

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Legislative Journal

TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2008

SESSION OF 2008 192ND OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

No. 17

SENATE

TUESDAY, March 18, 2008

The Senate met at 1 p.m., Eastern Daylight Saving Time.

The PRESIDENT (Lieutenant Governor Catherine Baker Knoll) in the Chair.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rabbi REUBAN ISRAEL ABRAHAM, United States Navy Reserve Chaplain, of Congregation Ner Zedek-Ezrath Israel-Beth Uziel, Philadelphia, offered the following prayer:

Let us join in prayer.

Almighty Father, eternal spirit of this universe, Creator and sustainer of all life, we ask that You bless this group of dedicated and faithful servants of the people of the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as they strive to do Your work and fulfill Your will on this day. Each of them approaches this task knowing that he or she is to be totally dedicated to promoting the common welfare of the citizens they serve. May they be completely selfless in applying all their heart, all their soul, and all their strength to the tasks at hand. May they end their Session this day with a quiet confidence and sustaining knowledge that each of them would be able to face their constituents and be told that their labors were well done. And may none of us who are assembled here this day ever forget that because each and every one of us has been created in Your image, we must never stop striving to bring justice, righteousness, and peace into this world which You have entrusted to our keeping.

We ask all of this in the many holy names by which we approach You. Amen.

The PRESIDENT. The Chair thanks Rabbi Abraham, who is the guest today of Senator Stack.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those assembled.)

HOUSE MESSAGES

SENATE BILL RETURNED WITH AMENDMENT

The Clerk of the House of Representatives returned to the Senate **SB 1137**, with the information the House has passed the same with amendment in which the concurrence of the Senate is requested.

The PRESIDENT. Pursuant to Senate Rule XIV, section 6, this bill will be referred to the Committee on Rules and Executive Nominations.

HOUSE BILL FOR CONCURRENCE

The Clerk of the House of Representatives presented to the Senate the following bill for concurrence, which was referred to the committee indicated:

March 18, 2008

HB 1265 -- Committee on Banking and Insurance.

**HOUSE CONCURS IN SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

The Clerk of the House of Representatives informed the Senate that the House has concurred in the resolution from the Senate, entitled:

Weekly recess.

BILLS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEES

Senator D. WHITE, from the Committee on Banking and Insurance, reported on the following bills:

SB 998 (Pr. No. 1840) (Amended)

An Act amending Title 40 (Insurance) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for clinical social work services.

SB 1254 (Pr. No. 1841) (Amended)

An Act amending the act of May 17, 1921 (P.L.682, No.284), known as The Insurance Company Law of 1921, further providing for marketing and administration of service contracts being distinct from the business of insurance.

Senator ARMSTRONG, from the Committee on Appropriations, reported on the following bills:

SB 428 (Pr. No. 1571) (Rereported)

An Act amending Title 45 (Legal Notices) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, adding a definition of "community paper of mass dissemination"; and further providing for legal advertising.

SB 822 (Pr. No. 1842) (Amended) (Rereported)

A Joint Resolution proposing integrated amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, further providing for disqualification to hold other office and for vacancy in the office of Lieutenant Governor.

Senator PICCOLA, from the Committee on State Government, reported the following bills:

SB 1103 (Pr. No. 1427)

An Act authorizing the Department of Transportation, with the approval of the Governor, to grant and convey to the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority a tract of land situate in the City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia County.

SB 1308 (Pr. No. 1832)

An Act authorizing the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to grant and convey to Solebury Township, certain lands situate in Solebury Township, Bucks County.

SB 1311 (Pr. No. 1845) (Amended)

An Act authorizing the City of Warren, Warren County, to sell and convey certain Project 70 lands free of restrictions imposed by the Project 70 Land Acquisition and Borrowing Act.

Senator GREENLEAF, from the Committee on Judiciary, reported the following bills:

SB 1021 (Pr. No. 1279)

An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, repealing provisions relating to pool and billiard rooms.

SB 1107 (Pr. No. 1843) (Amended)

An Act amending Titles 23 (Domestic Relations) and 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for modification of existing custody orders; and providing for protection of deployed members of the Pennsylvania National Guard and reserve components in child custody arrangements.

SB 1149 (Pr. No. 1531)

An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for aggravated assault.

SB 1250 (Pr. No. 1776)

A Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, providing for marriage between one man and one woman.

SB 1269 (Pr. No. 1731)

An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in juvenile matters, adding definitions; and further providing for other basic rights and for adjudications of juveniles.

SB 1278 (Pr. No. 1844) (Amended)

An Act amending Title 23 (Domestic Relations) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for child medical support, annual fees, review of orders of support, effect of incarceration, pass-through of support and assignment of support.

HB 306 (Pr. No. 2831)

An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, repealing provisions relating to certain appeals from the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board.

HB 675 (Pr. No. 1267)

An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for the offense of illegal dumping of methamphetamine waste; and imposing a penalty.

RESOLUTION REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE

Senator D. WHITE, from the Committee on Banking and Insurance, reported the following resolution:

SR 248 (Pr. No. 1828)

A Resolution designating April 7 through 11, 2008, as "Community Banking Week" in Pennsylvania.

BILL INTRODUCED AND REFERRED

The PRESIDENT laid before the Senate the following Senate Bill numbered, entitled, and referred as follows, which was read by the Clerk:

March 18, 2008

Senators RAFFERTY, TARTAGLIONE, ERICKSON, PUNT, COSTA, O'PAKE, PIPPY, PICCOLA, BOSCOLA, EICHELBERGER, WAUGH, BAKER and STACK presented to the Chair **SB 1263**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, repealing certain expiration provisions.

Which was referred to the Committee on JUDICIARY, March 18, 2008.

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED AND REFERRED

The PRESIDENT laid before the Senate the following Senate Resolution numbered, entitled, and referred as follows, which was read by the Clerk:

March 18, 2008

Senators RAFFERTY, FERLO, ORIE, PUNT, BRUBAKER, A. WILLIAMS, PILEGGI, ERICKSON, FONTANA, WOZNIAK, KASUNIC, ARMSTRONG, LOGAN, O'PAKE, TARTAGLIONE, BOSCOLA, KITCHEN, REGOLA, COSTA, D. WHITE, TOMLINSON, C. WILLIAMS, WAUGH, BAKER, WASHINGTON and STACK presented to the Chair **SR 252**, entitled:

A Resolution urging the citizens of this Commonwealth to participate in the In Case of Emergency campaign by entering information,

under the acronym of ICE, into the memory of their cellular phones in order to assist medical and other emergency personnel in contacting designated persons in the case of an emergency.

Which was referred to the Committee on VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, March 18, 2008.

LEGISLATIVE LEAVES

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware, Senator Pileggi.

Senator PILEGGI. Madam President, I request a legislative leave for Senator Punt.

The PRESIDENT. Senator Pileggi requests a legislative leave for Senator Punt.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Berks, Senator O'Pake.

Senator O'PAKE. Madam President, I request legislative leaves for Senator Washington and Senator Anthony Williams.

The PRESIDENT. Senator O'Pake requests legislative leaves for Senator Washington and Senator Anthony Williams.

Without objection, the leaves will be granted.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Senator PILEGGI asked and obtained a leave of absence for Senator TOMLINSON, for today's Session, for personal reasons.

Senator O'PAKE asked and obtained leaves of absence for Senator FUMO and Senator MUSTO, for today's Session, for personal reasons.

**SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS
JOURNALS APPROVED**

The PRESIDENT. The Journals of the Sessions of February 11, 2008, and February 12, 2008, are now in print.

The Clerk proceeded to read the Journals of the Sessions of February 11, 2008, and February 12, 2008.

Senator PILEGGI. Madam President, I move that further reading of the Journals be dispensed with and that the Journals be approved.

On the question,
Will the Senate agree to the motion?

The yeas and nays were required by Senator PILEGGI and were as follows, viz:

YEA-47

Armstrong	Folmer	O'Pake	Stout
Baker	Fontana	Orie	Tartaglione
Boscola	Gordner	Piccola	Vance
Browne	Greenleaf	Pileggi	Washington
Brubaker	Hughes	Pippy	Waugh
Corman	Kasunic	Punt	White, Donald
Costa	Kitchen	Rafferty	White, Mary Jo
Dinniman	LaValle	Regola	Williams, Anthony H.
Earll	Logan	Rhoades	Williams, Constance
Eichelberger	Madigan	Robbins	Wonderling
Erickson	McIlhinney	Scarnati	Wozniak
Ferlo	Mellow	Stack	

NAY-0

A majority of the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

The PRESIDENT. The Journals are approved.

**SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS
GUESTS OF SENATOR MICHAEL A. O'PAKE
PRESENTED TO THE SENATE**

Senator O'PAKE. Madam President, in the gallery is a group of Hispanic leaders from Berks County. They are here with the Berks Hispanic Leadership Institute and their two leaders, Mr. Jonathan Encarnacion, who is the executive director of the Hispanic Center in Reading, and also Professor John Kramer, of the faculty of Albright College.

I ask the Senate to extend its usual warm welcome to these future leaders of Berks County from the Berks Hispanic Leadership Institute.

The PRESIDENT. Would the professor and Jonathan and the Hispanic leaders from the Hispanic Center in Reading please rise so we can welcome you to the Pennsylvania Senate.

(Applause.)

**GUESTS OF SENATOR ROBERT WONDERLING
PRESENTED TO THE SENATE**

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montgomery, Senator Wonderling.

Senator WONDERLING. Madam President, it is indeed my honor to welcome today the Junior and Cadet Girl Scout Troop 8578 from Northampton County, hailing primarily from Forks and Palmer Townships. Their trip to Harrisburg today was organized by their troop leader, Paulette McKenna. We had a great opportunity to tour this magnificent Senate Chamber, and so therefore, Madam President, I ask that we provide our traditional and hearty welcome.

The PRESIDENT. Would our Junior and Cadet Girl Scout Troop please rise so we can welcome you.

(Applause.)

**GUESTS OF SENATOR CONSTANCE WILLIAMS
PRESENTED TO THE SENATE**

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Montgomery, Senator Connie Williams.

Senator C. WILLIAMS. Madam President, I have some very important constituents with us here today from Lower Merion. They won a trip to Harrisburg to visit me and see what we do in the Senate. I would like to introduce, with great pleasure, Gilda Kramer, Sam Adenbaum, and their sons, Jacob and Benjamin.

Gilda is a Lower Merion committeewoman and an attorney. Sam is our Lower Merion treasurer, so he is taking very good care of all the tax dollars that are paid by the good citizens of Lower Merion Township. Jacob is a sophomore at Lower Merion High School. He is a participant in the mock trials that go on in Montgomery County and is a very eager campaigner, so we will see him on the campaign trail. He learned a lot from his dad and his mom, and he will be very busy this summer. And finally, Benjamin is in fifth grade at Cynwyd Elementary School, and he has a brand new puppy named Fala.

We are delighted to have them here with us today to see what happens. Jacob and his dad sat in on one of the committee meet-

ings and listened to what was going on. So I ask my colleagues in the Senate to give them a warm Senate welcome. Welcome to Harrisburg.

The PRESIDENT. Will Gilda Kramer, Sam Adenbaum, Jacob, and Benjamin please rise so we can welcome you.

(Applause.)

GUEST OF SENATOR JOHN R. PIPPY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator Pippy.

Senator PIPPY. Madam President, it is my distinct privilege to introduce Justin Romeo. Justin is a sophomore at the University of Pittsburgh majoring in economics and political science. He is here today participating in a program called Legislator for a Day. Pitt has a great track record of getting their students out into the community and getting involved. Last summer, Justin spent 7 weeks participating in a fellowship sponsored by the Pittsburgh Foundation and the Les Aspin Center for Government. On an ironic side, he also spent some time with Senator Ted Stevens, a Senator from Alaska in our Federal government. We would like to give Justin a warm welcome. He is seated in the gallery.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDENT. Will Justin Romeo, from the University of Pittsburgh, please rise.

(Applause.)

GUESTS OF SENATOR ANDREW E. DINNIMAN PRESENTED TO THE SENATE

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Chester, Senator Dinniman.

Senator DINNIMAN. Madam President, it is my privilege to introduce a guest Page for today from my district. Her name is Brittany Maupin, and she is joined here by her mom, LeLa DeBaptiste, and her grandmother, Barbara DeBaptiste.

Brittany is only in sixth grade, but she has a resume that most of us wish we could have. She is a sixth grader, but she already has been in student council, both in fifth and sixth grades. She was a conflict manager in fourth and fifth grades. In the West Chester Area School District, when kids disagree with each other, they actually have some kids as conflict managers to break up the fights and disagreements on the playground itself, which is a wonderful peacemaking program.

She also was president of Junior Achievement in the fourth grade. She received the Bronze Medal recently, the highest award for a Junior Girl Scout, and if that is not enough, she is a black belt in tae kwon do.

So, Madam President, if you would please ask Brittany to rise so that we can all greet her as our guest Page.

The PRESIDENT. Brittany Maupin and her mother, LeLa, and grandmother, Barbara DeBaptiste, please rise.

(Applause.)

GUESTS OF SENATOR PATRICK M. BROWNE PRESENTED TO THE SENATE

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lehigh, Senator Browne.

Senator BROWNE. Madam President, it is always a pleasure for any of us to get up and have an opportunity to introduce to the body a true hero, someone who exhibits qualities of courage and self-sacrifice. What is great about my opportunity today is the hero that I am introducing is 10 years old. Alfred Hayward, son of Justin and Irene Hayward, is here today because Alfred was honored by the Fogelsville and Trexlertown Fire Departments at a special assembly for Fire Protection Week.

The reason why he was honored is several months ago, Alfred smelled smoke in the kitchen of his house, then saw flames rising from a pan on the stove. He immediately ran through the house, calling for everyone to get out. As his family reacted, he went next door to a neighbor's house to borrow a fire extinguisher. Alfred and his neighbor returned to the home to try to extinguish the fire as his sister called 911. The fire company arrived and confined the flames to the kitchen area of the house.

It was because of Alfred's courage at the ripe young age of 10 years old that his family can be with us today. The family that joins us today is Justin, his father; Irene, his mother; George, his brother; Guinevere, his sister; and Susan Silverstein, his aunt.

Let us please give Alfred a warm welcome and a thank you for his heroism and courage on behalf of his family.

The PRESIDENT. Will Alfred Hayward, Justin, Irene, George, Guinevere, and Susan all rise. Thank you.

(Applause.)

GUEST OF SENATOR JAY COSTA PRESENTED TO THE SENATE

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator Costa.

Senator COSTA. Madam President, I, too, rise today to introduce a guest who is with us in the gallery who is also participating in the University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Politics Legislator for a Day shadowing program. Madam President, it is my great honor and pleasure to introduce Maria Osinski, who is here today participating in this program, as I stated. She is a junior at the University of Pittsburgh pursuing a dual major in legal studies and administration of justice, along with a minor in history.

A native of Turtle Creek, Maria was valedictorian at Woodland Hills High School and was very active in the school's student government. At Pitt, Maria is a member of the College of General Studies, Student Government, and Sigma Alpha Lambda, a national leadership and honors organization. She is also president of Pitt's Alpha Psi Omega chapter of Lambda Alpha Epsilon, the national criminal justice fraternity, and a member of the National Scholars Honor Society. She has also volunteered in the past at the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office and as a court-appointed special advocate and hopes to pursue a law degree following her graduation from the University of Pittsburgh.

Madam President, I ask that my colleagues give a warm welcome to Maria, and welcome her here today to the Pennsylvania State Senate. Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDENT. Will Maria Osinski please rise so we can welcome you to the Pennsylvania Senate.

(Applause.)

**GUEST OF SENATOR PATRICIA H. VANCE
PRESENTED TO THE SENATE**

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Cumberland, Senator Vance.

Senator VANCE. Madam President, I am very pleased to welcome as a guest Page Brittney Feichtel, who is a ninth grader at East Pennsboro High School. She is serving as a Page today, and I am delighted to have her. I hope that we can give her a warm welcome to the Senate.

The PRESIDENT. Will Brittney Feichtel please rise so we can welcome you.

(Applause.)

**GUESTS OF SENATOR MICHAEL BRUBAKER
PRESENTED TO THE SENATE**

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lancaster, Senator Brubaker.

Senator BRUBAKER. Madam President, I am very pleased to welcome the members of an eighth grade class here today from West Fallowfield Christian School in Atglen, Chester County. They are here today to study civics and American government. The class is studying events that have impacted our history, how a bill becomes law, and they had a Capitol tour here this morning. There are 25 students here, and they are accompanied by their teacher and other chaperones in the gallery.

The PRESIDENT. Would the eighth grade class from West Fallowfield Christian School and their teachers and other guests please rise so we can welcome you. Welcome to the Pennsylvania State Senate.

(Applause.)

CALENDAR

THIRD CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

**BILL ON THIRD CONSIDERATION
AND FINAL PASSAGE**

SB 387 (Pr. No. 1808) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending the act of June 29, 1953 (P.L.304, No.66), known as the Vital Statistics Law of 1953, providing for certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth.

Considered the third time and agreed to,
And the amendments made thereto having been printed as required by the Constitution,

On the question,
Shall the bill pass finally?

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Montgomery, Senator Connie Williams.

Senator C. WILLIAMS. Madam President, will the sponsor of this bill stand for interrogation?

The PRESIDENT. He indicates he will.

Senator C. WILLIAMS. Madam President, I know this is a very sensitive issue for many families who face the tragedy and

sadness of a stillborn baby, and I am voting for this bill on the understanding that it is entirely voluntary for the parents to request certification. I would just like to be sure, and I ask the sponsor of this bill, that this bill in no way affects the legal status of fetuses.

Senator CORMAN. Madam President, I thank the Senator for the question. The idea for this legislation came from a constituent of mine who unfortunately went through this very difficult situation of giving birth to a stillborn and wanted some sort of recognition that they went through this process. We crafted it in such a way as to not go down the road that the Senator is concerned about, that we did not want to enter into when a fetus becomes a life.

We wanted to help parents deal with their grieving of going through a stillbirth, and so by having this as voluntary, something for the families to request, the department does not automatically give these certificates out. It is something that the families will have to request on their own. Also, putting on the certificate that this certificate is not proof of a live birth, we feel that we do not enter into the legal world of when a fetus becomes a life and still can provide a little help to the families who go through this grieving process.

Senator C. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Madam President. I know this will bring comfort to very sad people. I hope it will. Thank you.

And the question recurring,
Shall the bill pass finally?

The yeas and nays were taken agreeably to the provisions of the Constitution and were as follows, viz:

YEA-47

Armstrong	Folmer	O'Pake	Stout
Baker	Fontana	Orie	Tartaglione
Boscola	Gordner	Piccola	Vance
Browne	Greenleaf	Pileggi	Washington
Brubaker	Hughes	Pippy	Waugh
Corman	Kasunic	Punt	White, Donald
Costa	Kitchen	Rafferty	White, Mary Jo
Dinniman	LaValle	Regola	Williams, Anthony H.
Earll	Logan	Rhoades	Williams, Constance
Eichelberger	Madigan	Robbins	Wonderling
Erickson	McIlhinney	Scarnati	Wozniak
Ferlo	Mellow	Stack	

NAY-0

A constitutional majority of all the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate present said bill to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

BILL OVER IN ORDER

HB 1152 -- Without objection, the bill was passed over in its order at the request of Senator PILEGGI.

**BILL ON THIRD CONSIDERATION
AND FINAL PASSAGE**

SB 1153 (Pr. No. 1839) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for the Minor Judiciary Education Board and for the course of instruction and examination for certain minor judiciary.

Considered the third time and agreed to,
And the amendments made thereto having been printed as required by the Constitution,

On the question,
Shall the bill pass finally?

The yeas and nays were taken agreeably to the provisions of the Constitution and were as follows, viz:

YEA-36

Armstrong	Erickson	Orie	Scarnati
Baker	Folmer	Piccola	Stack
Browne	Gordner	Pileggi	Tartaglione
Brubaker	Greenleaf	Pippy	Vance
Corman	LaValle	Punt	Waugh
Costa	Madigan	Rafferty	White, Donald
Dinniman	McIlhinney	Regola	White, Mary Jo
Earll	Mellow	Rhoades	Williams, Constance
Eichelberger	O'Pake	Robbins	Wonderling

NAY-9

Boscola	Kasunic	Logan	Williams, Anthony H.
Ferlo	Kitchen	Stout	Wozniak
Fontana			

A constitutional majority of all the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate present said bill to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

SECOND CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

BILL ON SECOND CONSIDERATION

HB 874 (Pr. No. 2261) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act providing for umbilical cord blood banking; requiring health care facilities and providers to give pregnant patients information regarding umbilical cord blood banking; and requiring health care facilities to permit pregnant patients to arrange for umbilical cord blood donations.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

SB 906, SB 1169, HB 1214 and HB 1281 -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator PILEGGI.

BILL REREFERRED

SB 1286 (Pr. No. 1785) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending Title 4 (Amusements) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for the Pennsylvania Gaming Economic Development and Tourism Fund.

Upon motion of Senator PILEGGI, and agreed to by voice vote, the bill was rereferred to the Committee on Appropriations.

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

HB 1329 and HB 1330 -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator PILEGGI.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
CONGRATULATORY RESOLUTIONS

The PRESIDENT laid before the Senate the following resolutions, which were read, considered, and adopted by voice vote:

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Augusta Stevens, Stanley P. Krasucki, Donald R. Jones and to Heron's Eye Communications LLC of Greeley by Senator Baker.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Timothy R. Long by Senator Boscola.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to the Pulaski Committee of the Lehigh Valley by Senators Boscola, Browne, and Wonderling.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Marc Christopher Garen, Sean Knowles, Jordan McMahon, Hilary Schwartz, Kevin Robert Fitch, Brian Daniel Fitch and to the Allentown Public Library by Senator Browne.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to the Reverend Daniel Gambet by Senators Browne and Wonderling.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Tapias, Sally Hill, Nelson Stovall, Tyler Lawson, Phuong Minh Hoang, Roy Hank, Nickolas Fonzone, Donald Laudenslager, Ryan Werkheiser, Nathan Reinert, Daniel Groner, Kurt Landes, Kathy Craine, Pam Russell, Bridget Sidoti, Michael McShane and to Just Born, Inc., of Bethlehem by Senator Browne and others.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. James Drohan, Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau of Lancaster and to the 2007 Warwick High School Girls' Soccer Team by Senator Brubaker.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Robert C. Slamp by Senators Brubaker and Armstrong.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to the Honorable John E. Peterson, Kathleen Penn, Phil Davis and to the Lewistown Area High School Key Club by Senator Corman.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Christ Lutheran Church and School of Forest Hills by Senator Costa.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Benjamin E. Selin, Robert Russell Moore, Luke Pierce-Lolla, Geanine Rose Castaldi, Colleen Ruth Brian, Amanda Rose Benton, Kelsey McNicholas, Megan Hansler, Kaitlyn L. Winters, Monica Sehgal, Erika L. Sherman, Anne Marie Hawkins, Sarah Elizabeth Weber, George Turner, Albertina Siberski, Lauren Marie Jendzurski, Julianne L. Kemmler, Natalie Anne Harkins, Leandra Logan, Gerry Caggiano, Lisa O. Schiel and to HMC TV Channel 20 of West Chester by Senator Dinniman.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Betty Lou Eshun by Senators Dinniman and Rafferty.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Robert Earl Beeler and to Eric J. Law by Senator Earll.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mark Francis Will, Clyde D. Deremer, Kay Wawrynovic and to the Central Chapter of the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Harrisburg by Senator Eichelberger.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Matthew C. Moll and to Johnathan Alan Greely by Senator Folmer.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Alexander Blair by Senator Fumo.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Cotter Christian Richard Nunan, Olin Russell Covington, Mary Anne Heydenreich, Dean James, Ray Rothermel, Joe Ahrensfield, Edwin Rakocy, Ray C. Gerringer and to the Kulpmont Lions Club by Senator Gordner.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Myrtle Vearrindy and to Theodore Kohler by Senator Greenleaf.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Frazier High School of Perryopolis by Senator Kasunic.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Alberta Evancho, Clairton Volunteer Fire Department, Serra Catholic High School Boys' Basketball Team of McKeesport and to Troop 85 of the Boy Scouts of America of East McKeesport by Senator Logan.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Dr. Daniel J. Glunk, Dr. William J. Martin, Dr. Mamie Sweeting Diggs and to Richard A. Reitz by Senator Madigan.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Collin Abrams by Senator McIlhinney.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Congregation Brothers of Israel of Newtown by Senators McIlhinney and Tomlinson.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Angela M. Misuraca, Scranton Women Teachers' Club and to the Everhart Museum of Natural History, Science and Art by Senator Mellow.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Clyde A.B. Myers, Adam M. Citrullo, Kilian Paul Jerome, Phillip John Thomas, Children's Alopecia Project and to the Boylan family and the employees of Berks Packing Company, Incorporated by Senator O'Pake.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Thomas A. Beaver by Senators O'Pake and Folmer.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Christopher Michael Shaginaw and to the Pine-Richland School District of Gibsonia by Senator Orie.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to the Pittsburgh Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped by Senators Orie and Ferlo.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mary K. Currens, Nicholas Dininni, Robert P. Hawley and to the Wesley Union African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Harrisburg by Senator Piccola.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Ryan Joseph Ramberger, Robert Stephen Trusko, Mildred E. Robinson and to John R. Morris IV by Senator Pileggi.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Kevin R. Egeland, Matthew Richard Morrow, David Michael Adley, Viktor Kiritchenko, Andrew N. Mort, Kenneth E. Halliday, CentiMark Corporation of Canonsburg and to the Mt. Lebanon Public Library by Senator Pippy.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Kevin S. Rafuse, Jr., Michael Markovich, Michael Long, John Skulski, Stephen E. Morris, Albert E. Momme, Joseph Maggio, Joseph David Rittenhouse, Parkhouse of Royersford and to J.P. Mascaro and Sons of Eagleville by Senator Rafferty.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Gazboda, Mr. and Mrs. William R. Smith, Jacob Samuel Rizzi, John Rusinko, Justin Balchik, Thomas Dunn, Francis Maczka and to Eric William Bush by Senator Regola.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to the Reverend Monsignor William F. Glosser, Anne M. Evans, Jodi Nestor, members and coaches of the Tamaqua Area High School Boys' Swimming and Diving Team and to the Rape and Victim Assistance Center of Schuylkill County by Senator Rhoades.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Jordan Moss, Michael A. Lewis and to Warner's Homes and Improvements of Mercer by Senator Robbins.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Tyler James Loennig and to Lucas M. Swintek by Senator Scarnati.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Robert J. Reinstein, Bridesburg Elementary School and to the Father Judge High School Model United Nations Team by Senator Stack.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. Marion Malone and to CentiMark Corporation of Canonsburg by Senator Stout.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Latina Women Symposium and to the Ayuda Community Center of Philadelphia by Senator Tartaglione.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Christine Walsh, Donald Vandermay, Curt McKee, Jennifer Welch, David Erbele, Maureen Burns, Gerard Scherf, Robert Kennedy and to Thomas Maminski by Senators Tartaglione and Stack.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Nottingham Fire Department of Bensalem and to the Northampton Township Lions Club of Richboro by Senator Tomlinson.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Bruce G. Williams and to David Harris by Senator Tomlinson and others.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Skelly, David Albert Shane, Leah Gingrich, Steven Gasparini, James D. Hull, Richard Kowal, Gerald T. Sajer and to Cody Gilbert by Senator Vance.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Richard Farrington and to Renee Nelson by Senator Waugh.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. Regis Neff and to Mr. and Mrs. Dale Claypool by Senator D. White.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. Foster Bowser and to Bradley M. Leonardi by Senator M.J. White.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Norristown Public Library, Llanerch Fire Company of Havertown and to the George Clay Fire Company of West Conshohocken by Senator C. Williams.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Peter Quinn by Senators C. Williams and Pileggi.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Drew William Stahler, North Montco Technical Career Center of Lansdale and to the Tylersport Volunteer Fire Company by Senator Wonderling.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. Dexter F. Baker by Senators Wonderling and Browne.

Congratulations of the Senate were extended to Mr. and Mrs. John Heinlein by Senator Wozniak.

CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION

The PRESIDENT laid before the Senate the following resolution, which was read, considered, and adopted by voice vote:

Condolences of the Senate were extended to the family of the late Emmanuel H. Dimitriou by Senator O'Pake.

POSTHUMOUS CITATIONS

The PRESIDENT laid before the Senate the following citations, which were read, considered, and adopted by voice vote:

Posthumous citations honoring the late James F. Christie and the late Gary F. Skerski were extended to the families by Senator Tartaglione.

BILLS ON FIRST CONSIDERATION

Senator RAFFERTY. Madam President, I move that the Senate do now proceed to consideration of all bills reported from committees for the first time at today's Session.

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

The bills were as follows:

SB 998, SB 1021, SB 1103, SB 1107, SB 1149, SB 1250, SB 1254, SB 1269, SB 1278, SB 1308, SB 1311, HB 306 and HB 675.

And said bills having been considered for the first time,

Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for second consideration.

PETITIONS AND REMONSTRANCES

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Centre, Senator Corman.

Senator CORMAN. Madam President, in January 2007, Governor Rendell first introduced his Prescription for Pennsylvania that included the Cover All Pennsylvanians healthcare plan. While sounding very nice, the details left many of us feeling that the Cover All Pennsylvanians plan would be a bitter pill to swallow. In fact, over the year that has passed now, the information that has come out has become even harder to swallow.

How does the plan work? Madam President, the Commonwealth would subsidize healthcare for small employers and insure individuals below 300 percent of the poverty level. Individuals above 300 percent of the poverty level would be able to buy into the program through a sliding scale. Small employers who do not offer insurance coverage with fewer than 50 employees will be required to pay a portion of the premiums for participation in the program.

The Governor's Cover All Pennsylvanians plan includes coverage that is substantially better than what is currently being provided in the adultBasic program. Individuals in the adultBasic program pay a premium of around \$306 in addition to minimal out-of-pocket expenses for hospitalization, physician care, emergency services, diagnostic testing, maternity care, rehabilitation, and skilled care coverage. The CAP plan would include all of this and also cover prescriptions and behavioral health services

with a less expensive premium of \$286. Who makes up the difference? I will talk about this in a minute or two.

The plan relies on funding from the Federal government, medical providers, and employers and employees in the Commonwealth to provide these benefits. The Commonwealth will ask the Federal government to extend the Federal poverty limit to 300 percent in order to draw down additional Federal dollars. Can we do this? Can we assume the Federal government will allow Pennsylvania to extend the limit to 300 percent? Probably not. Last May, the State of Oklahoma asked the Federal government to increase its income limits to 300 percent of the poverty level. The feds rejected that request and gave a very clear signal that the State would not be able to go beyond 250 percent of the poverty level. Again, this was last May of 2007. Somehow, Governor Rendell and his staff did not get the signal and are still promising that Pennsylvania can get a 300-percent approval, something even Secretary Masch agreed was problematic in his testimony before the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Now, back to who makes up the premium shortfall. In order to provide expanded services at the reduced rate, the administration plans to greatly reduce the amount paid to providers for their services. While employers may or may not be subject to this 3-percent fair share assessment, they will be required to pay a portion of the premium for their employees. According to the Governor's plan, employees and other eligible individuals must pay a monthly sliding-scale fee ranging from \$10 to a full \$286 for the individuals over 300 percent of the Federal poverty limit. We know these fees will be higher because we will not get approved for the 300 percent.

Lastly, the Commonwealth will be tasked with making up the difference. Over the next 5 years, the administration estimates the Commonwealth's share will be \$1.4 billion. If you recall, a couple weeks ago I talked about how the Commonwealth is already putting over \$6 billion in State dollars, and \$14 billion total if you include the Federal money, toward health services already. This will be an additional \$1.4 billion as estimated by the Governor. Outside estimates say that the number, in fact, is closer to \$3.2 billion. In order to fund this first year alone, the Commonwealth would need a 5-percent tax increase in the personal income tax in order to fund the Cover All Pennsylvanians plan.

If the Commonwealth does not make up the difference, then who does? It is the providers. Again, the Governor's Cover All Pennsylvanians proposal forces providers to offer greater coverage than adultBasic with lower premiums. He is saying to providers, eat the difference, it will be good for you. Let us put this in perspective. The Governor's healthcare advisor, Rosemary Greco, testified that the plan would cover 144,000 people in the first year and 270,000 by the fifth year. Not quite cover all Pennsylvanians, is it? But what is the cost of these 270,000 Pennsylvanians? Three-point-two billion dollars. Again, \$3.2 billion.

While this administration is quick to distance itself from the Massachusetts experience, it is worth noting that Massachusetts is experiencing higher enrollment rates than predicted, and the State did not budget for it, which brings us to the what-goes-up-must-come-down theory of universal healthcare. The Rendell administration touts that providing this coverage, the amount necessary for the Commonwealth to fund the uncompensated care and disproportionate share of payments to House Bills will proportionately decline as insured enrollment increases.

Naturally, when something goes up, something must come down. Let us apply this theory to the entire plan. The administration is claiming that the number of eligible individuals is around 555,000. Last week when I spoke on this subject, I said the number was closer to 400,000, with many of this number being cash customers who will not sign up for any plan that is offered. By offering them the healthcare coverage, you would assume the number of uninsured would go down. Yet in this case, if you build it, especially with the premier benefit package, they will come. Instead of reducing the number of uninsured, we will only reduce the number utilizing private insurance plans.

Research estimates claim that the actual number of eligible people will be more than triple the administration estimates because of several factors, including crowding out. This is when individuals will opt for publicly funded coverage instead of taking private coverage that they would have previously held. If you recall, many of the uninsured, as we talked about last week, are people who were offered private insurance who have opted out of it for their own reasons. The administration is claiming that a cost savings will be achieved by requiring providers to take a reduction in their reimbursements. If provider rates go down, then I can assure you, the number of citizens who cannot find doctors will go up. Under this scenario, it will not matter who has insurance because there will be no more doctors to provide the care. Clearly, Mary Poppins had it right: a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, and a couple billion dollars will help Cover All Pennsylvanians to successfully transition our Commonwealth into a cream-of-the-crop-insurance welfare State.

The facts are these, Madam President. The Governor states that Pennsylvania will be approved for 300 percent of the poverty level for coverage. His plan depends on this number. We know it not to be factual. The Governor's plan assumes utilization by 270,000 individuals by the fifth year. Again, not covering all Pennsylvanians, but at a cost of \$3.2 billion, money we do not have in our coffers. The Governor's plan forces private insurers to offer a plan far greater than the coverage of adultBasic at a lower premium and asks them to eat the difference. The Governor's plan does not account for a crowdout, and the likelihood that a small business will discount coverage and force their employees under the State rules, thereby creating a larger welfare State.

The Governor's Cover All Pennsylvanians plan does all of this, but what it does not do is anything to lower the cost of healthcare to make it more affordable for its employers, school districts, local and State governments, and individuals who purchase private insurance. The Governor's plan subsidizes a system that includes an annual double-digit premium increase by \$3.2 billion without a plan to save a nickel. It is a feel-good proposal to the editorial writers across this Commonwealth, without any serious proposal to get us out of the bankruptcy 5 years down the road, long after the Governor has left town.

Now we have a so-called Access to Basic Care proposal, or son of CAP, that was passed in the House earlier this week. Is there a big difference between the two? No, Madam President. This proposal still expects our insurance companies to offer a more expensive product at a lower premium than adultBasic, but with a new catch - whatever. That is right. Let me say it again. Whatever. This new proposal passed by the House has no actual

mechanism to pay for the program. It actually contains the words, "Any moneys derived from whatever sources" to pay for the program. How are taxpayers, who already spend over \$14 billion on healthcare, supposed to pay for this new plan passed by the House? Whatever. Today, the Governor called this legislation landmark and praised how it was written. Whatever.

Madam President, we have to get serious about this. We have a major affordability crisis in healthcare here in Pennsylvania. We cannot pass on legislation that says "whatever." We have to put a bold proposal together that allows the opportunity of access for people who do not have health insurance to get private health insurance. It is easy to sit here and throw stones, Madam President, I realize, but it is important for us as a Majority party to come forward with ideas to deal with the uninsured, and I am confident that some of my colleagues have been working on this issue.

We will be coming forward with proposals that allow an opportunity for people to have access to affordable healthcare insurance. That is the key, Madam President, opportunity to have access to purchase affordable healthcare insurance. We cannot derive plans that do not add up at the end of the day and will cause more uninsured. We cannot go on plans that do not have funding sources. "Whatever" is not an answer. We need answers and plans out there where people can have access they can ultimately afford, and I look forward to the coming weeks when we start debating some of those proposals.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator Costa.

Senator COSTA. Madam President, I would like an opportunity to respond to my friend and colleague's comments regarding Pennsylvania's adultBasic program and the Cover All Pennsylvanians proposal, as it has gone through a couple of variations. A couple of things I want to add to the conversation, and that is, the key and critical element is access. Access to healthcare.

You have heard me, Madam President, speak on this floor from this podium a number of times, and my colleague, Senator Hughes, as well as a number of my other colleagues, speaking on the issue and the fact that we have some 700,000-plus Pennsylvanians who have no healthcare insurance. They do not have access to it. The House has sent us a version of the adultBasic program that they have modified, called Pennsylvania's ABC program, or PA ABC. That is going to attempt to do that. We have a version over here in the Senate, which passed the House 118 to 81. It is something that we need to take a look at.

And I recognize, as Senator Corman has highlighted that there are some issues as it relates to the final outcome, the final version, or whatever the final language that is part of that legislation, which need to be addressed. But I challenge the other side, I challenge the Majority party, to let us have that discussion. Let us have that dialogue. We have not had it yet. Give us the opportunity to participate in that process.

I stood at this podium about 5 weeks ago, in response to comments that were made by one of my colleagues, where we talked about how we were going to have hearings and discussions and debate by three committees: the Committee on Public Health and Welfare, the Committee on Finance, and the Committee on Banking and Insurance. Madam President, I have checked with my colleagues on this side of the aisle who are Minority chair-

persons of those committees, and they have not yet had the opportunity to discuss a single piece of legislation as it relates to advancing the ball regarding healthcare for so many Pennsylvanians.

Seven-hundred-thousand-plus. Stop and think about that number. That is a staggering, staggering number. And by doing nothing, we are doing what the Federal government has done on a number of issues. We are throwing our lot into the Federal government as it relates to issues of this nature, just like it was the Federal government that failed to act as it related to covering children in the country. We in Pennsylvania took very significant steps a few years back to cover all kids.

What we want to have the opportunity to do is cover all Pennsylvanians, and in a manner that is more responsible that I think we can afford. To suggest that in 5 years this Commonwealth will be bankrupt because we put into place a Cover All Pennsylvanians or a benefit package or a healthcare benefit program is just not being fair, and it is not being right with respect to the issue that is out there. To suggest that we will be bankrupt, I think, is irresponsible, because that is not the case. That is not the case that will take place here. Funding streams have been identified that would support this program. But give us the opportunity to have the discussions about that. We have not had that opportunity.

Now we have a measure that has passed the House. And quite frankly, Madam President, I think a lot of people in this room doubted very much that we in the Senate would have the opportunity to consider legislation to enact a healthcare program that we are talking about, but that is where we are today. Now, I know that my colleague, Senator Hughes, had talked about trying to get some language done and addressed by Valentine's Day, and that day has passed. And he has reminded us that we only have about 30-some days left before we break for our summer break, before we have to conclude our budget process, and I would suggest to my colleagues that that is more than enough time, more than enough time to take a look at the legislation that came over from the House that addresses some of the concerns that have been raised by my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

We are ready, we are willing, and we are able to address this very important issue. Madam President, if you look around, a number of the polling data suggest that our folks in this Commonwealth are very, very much concerned about their ability to have access to, and to be able to afford, healthcare coverage for themselves and for their families. When I make reference to those 700,000-plus folks, and depending upon whom you listen to, it can be 700,000 or it can be 800,000, the fact of the matter is every day that goes by, more and more Pennsylvanians are losing access to healthcare.

Every single day that we delay--just like the leadership in the Federal government, we delay here in the Senate--we are denying people the opportunity for healthcare coverage. They need it. They cannot afford it. And we are taking steps to prevent that from taking place. I again reiterate my call and my plea to my colleagues. We know what has come to us from the House. We know the concerns that were raised by my colleague a few moments ago and other issues that have been raised over the course of the past several weeks as we have discussed this issue. Let us take the time to conduct hearings, whether they be joint hearings among those three committees that I made reference to, whether

they be policy hearings or joint policy hearings between the Senate Republican Caucus and the Democratic Caucus.

The fact of the matter is that we have something in our court now. The ball is in our court. We cannot simply get up and talk, saying that this does not make sense, these numbers do not add up, or this is not going to work, or we may be bankrupt in 5 years if we go down this path. That is not the way in which we are instructed. That is not the way the residents of this Commonwealth want us to conduct business. They want us to address the issues, the important issues in Pennsylvania, the important issues in this Commonwealth.

One of the most important issues is healthcare coverage. Access to affordable healthcare coverage is what people in Pennsylvania want us to talk about. We have not been talking about it. We talk about it here during Petitions and Remonstrances, and that is great. That keeps the dialogue going, and I appreciate, nearly every week that we have Session, that my colleagues bring this issue up, and I think it is important that we keep it in the forefront.

Talk is great. But I think now we are at the point when the ball is in our court. We now need to take steps to try to address this very important issue and see what can be done to cobble together something, in a timely fashion, to start to reverse the trend of the working poor, those working Pennsylvanians. And let me reiterate, those working Pennsylvanians, of those 700,000 people, 71 percent of them are working every day - get up, go to work, come home, and all they ask is for the opportunity to make healthcare coverage available for themselves and for their families. And we know, Madam President, that if we are able to provide that coverage to these Pennsylvanians, to these working families, that we will be in a position to help drive down costs.

There is no question that if people have access to healthcare on a regular, consistent basis, it leads to driving down costs. We all know that the most expensive entry into the healthcare system is through the emergency room, and what we are doing is driving people to that point. By denying them access, by denying them affordable healthcare, we are driving them to the emergency rooms, where they are going to have to pay the more expensive costs of making sure that they receive the healthcare that they need.

What has been put in place is legislation as a starting point. And we have had a number of starting points, but now we are at a point where something has passed through one-half of the process. One-half of the process is passage in the House. And now the ball is in our court, to reiterate my phrase. It is now up to us to have further dialogue, not on the Senate floor during Petitions and Remonstrances, but rather in the structure that we are supposed to work through, the committee structure. Let us have some discussions. Let us have dialogue with respect to that issue and then move forward.

Madam President, I do think that we have the opportunity to embark on landmark legislation, legislation that will be different than what has been done in other States. For example, it is Massachusetts that has been referenced. As I understand the Massachusetts legislation, that is a mandate. This is different. What we are proposing here in Pennsylvania is something where we are going to authorize a certain level of enrollment, and then we will move forward.

But the fact of the matter is we have the adultBasic program in place. It has been successful in terms of the ability to provide healthcare, but what has not been successful is the number of people who have been able to get that access. We have tens of thousands of people on that waiting list. They want to be on that program. They want access to healthcare. They signed up for that. And now we have an opportunity to expand that adultBasic program to provide for additional coverage for all those Pennsylvanians on the waiting list, and then some. And we also have the opportunity to provide them expanded care. Mental health care, mental health treatment, something that is not done today in the adultBasic program. Prescription drug coverage. Believe it or not, there are a number of people in the adultBasic program who have the need for prescription drug coverage.

We need to take steps to get to that end. But to sit here on the Senate floor during Petitions and Remonstrances and talk about it day in and day out is not going to get the job done. I encourage my colleagues. We are ready, willing, and able to sit down and have a very serious discussion, to address a number of the concerns that were raised by my colleagues, to make certain that we are in a position to move forward on legislation that is going to provide healthcare coverage for so many Pennsylvanians who truly want it, who have evidenced their desire to have that coverage by signing up for the adultBasic program, who want to move forward to provide protection for their kids and their families. Again, as I reiterate, these are working Pennsylvanians who deserve access to some of the greatest healthcare that we offer in this country, right here in Pennsylvania. We are denying them that opportunity, and until we do something, every single day that goes by, more and more people are denied access to that healthcare. We need to take steps to do it, and I appreciate the patience, Madam President, of my colleagues to allow me the opportunity to speak on this issue.

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Centre, Senator Corman.

Senator CORMAN. Madam President, I want to thank the gentleman, my friend and colleague, Senator Costa, from Allegheny County. He is a very passionate legislator for his district and a very effective one, and I always enjoy talking about the issues. That is what we do here is plow through the issues, and we do not always necessarily agree on the solution, but I think we both agree on the problem and that the problem needs to be addressed. I agree with him on that point of view. But he did talk about how this is not a mandate, and I understand that, and Secretary Masch talked about that, and the Insurance Commissioner talked about that as well. But here is the problem. It may not be a mandate as far as a legislative mandate, but it is a political mandate.

Just for an example, we started out with the adultBasic coverage as a defined amount of money that we had in the tobacco settlement, and that was going to cover the uninsured through a period of time when they were going from job to job, or whoever needed insurance at the time. Then we found out that was not enough because there was a bigger demand. So the Governor came up with this agreement with the Blues, to combine with their social mission to come up with more dollars to put toward the adultBasic. Now we have found that is not enough, and now we have the Cover All Pennsylvanians plan.

My point is, Madam President, I tried to illustrate earlier how, at the end of the day, that plan will not work. It will continue to

need more. It will continue to need more. It will continue to need more. If we are going down the road to subsidization of healthcare instead of working at the cost of healthcare, we are going to continue to need more and more and more. Whether we go bankrupt or not, maybe that statement was a little over the top for me, if that is what the gentleman wants to suggest. But let us talk about the budgeting process. This year, we had a budgeting process where the Secretary of Public Welfare said we need \$100 million to do cost-of-living adjustments for mental health workers, for nursing home assessments, things of that nature, \$100 million we do not have in the budget. That is because of the \$100 million that we are spending on State programs like this that are never-ending. They are going to go on and on and on. And I can talk about a lot of different places where we would like to reprioritize our dollars, maybe toward education, early childhood education, but the dollars just are not there, unless we just want to continue to raise taxes for a program that is never-ending and continues to grow.

The reason to come and talk about these plans on the Senate floor is there are two plans that are getting a lot of publicity right now, the Governor's first plan and now the House plan, and there are serious flaws to these plans. And the public deserves a right to know why we are not bringing those up through the committee process, because, as I pointed out, the Cover All Pennsylvanians plan does not add up, by any stretch of the imagination, and would have a tremendous mandate on our providers in this State. And that may be okay for some of the wealthy areas of the State, but if you get into rural Pennsylvania and you continue to take blood out of the hide of these providers, they are going to start closing up shop and not be able to provide the services that are so drastically needed in rural Pennsylvania. So that plan has significant flaws.

And I am sorry, but I cannot take seriously any plan that comes over from the House of Representatives that does not identify the funding source. I mean, we can pass all we want out of this Chamber and say we will figure out how to pay for it later. You know, "whatever." Whatever. But, Madam President, it is important that the public knows how we are going to pay for these particular pieces of legislation. You just cannot pass over legislation that says "whatever" and expect to be taken seriously.

So I do think this is a significant problem that we should be addressing. We are going to try to address it from a different angle. We are going to try to go after the affordability problems that we have here in Pennsylvania. We are going to try to develop products that are going to go after the segment of the population that is uninsured, the 19- to 35-year-olds. That is 50 percent of the population that is uninsured. Maybe a full-boat plan that has all the coverage of adultBasic is not what they are looking for or something they can afford. Maybe we can come up with a mandate-free type of legislation or product so that they can get catastrophic coverage, which would address that segment of the population. So there are other ways to attack this.

My concern is, and the reason I speak out against it is, the subsidization plans proposed by the Governor and now passed by the House are going to set this Commonwealth on an unstable, never-ending funding source for these uninsured. It is going to continue to grow and continue to raise costs, and we are going to have to continue to crowd out other programs here in State government to pay for these plans.

So again, the Governor deserves full credit for putting this issue in front of us and generating the public interest to desire to deal with the uninsured. I give him full marks for doing that. I do not necessarily agree with the solution he has put out there. I think we can go a different direction and go after affordability. I think that would be a much more prudent way, much more effective way, of getting that to the uninsured and not tax the Commonwealth to the degree which the current plans that have been suggested would.

So I continue to look forward to the dialogue. I continue to look forward to working with the other side of the aisle. They are very passionate about this issue, as they should be, as we all are. All the smarts are not on this side. There are a lot on that side as well, and we look forward to their ideas as we hopefully come forward, by the time we break, with some plan that will go after the affordability crisis we have here in Pennsylvania.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator Costa.

Senator COSTA. Madam President, I want to thank the gentleman. I agree. I think we all agree that we need to address this very important issue. The question is how we get there. And my comments are going to be directed to the issue of affordability.

My colleague made reference to the fact that we started with the adultBasic program, funded primarily by the tobacco settlement money. We then grew it into the Commonwealth Healthcare Reinvestment Fund, the Blues merger issue, that provide for additional coverage. And then here we are today trying to provide further coverage. But the reason why there is such a critical demand for healthcare services in this Commonwealth is the cost. We have simply made it too expensive for people to be able to afford healthcare. We have taken it out of their realm of ability to pay for it.

Largely employers, as I said a number of times, some 400,000 Pennsylvanians no longer have health insurance: individuals who had coverage in the last 5 to 6 years from their employers but no longer have it because they simply cannot afford it, because we have driven up the cost. The cost of premiums has gone up 76 percent. That is staggering when you look at that number. And I agree, we need to take steps to address affordability. We need to extract unnecessary resources that are being spent in the healthcare industry, extract those resources out of there and drive those savings back to the folks, and make those premiums more affordable.

But we have not done anything along those lines in almost a year. We took two significant steps, but now it is time to do more. And the dialogue that should be taking place in this General Assembly should be related to the issue of providing the coverage, providing a mechanism to pay for it, and providing a mechanism to start to drive down the cost of healthcare, very significant steps to drive down those costs. We are not even doing that.

This is a very complex issue. I do not want folks to think that it is something that can be solved rather easily. It is an issue that is very complicated and very complex, and there are various levels and layers that need to be looked at before we get to an appropriate solution. But we need the time to do that. Clearly, without a doubt, the Governor has put insurance reform on the table. It needs to be part of the discussion. We need to have a serious dialogue about how we address it and how we work in

conjunction with our insurance providers and our insurance companies in terms of the rates that they charge and how they go about determining what those rates should be. Those are all factors that need to be considered in this discussion.

What we want, what we are looking for, is the opportunity to have very serious dialogue and discussion and a comprehensive review of this legislation, to determine what it is that we can all agree upon in this Chamber and something that will be able to be agreed upon in the Chamber across the hall and get to the Governor's desk for signature so that we can provide working Pennsylvanians adequate, affordable, and accessible healthcare, because they desperately need it, they desperately want it, and they are desperately willing to pay for it at a modest rate. That is what we need to find, and that is the goal we should have in this General Assembly and in this Chamber.

So again, I thank the gentleman for raising the issue, and I think on a couple of issues we agree, that we need to address the issues of affordability and accessibility. The question is, on the other part of the equation, we need to figure out how we get there. But in the interim, we need to take steps to look at all those issues in a comprehensive way. Let us do that soon, not later. That is where we need to be.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montgomery, Senator Wonderling.

Senator WONDERLING. Madam President, to my colleague and row mate and good friend from Lebanon County, Senator Folmer, I would like to thank him for yielding time here.

First of all, I applaud His Excellency, Governor Ed Rendell, for putting the whole issue of healthcare front and center in front of the citizens of this Commonwealth. And I further applaud Senator Costa's passion and thoughtfulness on this issue. I just have a couple of brief comments, Madam President, based on the Petitions and Remonstrances provided this afternoon.

First, I do not believe Democrats and Republicans disagree that we need to find long-term solutions in the provision of healthcare for the citizens of this Commonwealth, particularly those who are on fixed incomes, those who are of moderate and low means, and those who are working across this Commonwealth. We may debate on how many uninsured Pennsylvanians there are--high estimates indicate it could be 800,000, and more moderate estimates suggest it is 400,000 or 500,000--but that is not the point. The point is, in my opinion, there is a proper role for a modern Pennsylvania government to insure and assure that citizens have access to affordable healthcare. There are many stakeholders, and it is a complex issue, but I do want to address the three points that were made by my colleague from Allegheny County.

First, as to coverage, I believe, and I am an optimist on this point, that we will reach that proverbial sweet spot of compromise on what the right benefit mix should be, particularly for those Pennsylvanians who are struggling and do not have access to healthcare. And there is a role for public subsidy, for taxpayer subsidy, in defining that benefit coverage.

As to the cost, which is an issue that is paramount in Presidential politics in Pennsylvania today, with candidates on both sides of the aisle not just talking about coverage, but the high cost and the provision of healthcare. We have passed into law measures to reduce healthcare costs, measures related to dealing with hospital-borne infections. I have legislation that would digitize the

healthcare system in urban, suburban, and rural Pennsylvania. I think we should still take another run at meaningful tort reform across all sectors of our economy, particularly those in the medical profession, who are very much still today practicing defensive medicine as a result of the high cost of litigation in the healthcare sector.

So there are many things we can do to attack the costs which, by the way, Madam President, I do not think can be resolved in weeks and months by the measure of a holiday Calendar, as we have been hearing, but requires a bipartisan effort over time to address the issue. Which brings us to, and I think Senator Corman was making the point in addressing the bill that has just come to this Chamber from the House, how do we pay for this?

I have stood here during Petitions and Remonstrances on previous occasions to suggest that there may be an additional way to fund the healthcare system. I have legislation that once again revisits the issue of whether or not public State Stores, the retail outlets that sell to Pennsylvanians, those who want to purchase wine and spirits, whether or not public State Stores are something we can afford in a modern 21st century Pennsylvania. I raise this issue because, at least at a minimum, and only from my perspective, I am offering an alternative to "whatever," which was the language presented to us from the House and the Governor's financial plan for funding healthcare.

Because I believe the provision of healthcare is a core function of a modern Pennsylvania, I believe we have a responsibility to work on a bipartisan basis to not only address the cost issue and the benefit structure issue, but how we are going to pay for all this. I know the folks I represent do not want to pay any more in taxes, and I also know that the assumptions that are made in the Governor's Cover All Pennsylvanians proposal are somewhat flawed - counting on an increase in Federal subsidy, and we have heard that may not be the case; an increase in the cigarette tax, and I am sure there will be support for that tax increase, but it is a declining revenue source over time, as the use of tobacco products are on the decline; and then ultimately a tax on entrepreneurs, which I do not think is good for the Pennsylvania economy.

So I, for one, have offered an alternate way to fund the healthcare initiatives that are currently being debated by getting us out of a governmental enterprise that I do not think is a core function of a modern government. We can do that and then fund not only in the short-term, but the long-term healthcare requirements.

I just conclude, Madam President, by suggesting that my inspiration for privatization of the State Store system was not necessarily Governor Tom Ridge or Governor Dick Thornburgh or what countless other States have done. It was actually Governor Ed Rendell who, in his campaign for Governor and his first term, suggested that privatization of the State Store system was a good idea. And then furthermore, his recent efforts, which I applaud, to look at leasing the Pennsylvania Turnpike, taking an asset that has a long history in this Commonwealth, making an evaluation of that asset, and bringing the private sector in to manage that asset in a way which may have a higher return. We may agree or disagree that leasing the turnpike is a good idea or a bad idea, but that is not the point here. The point here is the Governor has shown, I think, great vision to look at Pennsylvania's public assets, like the Pennsylvania turnpike, and see a private/public partnership in such a way that can help finance some other func-

tion of government. I think it is analogous to my legislation regarding the State Stores: make an evaluation of a public asset, in this case 600-plus retail State Stores, see what the market will provide in a private sector role for those States Stores, and use the revenue of the sale of those stores to finance the short-, medium-, and long-term healthcare requirements of the working men and women of this Commonwealth.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lebanon, Senator Folmer.

Senator FOLMER. Madam President, today we heard about many problems that we are facing here in Pennsylvania with healthcare, thousands of adults who have no health insurance, and the need to step into the breach and provide support for those who need it most. It has been said that the Governor is the only one working on a plan to deal with healthcare in Pennsylvania. Madam President, I say that is not totally true. I, too, have a healthcare plan. It is called Healthy Pennsylvania, Senate Bills No. 1181 through 1196.

Now, I agree with the people throughout Pennsylvania and across our nation who are concerned about healthcare. They say it costs too much, it is too hard to get, and the quality is not what it used to be. These are the issues that Healthy Pennsylvania focuses on. Madam President, when you talk about healthcare, you need to talk about three main issues: quality, cost, and accessibility. Now, I applaud Governor Rendell for correctly identifying the main problem with healthcare in Pennsylvania, and that is the cost. However, I do not believe the Governor's plan addresses costs. His plan focuses more on accessibility than cost. Now, the main difference between my plan and the Governor's plan centers on the role that government would play in our healthcare system. The Governor proposes more government. My plan calls for less government.

When looking at what happened in other States and nations that have increased government's role in providing healthcare - Massachusetts boasts that it has reduced the number of uninsured by half, with four out of five people relying on government programs that are costing Massachusetts about \$150 million more per year. Canadians wait months for healthcare: 6 months for hip replacements, 5 months for CAT scans, up to a year for heart surgery. Some even die waiting. No wonder 8 out of 10 Canadians say this system is in crisis. Great Britain's National Institute for Health estimates that roughly 1 million people wait for care, with about 200,000 waiting as long as 6 months.

There is no doubt, Madam President, that there are flaws in the American and Pennsylvania healthcare systems. However, looking to government to address these flaws is not the answer. We should not confuse lack of health insurance with lack of care. American healthcare remains the envy of the world. We need to find ways to make it more affordable while preserving quality. That is the goal of Healthy Pennsylvania.

Healthy Pennsylvania is like fingers on a hand. Individually, they have little impact. However, collectively, they form a mighty fist that would fight back at the increased cost, the decreased availability, and the diminished quality of our current system. For my colleagues who are concerned about healthcare, I call upon you to join me in pushing forward with Healthy Pennsylvania. It represents real solutions to Pennsylvania's healthcare costs without compromising the quality of our healthcare system.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

The PRESIDENT. Thank you, Senator Folmer, for your suggesting Senate Bill No. 1181 through Senate Bill No. 1196 to deal with this problem.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Philadelphia, Senator Stack.

Senator STACK. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak. My remarks will, by far, be the shortest out of all the speakers, but I enjoyed the discussion, and it is one that has to be ongoing. We have to solve this problem. But I rise to discuss a different topic, although in one way or another related to healthcare.

I rise today to stress the importance and the need for increased funding for subsidized child care services. The subsidized child care program provides quality care to children while their parents work. Day care is a tremendous expense for most families but especially hardworking low-income families who simply must work to make ends meet. Right now, there are more than 8,300 children on the statewide waiting list. In northeast Philadelphia alone, which I represent, more than 1,500 children from low-income working families are waiting to receive child care subsidies. The average waiting period is about 90 days, Madam President. Ninety days is simply too long for parents to have to wait to find subsidized day care for their children. These parents want to work.

This year's proposed budget has a \$28 million increase for subsidized child care services. Of that, \$6.9 million is set aside to reduce the current waiting list. However, eliminating the waiting list will cost \$30 million.

Madam President, as we continue to negotiate this year's budget, I am calling for an additional \$9 million in funding for the child care services line item to reduce the subsidized child care waiting list by 50 percent. By significantly reducing this waiting list, we can provide thousands of children with quality day care while ensuring that parents can go to work and provide for their families while contributing to Pennsylvania's economy and reducing dependence on welfare.

I encourage my colleagues to consider supporting an increase in funding to the subsidized child care program and getting our citizens off to work and off welfare.

Thank you, Madam President.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SECRETARY

The following announcements were read by the Secretary of the Senate:

SENATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2008

10:00 A.M.	COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE FOR SENATE BILL No. 246 (discussion on Senate Bill No. 246) C A N C E L L E D	Room 8E-B East Wing
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TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2008

9:00 A.M.	COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE FOR SENATE BILL No. 246	Room 8E-A East Wing
10:00 A.M.	BANKING AND INSURANCE (public hearing on House Bill No. 1150)	Hrg. Rm. 1 North Off.

10:30 A.M.	ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY (informational briefing on the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' natural gas leasing plan)	Room 8E-B East Wing
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The PRESIDENT. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Allegheny, Senator Orié.

Senator ORIE. Madam President, I move that the Senate do now recess until Monday, March 31, 2008, at 1 p.m., Eastern Daylight Saving Time.

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

The Senate recessed at 2:34 p.m., Eastern Daylight Saving Time.