the Governor had indicated to – other than what the Governor had indicated to. Our spending right now is approximately \$28 billion. That is \$2,000 for every man, woman, and child in Pennsylvania. That is a lot of money; that is a lot of money, and when we look at surrounding States that have similar or worse problems, Pennsylvania does basically do a good job as far as what we do as far as our citizens are concerned. But we need to do better; we need to do better. We cannot afford to stay on a spending plan that we had previously been for the last 5 years or 6 years. We need to change our ways.



So when the majority chairman says that he has his ideas and he is going to take the Appropriations Committee on the road, I welcome that, to listen to what the people of Pennsylvania are going to suggest. And what I also welcome, too, is let us not lose sight of what we have to do as far as our working-class people in Pennsylvania.

Before I end my remarks, last year the majority chairman gave me an olive branch that I was kind of happy and laughed about, and we were kind of needled throughout the budget season of what, you know, what was going to take place, and that was brought up maybe a couple of times in the halls of this House. But this year, when I look at this budget, there is only one other item that I could think of to give the majority chairman – just listen to this – and that is a magician's hat, because he is going to need all the luck in the world to get this through, and we also have a Republican elephant that can help us work together. So with this budget, I present him with this magician's hat, because he is going to need all the luck in the world to get this through.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### STATEMENT BY MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. DeWEESE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The previous speaker, the honorable chairman, Mr. Civera, has focused some of his remarks today upon the middle class, upon a broad-based focus on working families of middle income. It would have been heartening to have heard a similar speech last week during the property tax debate when a very aggressive turn, when a very aggressive turn was engineered by our Republican colleagues away from a broad-based tax effort on behalf of working families and focused upon only one cohort, a worthy and honorable cohort, but certainly not the same kind of speech we hear today. It is very difficult to juxtapose the gentleman's heartfelt concern today about people of middle income and the tax burden that they share when you remember his actions just a few days ago, when he could have leaped into the breach and made a very, very similar and solitary stand, albeit on his side, for working families.

Now, it is incredible that the Bush administration in Washington, DC, in a terrible deficit situation, is still thinking beyond the curve and anxious to give an economic stimulus package to the nation. They are doing that from a debt- and deficit-ridden Federal government. The Honorable Governor Rendell is trying to do a similar thing with our modest surplus. There is a colossal difference in the effort of a national government using deficit spending to stimulate the government of the nation and our own fiscally prudent Governor and fiscally prudent administration, and concomitantly fiscally prudent General Assembly, trying, at least Chairman Evans and some of us are trying with the Governor, to help stimulate Pennsylvania's economy.

It should be noted that the Governor said it, and I will say it again. I do not have the numbers in front of me, but they are easily available. I think California's deficit was around \$13 billion, but with Florida and Ohio and a concatenation of other States having terrible deficits, there is no doubt that Pennsylvania's vibrant economic circumstance is in large measure due to the fiscal stewardship of America's mayor

turned Pennsylvania Governor, a business Democrat of the first magnitude, Governor Rendell. You all know because we have said it many times from this microphone, even in the Ridge and Casey years, that we have fewer State workers per capita than any of our 49 sister States. And now, Governor Rendell is trying to cut 100 million additional dollars from the administrative costs of State government. That should not go unnoted. He is trying to cut deep into the operational costs of his departments, and he has done that consistently. He has invested in our collective enterprises through Business in Our Sites and enumerable other economic development programs, and you know, folks, it just might be the reason that we are not in the same parlous and perilous fiscal circumstances that they are in the Buckeye State or the Sunshine State or the Golden State. It could just be his leadership.

And it was incredible the paucity of clapping that I noticed on the other side of the aisle. I did notice, I did notice that Micozzie, my honorable friend, Chairman Micozzie, very, very quietly tapped his hands once or twice, and the indomitable Representative of Pennsylvania's agriculture community, the Honorable Mr. Hershey – of course, it could be that his tenure is in the twilight moments – but he clapped a few times. But it was incredible that we have a strong economy in Pennsylvania, comparatively speaking. It was incredible that the investments in education and health care were not lauded by my brother and sister Republicans. It is incredible that when he is trying to invest in the Salk Fund and in biomedical research around this State so that we can be a crusader in the cause of fighting cancer and in building an infrastructure for medical research in this State that will last for decades, it was incredible that the limited enthusiasms of my worthy colleagues were so manifest. The silence, as the hackneyed phrase goes, was deafening.

But nevertheless, Rendell, Governor of our 12 million citizens, had an enthusiastic perspective. He called for bipartisanship. Evans from Philadelphia, Chairman Evans, has called for bipartisanship, and even the lighthearted jocularity and friendship evinced by Mr. Civera adumbrates a friendly season. We are amongst the most partisan of the 50 States. It would be a grand journey if we could move away from that heritage. I do not know that we can, but we shall try.

Mr. Civera mentioned that there are \$2,000 per person being spent around the State, and when you factor in, as the Governor indicated, the widow of the World War II veteran who is living in a nursing home and receiving a great deal of help from the Department of Welfare of our Commonwealth, when you think that it is costing \$35,000 or \$40,000 to keep a man or woman incarcerated, when you think of what it costs to develop our State parks and State highways and keep our troopers on the road, it is a very expensive enterprise, but in spite of that, the stewardship of this administration and of our General Assembly and Republicans and Democrats alike in the House and Senate deserve credit. We are not experiencing the depredations at the budget table that our sister States are experiencing.

And for all of the jaundice and vexations enumerated by the honorable gentleman from Delaware County, it should be noted that he and many of his colleagues went along, not just for the ride, but they were the wheelhorses in the advance of the first six of Governor Rendell's budgets, or at least the first five. The fact is, we have compromised in the past, and if we do not compromise in the future, we will be in a terrible circumstance.

So with a picture that cannot be painted yet but with a sketch that should be suggested, the only way we are going to serve the

men and women that we represent back home is if we are bipartisan. And the Governor has set the stage for a bipartisan dialogue. I am confident that that is the direction we shall go in. I think this is a very good draft document. We all know that a budget day and a budget speech is just that – a budget day and a budget speech. It is a blueprint, it is a good blueprint, and I look forward to working with my Republican colleagues as we make it more definitive, more exact, and more responsive to the citizenry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### STATEMENT BY MINORITY LEADER

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the minority leader, Representative Smith.

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

I have got to admit, there is a lot of material out here today, but at the risk of overplaying my hometown, this day just feels a little bit like Groundhog Day all over again. It is a simple story. The Governor comes out, he comes up on the podium, the lights hit him, he sees his shadow, and he proposes a lot more increases in taxes, more increases in borrowing, and more increases in spending. It has been the same story year after year after year.

I was encouraged, though, Mr. Speaker, that the Governor on one hand was putting a very positive light on Pennsylvania's economy compared to other States, and while he conflicts that message a little bit by saying we need to borrow and dig ourselves deeper in the hole, which is kind of a de facto deficit spending of its own right, that he wants to dig us further in a hole in an economic stimulus thing, while on the same hand he is saying we are doing really well.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the reason Pennsylvania's budget is in relatively good shape, however, is because mostly this caucus pushed very, very hard last year to control spending. Had we not been laying on that side of the budget table with all of our weight, which is the minority weight – we are the Little Sisters of the Poor in the legislative scheme of things – but we put all of our weight on controlling spending last year, and I would suggest had we not and spending would have gone further out of control, we would be in bigger trouble, we would be like those other States. So I am glad to hear that that is a positive, and I would suggest that that was in great part because of our efforts to try to control spending last year.

I noticed the Governor said that this budget would increase spending by 4.2 percent and that that was equal to, and he used the number, 4.1-percent inflation rate. I am anxious to see what the background is for that because our information suggests that the annual projected inflation rate for this period of time is around 2.3 percent. That, to me, sounds more realistic. So we will be anxious as we discuss the budget to find out just what the basis is for a 4.1-percent annual inflation rate. I do not know that that jives with our numbers, Mr. Speaker.

I would also note in a broad light that while it was not mentioned here, somewhere deep buried in that budget book is the notation, and every administration has some company that specializes in economic predictions, they use the Global Insight, and that is perfectly – I mean, we are in no disagreement there, but these companies when they do this for the Commonwealth, they usually give you three predictions: kind of a conservative and moderate and a liberal version, if you want – not to use

those words per se – or a pessimistic and optimistic and a moderate version. This budget that the Governor has proposed is based on the most optimistic of Global Insight's, the most optimistic economic future for the coming year. I would say that as a caution. I guess I would have been inclined to be a little more cautious. I am not sure I would have gone with the most pessimistic view, but I think it is questionable and worth us noting that the projections in this budget are based on the most optimistic view that Global Insight would put forth.

Mr. Speaker, the Governor talked about cutting \$100 million in government operations. This budget proposes a 4- to 7-percent increase – it varies – in general government operations. Those are just the basic department programming operations. To me, those two numbers are not quite set in my mind, and I certainly will want to reconcile that as we go through the budget deliberations.

Mr. Speaker, this budget proposes some pretty big increases, and I think it is important for the people of Pennsylvania to recognize some of the basic facts: Pre-K through 12, the total funding would be \$9.94 billion; higher education, \$2 billion; welfare, \$10.3 billion; corrections, \$1.6 billion. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of money in a couple of strategic departments.

I am a little concerned, Mr. Speaker, in that the Governor, while telling us that we need to be bipartisan, and the majority leader and the majority Appropriations chairman just talked about being bipartisan, I found it a little bit concerning, I guess, that while some are talking about being bipartisan, the Governor virtually threatens to report us if we question the DPW (Department of Public Welfare) numbers, if we question welfare numbers. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the challenge is on us to question the numbers. That does not mean you are for or against something necessarily. It means you are questioning what the value is that the people of Pennsylvania are getting for their tax dollars, and that is an important point that I think we should make. We need to ask the questions. We need to seek value for the taxpayers of Pennsylvania.

As a sidebar, I would also say on the discussion of being bipartisan, I also just could not help but notice the irony as well that when 60, roughly 60 Democrats vote for something last week and 97, 96, 95 Republicans vote for the same proposal on property tax reform last week, to me, that seemed like a pretty good definition of bipartisanship. Maybe you would rather have it be 90 Democrats and 60 Republicans, but to me, 90 Republicans and 60 Democrats sounds pretty bipartisan. But yet, as we are working together, that legislation disappears from the calendar yesterday. So just a little sidebar on bipartisanship.

Back to the budget, Mr. Speaker, on education, basic education, a 6-percent increase, and I was very encouraged, Mr. Speaker, that the Governor talked about accountability, because quite frankly, what I did not probably agree with his characterization was how the Governor could put our current statistics in a positive light when in fact we are failing by those same academic standards, those same academic measures. Kids are graduating unable to read, write, or do math. Fifty-seven thousand high school graduates last year – that is 45 percent – failed at reading, writing, and math proficiency. Eighth graders, 64 percent cannot read at grade level; 62 percent cannot do math at grade level. Mr. Speaker, that is a failing grade. Fourth graders, 60 percent cannot read at grade level; 53 percent cannot do math at grade level. Community colleges perform some type of remedial education on 45 to 60 percent of

students entering school. Mr. Speaker, as I see it, I am not criticizing the community colleges for doing that, but frankly, that is a waste of money. That is paying for it twice. These kids just came through a basic education school that took them from K through 12, and now we are paying again to teach them how to read.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate and I will look very closely at the accountability provisions that the Governor referenced, and I am very encouraged by them because it is absolutely the direction we need to go, and this is accountability on our schools as a unit, it is accountability on our teachers as a unit, and yes, Mr. Speaker, it is demanding accountability from our parents of young children in this Commonwealth as well.

In a way, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure we should be giving schools any more money until they teach kids basically how to read. Real basic stuff; that is why it is called basic education. Mr. Speaker, we need, we need very much to put this kind of accountability into our education system. New money, new results – that is what we are really looking for, Mr. Speaker.

On the borrowing, Mr. Speaker, the Governor indicated that the increase in RCAP (Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program) would cost us about \$11 million more in debt service next year. That is a nice, nice number. That is a digestible number. We can afford that. What is not said is that if we were to do all of the increase in borrowing that the Governor has proposed, it would increase our debt service roughly \$125 million next year. Our debt service would go roughly from \$870 million, just so I am clear, that means when the final budget bill goes to the Governor's desk, the first thing that is in there right at the opening bell is \$870 million to pay debt service. If the Governor were to get all that he has proposed, next year that would be \$1 billion. Right off the top of every tax dollar, take \$1 billion and send it to the bank to pay for debt service, to pay for that interest charge on the money we have borrowed.

And the Governor talked about all the shovel-ready projects that were waiting to be done. I just kind of put my own definition to shovel-ready, and I thought shovel-ready must be ones that have already been promised. Those are shovel-ready projects, ones that have been promised by somebody around the building. I wonder if that included the Chester soccer stadium. I noticed a big story in the Philadelphia papers. You read that story, it was a done deal. It is done. They are just waiting for the check to clear. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that that is the intent of this legislature.

The Governor spent a little bit of time, not much, and I do not mean that critically, on transportation issues, on infrastructure. And from all of us, Mr. Speaker, maintaining a good, solid transportation infrastructure is probably one of the clear responsibilities of State government that we all agree on. I had to wonder, though, Mr. Speaker, if the Governor, and I really mean this as a rhetorical question, I had to wonder if in fact the Governor is suggesting that Act 44 is not meeting the needs of Pennsylvania. Is it a failure? Has it not succeeded or does he expect that it will not succeed, and is that the reason that he is looking for additional money for bridges in Pennsylvania?

Mr. Speaker, one or two other points on health care. There is no one in this legislature who does not want to see every Pennsylvanian have coverage for health care. Because one person might say they are for universal health care does not mean that the other does not want to see the people of

Pennsylvania have access to adequate and affordable health care. That is a mutual goal, Mr. Speaker. However, there is a pretty significant difference in how the Governor is approaching this and how we think we should approach this, and without getting into that whole debate, I think we can do this without raising taxes, without creating a new bureaucracy – I was also amazed that you could do that with 100 people – without creating a new bureaucracy, and without creating newly uninsured. I think they refer to it now as the crowd-out.

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental difference in what the Governor has proposed to expand health care affordably and provide access to all Pennsylvanians is that his plan would create a new program to provide insurance for those currently unidentified people – those currently identified people who are uninsured. Once that program is started, it will create a crowd-out of another sector of the population who would then not have insurance, and the only logical response would be to expand that program. It will create a huge bureaucracy at the end of the day. And throughout that period of transition, you will give insurance to one group while another group is losing it.

Mr. Speaker, our health-care proposal, one that we would like to work with the rest of the parties in this building, can do this without increasing taxes, without creating a new bureaucracy, and without generating crowd-out, without taking insurance away from some to give it to others.

Mr. Speaker, there was also some talk and the majority Appropriations chairman talked about his legislation to provide a tax rebate, basically taking money from the budgetary stabilization fund, is fundamentally what it does. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how you give a rebate when we have already provided a special tax provision so that these same individuals are not paying income taxes. It is just giving people money back that they did not send. It is a left-handed welfare program, Mr. Speaker.

We are not against helping people in need, Mr. Speaker, but at the end of the day, we cannot lose sight of the people that actually provide those jobs, that generate that economy. We need to stay focused, Mr. Speaker, on controlling spending in this budget, controlling our borrowing, Mr. Speaker, and making Pennsylvania's tax structure more competitive so that these same people that this proposal would give \$400 to at a one-time shot, that these same people have good jobs in the future, because that is the ultimate way out of this dilemma that we may face.

Mr. Speaker, it took us 227 years for the State budget to get to \$19 billion, and it took us 6 years to get from \$19 to \$28 billion. To me, that is a pretty good example of spending being out of control. I think, Mr. Speaker, that that is our number one priority. We must control our spending. We must give the people of Pennsylvania value for their tax dollar. That is what they really— People, people will pay taxes less grudgingly, I am not going to say they will be happy to pay them, nobody likes to pay taxes, but they can accept paying taxes when they know they are getting some value back for that dollar. We need to do that in education, Mr. Speaker, we need to do that in welfare, Mr. Speaker, we need to do that across the board in the State budget, and I would challenge the Appropriations Committee as a whole, as I would challenge this body, but it falls squarely on the hands of those in the Appropriations Committee at the initial level, I would challenge them to seek out that value, to review the programs that exist.

Look at some of these education programs that have been created. Are there some of these programs that are providing duplicate services? Do we really need to duplicate these services? Why are we paying schools to educate kids that have gone on to community college when they are not getting educated and taught how to read in the early stages of education? To me, Mr. Speaker, it is about value. It is about our giving the people of Pennsylvania real value, and that is the direction that I think we need to take this Commonwealth's budget. I challenge the committee to really evaluate the programs, all of the spending in the budget.

The Governor talked about the budget savings he has generated, \$1.3 billion, I think was the number used, but he reinvested it somewhere else. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to control the spending. We need to create value for the taxpayers. That is the key, and that is what will keep Pennsylvania successful in the future. That is what will preserve our progress, Mr. Speaker, if we follow that course. It is what put us in a good position this year; it is what will put us in a good position next year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### STATEMENT BY MR. D. EVANS

The SPEAKER. Representative Evans.

Mr. D. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, the last gentleman who spoke, I do not know why he keeps insisting, doing misrepresentation. What I said is, working families, working families, giving back money to working families. Now, I only said what was said by the President of the United States by putting money back into people's pockets. I said that a couple weeks ago. I will tell you how we are going to pay for it, and these people are working families. I am going to keep stressing that. And it is important to understand that they, too, pay taxes. They are just at the bottom of the rung. We have a recession, economic slowdown, whatever you want to call it. I said, give people back \$400, and they must, they must have kids; they must have kids.

So the bottom line to understand in all of this, Mr. Speaker, is, I want to put the offer again. Lisa, can you raise your hand? Lisa is right there. Lisa is going to come around for any of you who would like to sign the bill. You are welcome to sign the bill. This is not just about Democrats or Republicans. It is about Pennsylvanians, 475. You are welcome to sign the bill. Do you want me to rearrange your name up near the top? I will rearrange your name and put it near the top. Do you want your name near the top? I will put your name, because it is not about credit. It is about us working together.

So I do not want you to leave with the impression, because, you know, I really— You know, the Governor was— I just get so tired of when I keep hearing people throw out this word "welfare," and they throw the word "welfare" out kind of like a scare tactic, because that is what I just heard the gentleman just say. He just said, when we talked about this initiative of putting money into the pockets, he threw out welfare. So you know when you throw welfare out, right away you get to a point where you say, oh, welfare, welfare. Well, you know, the only thing you are trying to do is for people who are working, people who pay taxes, one time only, \$400; one time only.

In addition the Governor said, he talked about the earned income tax, which is long term, work a bill out and put it in law. So first he talked about one time only; secondly, it is

\$130 million, which is in the Rainy Day Fund; thirdly, he talked about paying it back; fourth, we talked about a long-term solution. So I want to put the offer out again. So we ought to figure out how to do this.

You can call my office, if you do not want to do it publicly – 717-783-1540 – if you do not want to do it on the floor because you do not want anybody to see you are talking to me. That is 717-783-1540; call my office if you want to join on this bill, because I do not want anyone to be embarrassed like you are talking to me even though you know in good conscience, \$400, one-time-only rebate; one time only.

So I want you to understand, this bill will be introduced. We will bring it up. We will have a discussion. I just think it is a mistake, personally, I think it is a mistake, personally, for your side not to join in. I just heard one of my colleagues say, when Tom Ridge was in, we did \$100. We did \$100 when Tom Ridge was in. We sent all of the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and we did not even worry about their limit. We gave them \$100.

So I am saying to you, \$400, working families, taxpayers, we want to give \$400. So the bill, the bill I have right here— And I do want it to be bipartisan. I want to be very clear. I would like to have the Republicans sign on the bill. I will put your name up near the top. I will make sure we see you out front, let you do all that you wanted to do. One time only; one time only.

So, Mr. Speaker, if anybody would like to sign on— Where is Lisa? Is Lisa, I just saw— Lisa, raise your hand, please. Right there. Just to stop and give her the information. She will put it down on the bill.

Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### STATEMENT BY MR. CLYMER

The SPEAKER. Representative Clymer.

Mr. CLYMER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will be brief. May I speak on the budget?

The SPEAKER. The gentleman is in order and may proceed.

Mr. CLYMER. Thank you.

I just have a few brief observations, and maybe they have been covered, I do not know, but in the \$100 million savings that the Governor has projected, I just wonder how these departments are going to fare, the State Police and the Attorney General. We know that protecting our citizens against crime, against drug abuse, alcohol abuse, these murders and other assorted types of criminal activity, we need to be prepared, and what better agencies then to prosecute criminals, to investigate crimes and criminals are the State Police and Attorney General, so I would hope that we do not see any cuts in those two agencies.

And then secondly, Mr. Speaker, I somehow noticed the Governor did not mention agriculture, which is our number one industry. He mentioned about the need for ethanol, about providing alternative energies, and I certainly can support that, but it is going to be the farm community that is going to provide the substance for ethanol. Not only that, but farming is a dedicated industry where people have to work together. Farm families, among other families, are wonderful families, but I think farm families have it together in that each person in the family has to communicate and work with each other to make farming a success, and if we are going to see this farming

agrobusiness continue in the future, we have to make certain that we are doing our part here in the General Assembly.

And then lastly, the Governor had spoken about long-term consequences of our actions if we do not take prompt action on certain events, and I would like to mention that in the arena of public smoking, which he had mentioned and why that is good for preventative health measures, and I agree, we need to have the prevention of smoking in the public sector, I would hope that the casinos are included, that they are to be excluded from smoking because workers and people who work in the casinos are also impacted, that this special interest group is not carved out but casinos also will be prohibited from having smoking.

And then the Governor had mentioned the importance of families and why families are important to Pennsylvania. Certainly, we all here know how important families are. Mr. Speaker, I have a bill that is still in committee, the Gaming Oversight Committee, that would allow the casinos who provide special perks on selected customers to send out a monthly statement to those families, and that is important because families need to know if a loved one has become addicted to gambling. And too often we learn too late that addiction has taken place and the destruction, the deterioration, dysfunctional families take place. Crime is also a part of that whole scenario. So I am hoping we can work in a bipartisan way to move my legislation that would allow families to receive this monthly statement.

And then finally, Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, in the news recently there has been much mentioned about who should be doing the oversight on the investigation of casino licenses, and we have a bill, it is HB 1450, that is in the Gaming Oversight Committee, that would allow the Pennsylvania State Police and the Attorney General, working together, to have oversight with the Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement. Mr. Speaker, there is a break in the system, and unless we work in a bipartisan way to correct that break, I think we are going to see crime and corruption be the name for casino gambling in Pennsylvania.

So let us work together. Certainly our side is willing to come over and share our legislation and tell you why it is so important to move it forward, and we hope that this issue can be resolved very shortly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### JEFF MITCH PRESENTED

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes Representative Ellis for the purpose of an introduction.

Mr. ELLIS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the opportunity to rise today, because being from the western part of the State, we do not often get a lot of visitors out here, but I have a young gentleman from my hometown that is here today. He is certainly a shining example of what youth can do in this Commonwealth.

He is very active in a group called the YMCA Youth And Government, and many of you have probably heard me speak on that because it is how I got my start in this political arena. The first time I was here, I sat where Representative Kauffman sits now at age 14 and got to sit in here and participate in debates and act like a Representative.

And so what we had this year was Jeff Mitch from Butler County was elected as Pennsylvania's youth governor, and he

has been serving the Commonwealth since last April, and he will be here until this April when the kids come over and take over the Capitol one more time. And you know what is great, Mr. Speaker? At that time we will hear some imaginative speeches and ideas, just like we did today.

So it is an honor for me to have Jeff Mitch here. If you could all please rise and give Jeff a great welcome to the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER. Representative Ellis, would you come to the rostrum, please.

### DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

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

Mr. COHEN. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the House Democratic Caucus to go over the budget in more detail at 3 p.m.; a 3 p.m. meeting of the Democratic Caucus to go over the budget.

In addition, chairmen and leaders will meet at 4 p.m.

### REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

The SPEAKER. Representative Major.

Miss MAJOR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Republicans will not caucus this afternoon. We will tentatively plan to caucus tomorrow morning at 10:30 to discuss the two bills that are on the agenda to be voted tomorrow on tomorrow's voting schedule.

Again, Republicans will not caucus this afternoon but will caucus tomorrow, and I ask members to please watch their e-mails for more information on that caucus tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER. Are there any other members seeking recognition?

Any other announcements?

### ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes Representative Mahoney of Fayette County, who moves that this House do now adjourn until Wednesday, February 6, 2008, at 11 a.m., e.s.t., unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

On the question,

Will the House agree to the motion?

Motion was agreed to, and at 1:55 p.m., e.s.t., the House adjourned.