

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING

STATE CAPITOL  
MAIN BUILDING  
ROOM 140  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2014  
1:00 P.M.

PRESENTATION FROM  
HOUSE MEMBERS

BEFORE:

HONORABLE WILLIAM F. ADOLPH, JR., MAJORITY CHAIRMAN  
HONORABLE KAREN BOBACK  
HONORABLE JIM CHRISTIANA  
HONORABLE GARY DAY  
HONORABLE GORDON DENLINGER  
HONORABLE BRIAN ELLIS  
HONORABLE GLEN GRELL  
HONORABLE SETH GROVE  
HONORABLE ADAM HARRIS  
HONORABLE TOM KILLION  
HONORABLE DAVID R. MILLARD  
HONORABLE MARK T. MUSTIO  
HONORABLE DONNA OBERLANDER  
HONORABLE BERNIE T. O'NEILL  
HONORABLE MICHAEL PEIFER  
HONORABLE JEFFREY P. PYLE  
HONORABLE CURTIS G. SONNEY

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JEAN DAVIS REPORTING  
285 EAST MANSION ROAD • HERSHEY, PA 17033  
Phone (717)503-6568

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**BEFORE (cont.'d):**

- HONORABLE JOSEPH F. MARKOSEK, MINORITY CHAIRMAN**
- HONORABLE BRENDAN BOYLE**
- HONORABLE MATTHEW D. BRADFORD**
- HONORABLE MICHELLE F. BROWNLEE**
- HONORABLE MIKE CARROLL**
- HONORABLE H. SCOTT CONKLIN**
- HONORABLE MADELEINE DEAN**
- HONORABLE DEBERAH KULA**
- HONORABLE MICHAEL O'BRIEN**
- HONORABLE STEVEN SANTARSIERO**

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

- DAVID DONLEY, REPUBLICAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
- DAN CLARK, REPUBLICAN CHIEF COUNSEL**
- MIRIAM FOX, DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**JEAN M. DAVIS, REPORTER  
NOTARY PUBLIC**

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Good afternoon,  
4 everyone.

5 I'd like to reconvene the House Appropriations  
6 Committee. Every year during the budget hearings we have  
7 House of Representatives member testimony. Normally, it's  
8 the last part of the budget hearing. But as a result of  
9 the severe weather that we've had over the last several  
10 weeks, there was one day where we postponed a hearing day.  
11 And we do have some hearings later after the members'  
12 testimony.

13 It's also one of my favorite parts of the budget  
14 hearings because it's always good to hear from our House  
15 members.

16 Our first House member is Representative Thomas  
17 Murt from parts of Montgomery County and Philadelphia  
18 County.

19 Representative.

20 REP. MURT: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Adolph, Chairman Markosek, thank you  
22 very much for the opportunity to testify this afternoon.  
23 Before I proceed with my remarks, I wanted to express my  
24 gratitude to you and to this Committee for the excellent  
25 work you have done in the past as it relates to the

1 investment the Commonwealth has made in the funding of  
2 programs and services that support our adult population who  
3 have various types of disabilities but, most especially,  
4 intellectual disabilities.

5 In the past few years, we have made great  
6 progress in this mission. This is a story in which the  
7 media may not have an interest, but it is nevertheless a  
8 very positive development. And as one Representative, I  
9 want you to know that I am grateful.

10 Mr. Chairman, I'm here today on behalf of all our  
11 veterans across the Commonwealth to speak to you regarding  
12 the proposed reduction in funding for our veterans homes in  
13 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As a veteran of the war  
14 in Iraq and as a member of the Advisory Council at the  
15 Delaware Valley Veterans Home in Northeast Philadelphia,  
16 this line item is near and dear to my heart, as it is to  
17 thousands of families across the Commonwealth.

18 Mr. Chairman, our men and women who have fought  
19 in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and in other  
20 conflicts around the world deserve the very best care that  
21 Pennsylvania can offer. We owe them that much.

22 There are six State veterans homes across the  
23 Commonwealth. These facilities provide long-term care to  
24 1,554 veterans and/or their spouses. An additional 2,160  
25 skilled nursing beds exist in our system.

1           Mr. Chairman, for the fiscal year 2014-2015,  
2           cost-saving initiatives will continue to be in effect at  
3           our veterans homes. These measures ensure that  
4           standardization is in effect across all of the system to  
5           deliver comparable care regardless of which of the six  
6           homes at which a veteran may reside.

7           We desire to afford our veterans the highest  
8           level and quality of care. These efforts have had great  
9           success. Per diem rates have been lowered to our veterans  
10          by \$6 a day. Mr. Chairman, in this economic climate where  
11          health care costs are rising significantly, this is a  
12          remarkable accomplishment in itself.

13          One of the factors that make our veterans homes  
14          so attractive is that in addition to high-quality,  
15          professional, and compassionate care, our veterans are  
16          required to pay what they can afford. In addition, all our  
17          veterans homes are now in full licensure status and  
18          promptly address any issues as noted by the Pennsylvania  
19          Department of Public Welfare, U.S. Department of Veterans  
20          Affairs, and the Department of Health.

21          Mr. Chairman, the Bureau of Veterans Homes has  
22          kept up with the transformations in health care that we  
23          have witnessed over the past two decades. The Bureau of  
24          Veterans Homes has updated their practices in handling  
25          long-term care and fostering a more home-like environment.

1           They have been phasing out archaic institutional  
2 approaches to care. Modernization has also been fostered  
3 at the dining service level at all six facilities. And  
4 \$133 million has been allocated over the past five years to  
5 make these modifications possible. \$62 million of that  
6 funding was from the Federal Department of Veterans  
7 Affairs, which accounted for 46 percent of the funding  
8 provided.

9           Mr. Chairman, the Department of Military and  
10 Veterans Affairs has also moved on an initiative to  
11 leverage dollars from the Federal Government by enrolling  
12 their residents in Medicare Part D for pharmaceuticals in  
13 our facilities. Two pilot projects to achieve this are  
14 currently underway, with expansion to all veterans homes  
15 expected by the end of the year.

16           The quality of our State veterans homes is also  
17 well above the national average, as manifested in part by  
18 the extensive waiting list of those trying to be admitted  
19 to our facilities across the State.

20           Mr. Chairman, if we hope to keep our promise to  
21 our veterans, like the promise they took to defend this  
22 great nation, we must not cut funding to our veterans  
23 homes. Our veterans deserve the best care possible here in  
24 Pennsylvania. Our veteran population, like every other  
25 population, is living longer.

1           As an example, the men and women who served in  
2 Vietnam and who were exposed to Agent Orange and other  
3 chemicals are now making their way into our veterans homes  
4 and are suffering from Parkinson's Disease and Hodgkin's  
5 lymphoma, prostate cancer, lung cancer, colon cancer, soft  
6 tissue sarcoma, and liver cancer.

7           We are a Commonwealth that proudly boasts almost  
8 one million veterans living within our borders. To keep  
9 the level of care in these homes as one of the best in the  
10 nation, we must increase our support of this mission of  
11 caring for our veterans. The Bureau of Veterans Homes has  
12 shown they can reduce costs and bring better care to our  
13 veterans.

14           Mr. Chairman, I respectfully and humbly request  
15 on behalf of Pennsylvania's veterans that we find a way to  
16 increase investment in the mission of these critically  
17 important veterans homes.

18           Thank you for your consideration of my request.

19           MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much,  
20 Representative Murt. And we certainly will. Thank you for  
21 your testimony.

22           REP. MURT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank  
23 you, members.

24           MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much.

25           The next member of the House of Representatives



1 is Representative Joseph Hackett from Delaware County.

2 Representative, good afternoon.

3 REP. HACKETT: Good afternoon, Chairman Adolph,  
4 Chairman Markosek, and members of the Committee. And thank  
5 you for the opportunity to address you here today to share  
6 my two cents on the 2014-2015 budget.

7 My first area of concern with the Governor's  
8 proposed budget is the Corrections Department. The  
9 Governor has proposed to increase the line item for State  
10 correctional institutions by over \$78 million, bringing the  
11 total line item to over \$1.7 billion.

12 While this includes over \$7 million for enhanced  
13 mental health treatment to inmates, which I support, this  
14 means that over \$70 million more of the taxpayer money is  
15 going towards housing our inmates. In a time when we have  
16 residents who are barely able to make ends meet, I want to  
17 be sure that this additional money is absolutely necessary  
18 because, quite frankly, I'd rather see that money coming  
19 back to our schools or helping to address other  
20 obligations.

21 This additional funding is especially of concern  
22 to me given the Department's testimony in front of the  
23 Senate Appropriations Committee last week where they stated  
24 they are putting final touches on a pilot program to give  
25 inmates access to electronic tablets. Prisoners are

1 incarcerated because they have done something wrong. What  
2 kind of punishment is it to allow them to purchase a tablet  
3 to listen to music or check e-mail?

4 I find this kind of fringe benefit both insulting  
5 and infuriating and cannot stand by and allow prisoners to  
6 basically be rewarded while my law-abiding constituents  
7 live paycheck to paycheck.

8 One area that is of personal significance to me  
9 is the growing epidemic of opioid and heroin abuse in the  
10 Commonwealth. I have several friends who have battled  
11 addiction with these substances and, sadly, some of them  
12 are no longer with us today. While we in the Legislature  
13 are exploring ways of keeping these prescription and  
14 illegal drugs off the streets, the most effective tool in  
15 fighting this battle is a well-funded and well-trained  
16 police force.

17 It's obvious that the Governor is committed to  
18 this issue also, given his proposed increase to the  
19 Department of Drug and Alcohol programs. And I would like  
20 to thank him for that. However, I think that it's going to  
21 take a lot more than what he has proposed to produce any  
22 kind of positive result with this problem. I'd like to see  
23 some of that proposed increased funding for the prisons  
24 redirected to programs like this to help keep people out of  
25 our prison system in the first place. I think it would be

1 a far better use of taxpayer money.

2 Next, I have some concerns about the New  
3 Choices/New Options Program within the Department of Labor  
4 and Industry, which the Governor has proposed to zero out  
5 from last year's \$500,000 appropriation. This program has  
6 been incredibly successful over the years at helping single  
7 parents and out-of-work individuals to obtain gainful  
8 employment.

9 The program at the Delaware County Community  
10 College has a proven track record of success. And I  
11 believe it is critical to the job market of the  
12 Commonwealth to at least restore that funding level, if not  
13 increase it.

14 I would also like to commend the Governor on his  
15 increased funding for the Department of Environmental  
16 Protection programs, specifically \$2 million more for the  
17 Clean Air Fund and a \$7 million increase for environmental  
18 protection operations. Air quality is a large problem in  
19 Delaware County, which has led to increased levels of  
20 asthma in our children. By increasing the funding for  
21 these programs, I believe that we can address this issue of  
22 poor air quality in the Southeast and reverse this trend of  
23 health issues for our children.

24 Another issue of interest to me is that of the  
25 safety and security of our rail infrastructure in

1 Pennsylvania and the adequate funding of our emergency  
2 responders in these affected communities. There have been  
3 several incidents within the State recently involving  
4 crude-oil-carrying trains, including one in Philadelphia  
5 and one in the Pittsburgh region that actually resulted in  
6 an oil spill.

7 We need to make sure that our local emergency  
8 management agencies and first responders are ready for this  
9 type of incident and are properly equipped to deal with  
10 them. Because of these recent incidents, I've called upon  
11 the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee  
12 to hold hearings on this issue next week in Delaware  
13 County. I wanted to put this issue on the Appropriations  
14 Committee radar.

15 I realize that funding for this type of concern  
16 would likely be from Federal sources or a hybrid of Federal  
17 and State money, but I think it would be a good idea to  
18 keep this in back of everyone's mind just in case it comes  
19 up in the near future as we move forward.

20 In closing, I appreciate the time and forum,  
21 Mr. Chairman. I believe that my requests within the  
22 context of a \$29 billion budget amounts to a drop in the  
23 bucket and would appreciate your attention to them as you  
24 move forward with crafting our 2014-2015 General Fund  
25 budget.

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Thank you for your attention here today.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much, Representative Hackett. And we will certainly be looking forward to working with you during this process.

REP. HACKETT: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Committee.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

Next we will hear from Representative DeLissio.

REP. DeLISSIO: Good afternoon.

Members of the Appropriations Committee and staff and Chairmen, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address my concerns relative to the Governor's proposed budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

My constituents agree with me that the budget is the most important legislative event that occurs and learning as much as possible about the budget is a very important aspect of my job.

They believe that my time is well spent understanding the budget details, because, as they say, the devil is in the details. These budget details affect the daily, if not hourly, lives of my constituents and all of the citizens in the Commonwealth.

This is the fourth year that I have testified on the Governor's proposed budget. I was prompted to look back over the testimony that I gave in the previous three

1 years. It was somewhat startling to realize that I could  
2 title today's testimony, What is Old is New Again. These  
3 excerpts from past testimony are still applicable today.

4 In 2011 I testified, what I have observed from  
5 attending some of these hearings is that it is clear that  
6 the proposed budget addresses the expense side. However,  
7 there is little emphasis on growth which will lead to  
8 revenue enhancement. One way to enhance revenue is to  
9 prepare both today and tomorrow's workforce for  
10 better-paying jobs.

11 Better jobs will result in higher payroll taxes.  
12 Better jobs will result in additional discretionary  
13 spending, and the affiliated sales and use taxes collected  
14 in conjunction with that additional spending will enhance  
15 revenue. A trained and educated workforce will be eligible  
16 for those better jobs.

17 I have a further concern that problematic  
18 reductions in other areas of the budget will shift costs to  
19 local governments and create additional and unnecessary  
20 hardships. You and I both know that those shifts will  
21 ultimately be paid by the taxpayer. Those hardships will  
22 become a burden to those who are most vulnerable.

23 In 2012 I testified, my 30-year career further  
24 informs me that the budget development is about revenues  
25 and expenses and the priorities that are identified that

1 drive those revenues and expenses. One response I have  
2 after listening carefully and reviewing budget-related  
3 materials is that the priorities I have heard include  
4 short-term money savings at potential greater costs in the  
5 mid and long term. These mid- and long-term costs do not  
6 even take into consideration what I refer to as soft costs.  
7 And the soft costs are the havoc wreaked in constituents'  
8 lives; for example, lost time, increased frustration, lost  
9 productivity, increased stress, etc. And there I was  
10 referring to the cuts in that year for the Human Services  
11 programs.

12 In 2012 I further testified, and speaking of best  
13 practices, I have learned over time that a good leader  
14 would use the best practice of engaging a diverse group of  
15 stakeholders when making strategic decisions and,  
16 ultimately, major changes.

17 Generally, I don't find people are averse to  
18 changes if they are part of the process and feel vested in  
19 the process. And I remain concerned that the process has  
20 not included diverse groups of stakeholders in a meaningful  
21 way. If this year's budget negotiations echo last year,  
22 then 45.5 percent or more of the citizens will be excluded  
23 from the dialogue because members of the minority party  
24 were excluded from the budget decisions.

25 I want to go on record today that it is untenable

1 if it happens again this year. That was in 2012. And it  
2 did happen again that year.

3 I think the citizens should help to determine the  
4 nice-to-haves versus the need-to-haves. And I would submit  
5 to you that the ultimate answer to determining need or nice  
6 is subject to opinion. My opinion counts on behalf of my  
7 constituents and their opinion counts as far as I am  
8 concerned. To remedy this, I will be holding a public  
9 hearing in the 194th for my constituents to provide  
10 testimony on the budget. It is, after all, their tax  
11 dollars.

12 And I just want to let you know that again for  
13 the third time this year in June, I will be holding my  
14 Voices of the Community budget hearing in the 194th. It  
15 has been inspiring and encouraging listening to the voices  
16 of both Jane and John Q citizen as they discuss what they  
17 think the budget priorities should be. And I am beyond  
18 impressed with the level of detail and effort that my  
19 constituents put into their remarks.

20 In 2013 I testified, our State budget must  
21 balance the needs of all citizens. We need to be cognizant  
22 of the fact that many of these citizens are the least able  
23 to advocate for their own needs. They are not represented  
24 by PACS, nor do they have the capability to influence the  
25 process and outcome by writing campaign checks.



1 I find myself concerned when line items in the  
2 budget, not to mention legislation, appear to be influenced  
3 by special interests. By the way, I have learned to follow  
4 the money trail. And it almost always is a troublesome  
5 journey.

6 We often consider public policy for the greater  
7 good but often deviate by diluting that policy based on the  
8 influence of special interests that are well financed.

9 I have witnessed budget decisions that have  
10 created chaos, harmed citizens, and in the short and long  
11 run pursued dubious policy that cost the State more money  
12 than was saved. I find it interesting that often the State  
13 chooses not to track information that does not support  
14 their budget decisions.

15 The current mistake -- and this was in 2013 -- I  
16 hope we can avoid is failing to plan for Medicaid expansion  
17 in conjunction with the Affordable Care Act. Medicaid  
18 expansion is the quintessential opportunity to do good and  
19 do well. We can do good by expanding this program and then  
20 the Commonwealth would be able to insure about 500,000  
21 citizens that are currently uninsured, many of whom are  
22 steady members of our workforce. The doing well is  
23 represented by the significant economic impact that will be  
24 experienced as a result of the expansion.

25 Our taxpayers contributed to the Federal dollars

1 that will pay for Medicaid expansion in other states and  
2 deserve to have access to that same coverage in  
3 Pennsylvania. Instead, if we opt out of Medicaid  
4 expansion, we could lose this critical health care coverage  
5 that will serve those most in need, a loss that could be  
6 the result of politics at play instead of public policy for  
7 the greater good.

8 Further in 2013 I testified that the Governor's  
9 budget assumes savings from pension reform by contemplating  
10 a payment significantly less than required by law. If  
11 pension reform does not happen at all, let alone happen  
12 timely, then there will be a significant budget shortfall.

13 I believe that the budget is the most important  
14 task for which the Legislature is responsible. I discuss  
15 the budget in most of my Town Hall meetings. And at that  
16 time, there were 21 Town Hall meetings that had been held  
17 in the past 27 months. That count is now 32 Town Halls in  
18 39 months. And I will continue to include the budget on my  
19 Town Hall agendas.

20 Citizens need to understand how the budget  
21 process works and how to have their voices heard during  
22 budget debate.

23 I ask that the budget debates over the next  
24 several months keep in mind that the budget must address  
25 and balance the needs of all those who call the

1 Commonwealth home and request a process whereby  
2 representatives from both parties are at the table  
3 throughout the budget negotiations.

4 In testifying here today, I am disappointed that  
5 my testimony is the legislative version of the movie  
6 Groundhog Day. Not much has changed and my concerns  
7 persist. I am particularly concerned with the money left  
8 on the table. And I assure you that this does not  
9 translate to tax increases. This refers to policy and  
10 legislation that did not fairly balance the needs of  
11 citizens and the needs of business.

12 I decided to embark on this third career as an  
13 elected official to effect change. And it is as clear as  
14 ever that the path to do that is to change the process.  
15 The process must be all-inclusive so that all voices are  
16 heard. I look forward to working to ensure that both  
17 parties are part of the budget negotiations and to reflect  
18 my constituents' priorities in those discussions.

19 Chairman Adolph and Chairman Markosek, on behalf  
20 of my constituents, I thank you for your time this  
21 afternoon.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,  
23 Representative.

24 The next testifier will be Representative Bryan  
25 Cutler from Lancaster County.

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Good afternoon, Representative.

REP. CUTLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. How are you?

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Very well. Thanks for being here.

REP. CUTLER: Wonderful. I'll try to be very brief.

First, I want to thank you, Chairman Adolph and Chairman Markosek, for your time and the members for their trip up here. I appreciate the opportunity to share on a line item in the budget that's always been very important to me because of my own personal issues and struggles with Lou Gehrig's Disease.

I was very pleased to see that this year the funding in the line item was maintained at \$350,000. And I wanted to advocate on behalf of that as well as all the other what I'll call disease-specific line items. I think that it's very important that as policymakers we understand the impacts that these diseases have on our ability to deliver social services or other forms of care, perhaps through Medicaid.

And I think we need to, for our taxpayers, get the most efficient use out of all the dollars that we have and are entrusted with.

In this particular case, I wanted to share some

1 of the highlights that this line item has been used for  
2 and, more importantly, the impact that it's had on the  
3 patients' lives and I think the financial impact that it's  
4 had on our budget by saving money.

5 The most immediate and substantial impact from  
6 the line item has been from the use of the  
7 multidisciplinary clinics. We're very fortunate that we  
8 have those in a state our size to have this many. We have  
9 clinics at Pennsylvania Hospital, Hershey Medical Center,  
10 Allegheny General Hospital, John P. Murtha Neuroscience and  
11 Pain Institute.

12 These clinics allow people with ALS, or the PALS,  
13 to see multiple, sometimes up to a dozen specialists in a  
14 one-stop-shop setting. They can come in and see a  
15 neurologist, a nurse, a social worker. They can see  
16 physical and occupational rehab as well as speech  
17 therapists and dietitians. This is all very important for  
18 their continuum of care.

19 Unfortunately, Lou Gehrig's Disease, as I've  
20 shared before, is always fatal, mostly within two to five  
21 years. But more importantly from our perspective as  
22 policymakers, it can also be extremely costly to us as the  
23 Commonwealth. Because once individuals utilize all of  
24 their own assets and become eligible for public assistance,  
25 this kind of care can sometimes cost tens of thousands of

1 dollars per year particularly near the end and in very  
2 clinic-intensive sites. It's not unusual to see bills  
3 upwards of seventy or eighty thousand dollars per year to  
4 care for these individuals and the complications that are  
5 associated with their disease.

6           Unfortunately, we have approximately 1,000  
7 patients in the Commonwealth that are suffering from ALS.  
8 If you remember back when I first started testifying about  
9 this disease, we had approximately 850 to 900. We've seen  
10 a steady increase in the rate of the disease as well as  
11 some advances in the treatment that I mentioned earlier.

12           I think the next most important impact that this  
13 line item has had has not just been the multidisciplinary  
14 clinics but in the ability to keep these patients in their  
15 home setting to provide the care. There's been roughly  
16 12,000 hours of in-home health care given to people with  
17 ALS. And this line item has actually helped to assist with  
18 about a quarter of that entire total that is being offered.

19           This level of specialized care, as I mentioned,  
20 is not cheap. And as policymakers, I think we always need  
21 to be on the lookout for the most efficient use of our  
22 money. I would certainly advocate that caring for  
23 individuals in a home setting is much more cost effective  
24 as well as more comforting to the patients in order to  
25 allow them to be in that setting. So I would certainly

1 view that as a win-win for every party involved.

2 The impact from this line item, I would argue,  
3 has been great. But unfortunately the need is even  
4 greater. As we've seen a steady growth in patients as well  
5 as medical advances, there are other areas I think that we  
6 could be looking towards, whether it be adaptive technology  
7 to be utilized in the home.

8 I shared an article with the Committee regarding  
9 the use of the Google glass technology, which I think has  
10 been fabulous. I had the privilege of touring some of the  
11 clinics and seeing the computers that can be controlled  
12 with eye movement. And while we're making great advances  
13 to keep people at home longer, they are also living longer  
14 so the costs are also increasing.

15 As policymakers, I think we have a great balance  
16 that we need to strike. We need to have an effective use  
17 of our dollars and an efficient use of our dollars. And I  
18 would argue that we need to make the best use of those and  
19 certainly why I'm here advocating on behalf of not just  
20 that line item for Lou Gehrig's Disease but all the  
21 disease-specific line items, because all of these diseases  
22 have a very real impact on our constituents' lives. And in  
23 addition to that, it has a very real financial impact on  
24 our budget as we consider these items as we move forward.

25 And in the scope of our budget, I think that this

1 is a \$350,000 investment that I would love to see increased  
2 at some point in the future when financially able. I'd  
3 love to see it perhaps go up to \$500,000. That would be  
4 \$500 per patient roughly. And I think that we could  
5 provide an even better standard of care here in the  
6 Commonwealth.

7 One of the things that I see on the horizon --  
8 and I've mentioned I believe every time that I've testified  
9 on this disease -- is that veterans are twice as likely to  
10 succumb to Lou Gehrig's Disease or be diagnosed with it  
11 from a statistical standpoint as compared to the average  
12 population.

13 And as many of you know, we have many brave men  
14 and women serving in the military currently on the war on  
15 terror. And we are the single state with the largest  
16 deployment of National Guardsmen over the course of the war  
17 on terror.

18 So that means as these veterans are returning  
19 home, I think it's even more important that we have the  
20 infrastructure and the pieces in place to care for them and  
21 assist them everywhere that they need so that we have  
22 continued success with our great medical clinics in the  
23 Commonwealth.

24 So thank you for your time. Thank you for your  
25 support. I look forward to working with you as we go



1 forward. Thank you.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Likewise,  
3 Representative. Thank you very much.

4 REP. CUTLER: You're welcome.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: The next testifier  
6 will be Representative Vanessa Brown from Philadelphia.

7 REP. BROWN: Good afternoon, everyone.

8 First and foremost, I would like to thank  
9 Chairman Adolph and Chairman Markosek and the House  
10 Appropriations Committee for allowing me to testify today.

11 Secondly, I would like to qualify my remarks this  
12 afternoon by stating that they are not meant to be  
13 interpreted as a general criticism of the Governor's  
14 proposed budget. I have always been of the school of  
15 thought that one should not criticize someone or something  
16 unless they are willing to offer an alternative solution or  
17 remedy. At this writing, I did not personally have an  
18 alternative budget plan to offer for acceptance.

19 Having said that, as both a legislator and  
20 Chairwoman of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, I  
21 simply wish to take this opportunity to bring several areas  
22 of concern regarding the budget to your collective  
23 attention.

24 In the aforementioned official capacity of which  
25 I serve, what immediately caught my attention in the

1 Governor's proposed budget was the zeroing out of the  
2 Department of Health's diabetes programs line item. This  
3 was particularly distressing to me, as I am keenly aware of  
4 the fact that African-Americans are more disproportionately  
5 affected by diabetes than their racial counterparts.

6 Specifically, African-Americans are twice more  
7 likely than whites to be diagnosed with diabetes. This  
8 rate of affliction is even more pronounced when it comes to  
9 African-American women in comparison to their racial  
10 counterparts.

11 In fact, in a recent report issued by the  
12 Pennsylvania Department of Health's Office of Health  
13 Equality entitled Black African-American Health Status  
14 Overview, it clearly outlines that in 2009, diabetes was  
15 the fifth largest killer of African-Americans aged 45 to 64  
16 in Pennsylvania. Additionally, the report states that from  
17 2007 through 2009, the percentage of African-American  
18 Pennsylvanians afflicted with diabetes is roughly double  
19 the national average.

20 With this information at our disposal, it should  
21 be clear to everyone that these facts and figures are not  
22 representative of the Commonwealth's need to eliminate this  
23 vitally important health program. If anything, the data  
24 seems to indicate that the State program with dual goals of  
25 preventing the development of diabetes and controlling its

1 complications needs to be expanded.

2 Due to the foregoing reasons, I am requesting  
3 that the funding cut from the Department of Health's  
4 diabetes program line item be restored to at least the  
5 2013-'14 current level.

6 Additionally, I wish to share similar concerns  
7 regarding the zeroing out of the Department of Health's  
8 Lupus line item. In this particular instance, we are  
9 talking about a relatively obscure disease that once again  
10 affects African-Americans at a disproportionate rate as  
11 compared to their racial counterparts.

12 For those of you who may be unaware, Lupus is an  
13 autoimmune disease where the body's immune system becomes  
14 hyperactive and attacks normal, healthy tissue. Although  
15 the medical community is still unclear as to what exactly  
16 causes Lupus, what we do know is that it affects young  
17 black woman at a rate three times higher as compared to  
18 their white counterparts. And what that equates to is 1 in  
19 250 African-American women are afflicted by this disease.

20 It is also important to note that the medication  
21 for Lupus can be quite expensive, especially for those from  
22 lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Such economic obstacles  
23 often cause many people to forgo adequate treatment, which  
24 only exacerbates the overall effect of the disease.

25 With this clear and convincing information at our

1 disposal, it would seem that from a purely economic  
2 perspective that providing adequate funding to the  
3 Department of Health to administer related programming and  
4 outreach would prove to be a truly worthwhile long-term  
5 investment.

6 Just as equally from a purely compassionate  
7 standpoint, when it comes to the relatively mysterious  
8 disease that disproportionately ravishes the bodies of  
9 black women in the very prime of their lives, I would like  
10 to think that our Commonwealth would be spurred into action  
11 to do more in the way of staving off the effects of this  
12 insidious disease upon its populace.

13 It rests as my hope that the members of this  
14 Committee will appeal to both their conscience and common  
15 sense by restoring funding for the Department of Health's  
16 Lupus line item to at least the current 2013-'14 level.

17 As most of you may remember, the last budgetary  
18 cycle, at the request of several Sickle Cell advocates from  
19 across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania  
20 Legislative Black Caucus was briefed on a drug treatment  
21 program called Hydroxyurea, which reduces the severity of  
22 Sickle Cell disease by stimulating the production of HbF,  
23 also known as fetal hemoglobin.

24 Upon receiving this information and sharing it  
25 with the members of our General Assembly, our legislative

1 body was successful in obtaining a moderate increase for  
2 the Sickle Cell line item for the purpose of providing  
3 outreach and education on the groundbreaking treatment.

4           Sadly, funding for outreach and education, which  
5 in the grand scheme of things would make the Sickle Cell  
6 disease more manageable and thus less expensive to treat,  
7 has been cut.

8           One budgetary cycle is not enough time to provide  
9 proper outreach and education regarding the revolutionary  
10 drug treatment to the many Pennsylvanians stricken with  
11 this disease. To be clear, this increase was not meant to  
12 be a recurrent increase. However, the goal was to utilize  
13 this increase in the most effective manner possible.

14           That said, we cannot honestly say that we have  
15 done so. Therefore, I would like to see the funding  
16 reduction of the Sickle Cell line item restored again to  
17 the 2013-'14 level.

18           Lastly, I would like to address the proposed  
19 decrease in the Executive Offices Human Relations  
20 Commission line item. The issue at hand is that this  
21 specific line item has seen a funding reduction during the  
22 last four out of five budgetary cycles, the exception being  
23 the 2012-2013 enacted budget, when the funding level was  
24 from the previous cycle.

25           In terms of sheer dollars and cents, since the

1 2010-'11 enacted budget to the present day, the Commission  
2 has seen its funding cut by nearly \$1 million. This would  
3 not be problematic if the Commission was producing outcomes  
4 that indicated that the total number of complaints alleging  
5 discrimination and prejudice has dropped off. However,  
6 this is clearly not the case. Instead, its investigators  
7 are being saddled with huge caseloads, which prevent them  
8 from executing their duties in both a timely and thorough  
9 manner.

10 As Chairwoman of the Pennsylvania Legislative  
11 Black Caucus, I have witnessed firsthand the high volume of  
12 citizens who visit my Harrisburg office alleging  
13 discrimination in the workplace, particularly those who are  
14 employed, sadly to say, by our Commonwealth's State  
15 agencies.

16 Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to  
17 express that I believe it would be in the best interests of  
18 all Pennsylvanians to demand more accountability concerning  
19 the justification for reducing funding for an entity whose  
20 primary purpose is to protect its citizens from the ill  
21 effects of racism and discrimination.

22 For the Committee's review, I have attached a  
23 correspondence that I received from a former investigator  
24 with the HRC, which outlines concerns similar to the ones  
25 that I have shared with you today.

1           In closing, I once again would like to thank  
2 Chairman Adolph and Chairman Markosek and the House  
3 Appropriations Committee for its indulgence. It is my  
4 sincere hope that the members of this Committee find merit  
5 in the several critically important points that I have  
6 raised here today.

7           Thank you.

8           MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much,  
9 Representative Brown.

10           The next testifier will be Representative Sue  
11 Helm. Representative Helm is from Dauphin County, the  
12 104th Legislative District.

13           REP. HELM: Thank you, Chairmen and members of  
14 the Appropriations Committee, for taking the time today to  
15 listen to my comments.

16           Like all of you, my No. 1 priority as a State  
17 Representative is the welfare of the citizens who elected  
18 me. In my case, that specifically translates to the desire  
19 to establish a much-needed medical facility in northern  
20 Dauphin County.

21           Years before I joined the ranks of the  
22 Legislature, I purchased a real estate company from a  
23 50-year-old gentleman from that area. It was 1986. He was  
24 recently married and was blessed with a much-loved and  
25 long-awaited baby daughter. Having sold the real estate

1 portion of his company, he was looking forward to spending  
2 more quality time with his family.

3 Life was supposed to be good. Instead, he  
4 suffered a heart attack in his Carsonville, Halifax, home.  
5 The ambulance was called immediately. But the doctors said  
6 it took too long to get him to the hospital. They said he  
7 fought to survive but he didn't make it.

8 Since that time, years before I was elected, I  
9 wondered how I, how all of us, could prevent such a  
10 situation.

11 If a person has a heart attack, minutes count.  
12 It's common knowledge that acting quickly can reduce the  
13 damage of a person's heart and increase their chance of  
14 survival.

15 In northern Dauphin County, it's 45 minutes in  
16 any direction to get to emergency health care. That's  
17 particularly bad news for the victims of heart attacks or  
18 strokes who need immediate medical attention.

19 Northern Dauphin County is a rural but growing  
20 community. The need for a medical facility is critical and  
21 increasing. The development of such a facility should  
22 start immediately to meet the current and fast-approaching  
23 future needs of that area.

24 There are two family practice centers in northern  
25 Dauphin County. However, they are only open 9 to 5 on



1 weekdays and two Saturdays a month. They have no  
2 accommodation or physician to handle strokes or heart  
3 attacks.

4 Since 2007, I have been actively pursuing the  
5 placement of a medical facility in northern Dauphin County.  
6 This includes government and non-government solutions,  
7 legislative and administrative approaches.

8 I recognize that any solution to this problem  
9 will involve a public/private support. I have spoken to  
10 officials of major hospitals and health care entities.  
11 They acknowledge the need. They offer support. But they  
12 need to see a commitment from the Commonwealth of  
13 Pennsylvania.

14 In 2008, I had a \$20 million authorization added  
15 to the State's capital budget. And I've continued to  
16 battle for the medical facility and its funding ever since.

17 In September of that year, the House Republican  
18 Policy Committee held a hearing in Lykens regarding a  
19 medical facility. The room was packed. Legislators and  
20 lobbyists were shocked at the turnout and, importantly, the  
21 concern expressed by area residents.

22 Several legislators were late to the Policy  
23 Hearing because some viewed me as a city girl, as they knew  
24 I represented Dauphin County, and after all, they came to  
25 Harrisburg City, Dauphin County, to work. They didn't view

1 the 104th District as a rural area and didn't expect the  
2 nearly one-hour ride from Harrisburg to Lykens. And that's  
3 the point.

4 Travel between northern Dauphin County and  
5 hospitals in Harrisburg or Hershey or Danville in Montour  
6 County or Pottsville in Schuylkill County is 45 minutes to  
7 an hour, especially if one gets caught behind a slow-moving  
8 vehicle or farm equipment on one of our winding and  
9 mountainous two-lane roads.

10 The areas in question are not served by  
11 interstates or four-lane highways. They are rural, but  
12 growing, areas and areas of need. Their greatest need is  
13 an adequate emergency health care facility.

14 I ask for your support at this time for \$5  
15 million of the \$20 million capital expenditure listed in  
16 House Bill 1589 of 2007 to fill this need. And I ask for  
17 your support for Line Item 237 of the 2014-'15 Governor's  
18 proposed budget to expand access to primary care services  
19 in rural and underserved areas of Pennsylvania.

20 His proposal would provide an additional \$4  
21 million to provide loan repayment assurance to health care  
22 practitioners who commit to working in primary care in  
23 rural and underserved areas of the Commonwealth.

24 Charles Dickens once wrote, "There is nothing so  
25 strong or safe in an emergency of life as the simple

1 truth." It is the simple truth that emergency health care  
2 is very much a need in our rural areas, especially northern  
3 Dauphin County.

4 I'm asking for this money today. But I also  
5 would like to say that in addition to the hearing that we  
6 had, Dauphin County also did do a study and invested quite  
7 a bit of money that will back up what I'm saying today.

8 I'd just like to thank the Chairmen and members  
9 of the Appropriations Committee for listening to me today.  
10 And I hope you will consider my request.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much,  
12 Representative Helm.

13 The next testifier will be Representative Rick  
14 Mirabito from Lycoming County.

15 Good afternoon, Representative.

16 REP. MIRABITO: Good afternoon.

17 Thank you, Chairman Adolph, Chairman Markosek,  
18 and members of the House Appropriations Committee for  
19 providing me the opportunity to speak to you today on  
20 behalf of the people of the 83rd Legislative District. The  
21 83rd District includes Williamsport, a third-class city  
22 located in Lycoming County in north central Pennsylvania,  
23 and nine other townships in boroughs surrounding  
24 Williamsport in rural Pennsylvania.

25 We know from research done by the Center for

1 Rural Pennsylvania that with 3.4 million rural residents --  
2 that's 27 percent of the State's total population --  
3 Pennsylvania is home to the third largest rural population  
4 in the United States.

5 Forty-eight of the sixty-seven counties in this  
6 Commonwealth are predominantly rural. Five counties are  
7 completely rural. The only two counties which have no  
8 rural population are Delaware and Philadelphia. The 27  
9 percent of the State's rural population occupies or lives  
10 in 75 percent of the state's landmass.

11 Issues that we face in rural Pennsylvania are  
12 often exacerbated by the demographic, economic, and  
13 geographic characteristics of our communities. Because  
14 rural Pennsylvania differs from other regions of the State,  
15 State budget cuts to rural communities have more  
16 detrimental impacts than on other more affluent areas of  
17 the State for several reasons.

18 First, rural communities are fundamentally  
19 different in their economic structure because they are  
20 poorer and less able to sustain massive cuts in State  
21 funding than affluent communities. They share many of the  
22 problems and economic struggles of our urban areas.

23 While the statewide median household income is  
24 approximately \$53,267, Lycoming County's median household  
25 income is \$44,557, a full 14.7 percent lower. And in

1 Williamsport, one-half of our households live on less than  
2 \$33,147, the median household income.

3 And statewide we have 13.1 percent of the  
4 population living below the poverty level, but in  
5 Williamsport we have 26.8 percent living below the poverty  
6 level. Other rural areas have similar or worse numbers of  
7 people living below the poverty level and lower median  
8 household incomes.

9 Second, although we may try to reduce State  
10 spending, the problems in our communities do not go away.

11 Third, reductions in State spending are a form of  
12 tax shifting, which burdens rural communities in  
13 devastating ways by shifting tax burdens onto those who are  
14 least able to sustain them. In 2011-2012, sources of rural  
15 school district revenues were 48 percent from local  
16 revenues, 46 percent from State revenue, and 6 percent from  
17 Federal revenue and other sources. We know that many rural  
18 communities were forced to raise local property taxes to  
19 deal with reduced State spending on education.

20 A very important issue to the constituents of the  
21 83rd Legislative District that remains unresolved from the  
22 last budget cycle is the return of the State Police  
23 Helicopter Aviation Unit. The budget cuts of the past  
24 three years have affected the public safety of residents in  
25 rural Pennsylvania.

1           I appeared before this Committee for the last two  
2 years and asked that funds be appropriated to restore the  
3 Pennsylvania State Police Aviation Unit to the  
4 Montoursville Airport. The Unit served a broad area of  
5 rural Pennsylvania, including ten counties, Bradford,  
6 Cameron, Clinton, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland,  
7 Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, and Tioga.

8           The aviation unit provided services to Federal,  
9 State, and local law enforcement agencies by conducting  
10 searches, criminal surveillance, Homeland Security  
11 missions, aerial photography, flood rescue missions, and  
12 other emergency transports.

13           In this budget, I urge the Committee to restore  
14 funding and require the Pennsylvania State Police to post a  
15 unit in Montoursville.

16           A second issue that remains unresolved from the  
17 last budget is Medicaid expansion. The Pennsylvania Health  
18 Law Project and the Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health  
19 released a report entitled, Medicaid Expansion: A Benefit  
20 for Rural Pennsylvania, which shows that in 2011, 12  
21 percent of the rural population in Pennsylvania, about  
22 411,919 people, did not have health insurance.

23           The report documents that Medicaid is often the  
24 health insurance program for the working poor, families  
25 with children, who work but are in low-income jobs without

1 employer-sponsored health insurance. As a result, many  
2 rural residents are often uninsured for longer periods of  
3 time than urban residents. For those reasons we need to  
4 pursue Medicaid expansion.

5 A problem that rural communities share with all  
6 regions of Pennsylvania and which we need to address in  
7 this budget is the epidemic of addiction and death from the  
8 misuse of prescription drugs and heroin across our  
9 Commonwealth. Between 1999 and 2007, the number of  
10 overdose deaths quadrupled.

11 We know that changes in Federal Government  
12 regulations have resulted in increased advertising for the  
13 sale of prescription drugs. In 1999, the Food and Drug  
14 Administration began permitting pharmaceutical companies to  
15 advertise prescription drugs on television in what is known  
16 as direct-to-consumer advertising.

17 The United States and New Zealand are the only  
18 two countries in the world that allow direct-to-consumer  
19 advertising of prescription drugs.

20 It is estimated that in 2007, the pharmaceutical  
21 industry spent \$4.8 billion on advertising the sale of  
22 prescription drugs directly to consumers. Obviously, these  
23 ads are not telling our youth to take prescription drugs  
24 illegally. But the message our nation is receiving is that  
25 if you want to feel better, take a prescription drug.

1           At a recent presentation by the District Attorney  
2     in our county, we learned that while 89 percent of the  
3     teenagers disapproved of heroin use, only one in five  
4     teenagers said that prescription painkillers are not  
5     addictive. Clearly, we need to work fast on educating our  
6     youth.

7           Across our State, especially in small rural  
8     communities, prescription drugs have become the pathway to  
9     the use of heroin. We need resources not only for  
10    prevention, education, rehabilitation, and treatment, but  
11    also for prosecution of those who illegally distribute  
12    prescription drugs.

13          Finally, the crisis in rising flood insurance  
14    premiums. This is a problem that results from the Federal  
15    Biggert-Waters Act of 2012. We have seen attempts at the  
16    Federal level to rectify the situation. There's no  
17    guarantee the Federal Government will provide assistance.

18          We must plan in this budget to provide resources  
19    until the Federal Government acts. And one source for  
20    assistance could be the Johnstown Flood Tax, the 18 percent  
21    tax on alcohol which raised \$311 million last year and  
22    which was passed to deal with flood-related issues.

23          In Pennsylvania, 6 of every 1,000 properties has  
24    a flood insurance policy, but as many as 30 out of 1,000  
25    live in a flood zone. And while residents and businesses



1 in a flood zone are directly impacted, communities are at  
2 risk of having this crisis destabilize their real estate  
3 markets.

4 For example, in Lycoming County there are  
5 approximately 53,000 real estate parcels. About 10  
6 percent, or 5,300, are located in the flood plain. In some  
7 communities such as Jersey Shore and Muncy, almost 50  
8 percent and 40 percent of the parcels, representatively,  
9 are in the flood plain. Many of these homes are in old  
10 communities when houses were built to be close to water  
11 sources.

12 And because homeowners are faced with huge  
13 increases in premiums, houses in the flood plain are not  
14 selling. According to the Lycoming County staff, since the  
15 passage of the Biggert Waters Act, 17 homes have sold in  
16 the flood plain while normally 60 to 70 houses would have  
17 sold during the same time period prior to the passage of  
18 the Biggert Waters Act.

19 If homeowners are unable to pay the increased  
20 flood insurance premiums and the properties go into  
21 foreclosure or are deemed to be worthless, the tax base  
22 currently paid by those homeowners will be shifted to other  
23 residents of the community. Similarly, if premiums make a  
24 business uncompetitive, that business may close and result  
25 in lost jobs.

1           The testimony at the public hearings showed that  
2           this problem faces all of our communities and is not the  
3           typical problem seen on national television of the  
4           expensive vacation home. In fact, homes in the flood plain  
5           are typically of lower average value and may be occupied by  
6           residents who are least able to afford to pay increased  
7           premiums.

8           There may not be a one-size-fits-all solution to  
9           this problem. Possible solutions include loan and grant  
10          programs for flood mitigation assistance, funds for  
11          short-term premium assistance, and funds to assist  
12          communities with buyouts and elevation study grants.

13          I urge this Committee to recognize the  
14          seriousness of this problem and to make resources available  
15          to fund legislation to help our communities. We may not  
16          have all the answers now, but we do know that our  
17          communities will need help.

18                 Thank you.

19                 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,  
20                 Representative.

21                 The next testifier will be Representative Maria  
22                 Donatucci from Philadelphia and Delaware Counties.

23                 Good afternoon, Representative.

24                 REP. DONATUCCI: Good afternoon, Chairman Adolph  
25                 and Chairman Markosek and members of the House Committee on

1 Appropriations.

2 Thank you again for providing the opportunity for  
3 me to speak to you on behalf of the people of the 185th  
4 Legislative District. I will be brief.

5 In Delaware and Philadelphia Counties where I  
6 draw my constituency, people are looking for real  
7 leadership to help fix public education funding, slow  
8 rising property taxes, create a living wage for all  
9 full-time employees, and move Pennsylvania towards economic  
10 prosperity.

11 While states surrounding Pennsylvania are showing  
12 budget surpluses and recovering economies, Pennsylvania  
13 faces a \$1.4 billion budget deficit. And my constituents,  
14 knowing this, are asking why?

15 Why does the Governor continue to leave revenue  
16 on the table year after year?

17 A 5 percent severance tax on natural gas drilling  
18 would generate \$334 million for the State. Closing the  
19 Delaware loophole by enacting combined reporting would  
20 generate \$165 million. Capping the sales tax vendor  
21 discount at \$250 a month would generate \$44 million.  
22 Taxing smokeless tobacco and cigars would bring in \$56  
23 million.

24 Why does our State rank a measly 41st nationwide  
25 in job creation after the Governor has cut business taxes

1 by \$1.2 billion? Why is the Governor risking lives by  
2 rejecting traditional Medicaid expansion in favor of an  
3 untested, unproved alternative?

4 True Medicaid expansion would give an estimated  
5 500,000 Pennsylvanians in the coverage gap access to  
6 Medicaid immediately with the Federal Government paying 100  
7 percent of the cost for the first three years and no less  
8 than 90 percent of the cost after that.

9 While millions in other states have been able to  
10 finally access the health care coverage they couldn't  
11 access before, hundreds of thousands of people in  
12 Pennsylvania remain cut off.

13 Yet, the Governor still has his eyes set on  
14 privatizing liquor sales and dismantling the PLCB, which,  
15 by the way, has contributed over \$4 billion to the  
16 Pennsylvania Treasury, nearly \$200 million to the  
17 Pennsylvania State Police, over \$18 million to the  
18 Department of Health, and \$50 million plus to local  
19 communities since the year 2000.

20 I was pleased to hear that the Governor's Lottery  
21 privatization plan fell through, but \$5 million was shelled  
22 out in fees, and seniors in my district have expressed  
23 concern that future Lottery privatization would diminish  
24 funds for senior programs.

25 Furthermore, the Governor's suggestion of

1 reducing the State's required Pennsylvania pension payment  
2 only adds to the State's \$50 billion debt for pension.

3 If education funding had not been cut by \$1  
4 billion, our schools could make their pension contribution.  
5 If business taxes had not been cut by \$1.2 billion, the  
6 State could make its payment.

7 For my constituents, the issues are real, and  
8 these issues are greatly affecting their ability to live  
9 out the American dream and pass lasting legacies on to  
10 their children.

11 Behind only Bridgeport, Connecticut, Philadelphia  
12 is the city with the second highest tax rates in the  
13 country. It is estimated that a family whose earnings fell  
14 into the \$100,000 tax bracket paid more than \$11,806 in  
15 property taxes last year, which is second-most among large  
16 cities, and many citizens saw their tax assessments triple  
17 after the AVI was implemented.

18 Any budget that is passed this year must help to  
19 alleviate the property tax burden. We must continue to  
20 work efficiently and in good faith to achieve the best  
21 desired results for Pennsylvania citizens. And this  
22 budget, like all future budgets, should reflect our  
23 commitment to do just that.

24 Thank you.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much,

1 Representative.

2 Our next testifier will be Representative Mark  
3 Painter from Montgomery County.

4 Good afternoon, Representative.

5 REP. PAINTER: Good afternoon. Thank you.

6 Chairman Adolph and Chairman Markosek and members  
7 of the Committee, I want to thank all of you for giving me  
8 this opportunity to offer testimony. I realize that the  
9 Commonwealth has many fiscal challenges and I don't envy  
10 any of you your positions. Difficult choices are going to  
11 have to be made.

12 That being said, I come before you today to raise  
13 the vexing issue of property tax relief. I raise this  
14 issue because I represent some of the highest property tax  
15 school districts in Pennsylvania. When I meet with  
16 constituents, property taxes is one of the issues they are  
17 most interested in. And the most frequent question I hear  
18 is, when are they going to do something about our property  
19 taxes?

20 I don't need to remind any of you that this  
21 session the House has already had several votes, some of  
22 them contentious, on legislation aimed at property tax  
23 relief. Some of these proposals came from the Republican  
24 side and some from the Democratic side. None have passed  
25 the General Assembly and frustration is building.

1                   In the past 15 years, the General Assembly has  
2                   made four attempts to address local property tax relief.  
3                   The only real success was Act 1, which created the Property  
4                   Tax Relief Fund as a mechanism to direct revenue from  
5                   casino gaming to property tax relief for homeowners.

6                   What's great about the Property Tax Relief Fund  
7                   is that every dollar allocated to the fund is a dollar in  
8                   property tax savings to a Pennsylvania homeowner. The fund  
9                   does not benefit commercial properties, rental properties,  
10                  or properties owned by out-of-state mega corporations. The  
11                  benefits go entirely to our homeowners.

12                  What's not so great about the fund is the amount  
13                  of relief it provides is still small, averaging about \$200,  
14                  or less than 10 percent, of the typical property tax on a  
15                  residential home in my district. It's not much. But it's  
16                  a good start. And it's more progress than we've been able  
17                  to make otherwise.

18                  Let me say it again. The Property Tax Relief  
19                  Fund represents relief targeted at the people who most need  
20                  it, our homeowners, and reduces property taxes on a  
21                  dollar-for-dollar basis.

22                  One of our best options for providing additional  
23                  property tax relief is adding revenue to the fund.  
24                  Conversely, the worst thing we could do to our homeowners  
25                  is to take away even this modest source of relief.

1                   Unfortunately, that's exactly what the General  
2                   Assembly did last year. In the fiscal code amendments  
3                   enacted in 2013 was a provision diverting some \$80 million  
4                   from property tax relief to help balance the General Fund.

5                   Just as every dollar into the Property Tax Relief  
6                   Fund represents a dollar of tax savings in homeowners'  
7                   pockets, every dollar diverted from the fund is a dollar in  
8                   extra property tax paid by our already overburdened  
9                   homeowners.

10                   It's bad enough that I have to explain to my  
11                   constituents that there has been no progress on property  
12                   tax relief in this session. It's even worse when I have to  
13                   tell them that the General Assembly has backtracked and  
14                   increased their property tax burden. To my knowledge, 2013  
15                   was the first time revenue was diverted from the fund. A  
16                   bad precedent was set and, once set, becomes all too easy  
17                   to repeat.

18                   I am here today to ask you, to implore you, not  
19                   to allow further diversion from the Property Tax Relief  
20                   Fund in 2014 or in 2015 or in any year following. Let us  
21                   resolve to make 2013 a one-time aberration and not an omen  
22                   of things to come. Let's break the habit while we still  
23                   can.

24                   If I'm granted one request in the 2014 budget, it  
25                   would be to preserve the Property Tax Relief Fund. If I am



1 granted a second, it would be to increase revenue to the  
2 fund. Let's set a new precedent, that we will work, year  
3 upon year, to increase this targeted relief to our  
4 homeowners and reduce reliance on property taxes to fund  
5 our schools.

6 As I said at the outset, I realize that revenues  
7 remain disappointing and difficult fiscal challenges  
8 confront this Committee. But an increase in revenue to the  
9 Property Tax Relief Fund, even a token or symbolic  
10 increase, would set us on a new path forward, one that  
11 promises even more relief to come and would give us all a  
12 small but concrete bit of good news to take back to our  
13 property owner constituents. I want to be able to return  
14 to my district and tell them something more than, well,  
15 we're still working on it.

16 Ladies and gentlemen, ancient Chinese wisdom  
17 holds that the journey of 10,000 miles begins with the  
18 first step. The complete path to real property tax relief  
19 remains unclear, but we can at least take that first step.

20 Thank you.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much,  
22 Representative.

23 The next testifier is Representative Steve  
24 McCarter from the 154th Legislative District.

25 Good afternoon, Representative.

1           REP. McCARTER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.  
2           And good afternoon, Chairman Markosek and members of the  
3           Committee.

4           MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Good afternoon.

5           REP. McCARTER: Thank you for the opportunity to  
6           be here today. What I'd like to talk about today is the  
7           education budget as proposed by the Governor.

8                     Again, there are many different aspects of that  
9           budget that I would like to talk about. But in this case,  
10          I'd like to focus in on the Ready To Learn Block Grant  
11          proposal and also on the infrastructure program of PlanCon.

12                    Upon hearing about the Ready To Learn Block Grant  
13          proposal as outlined in the Governor's recent budget  
14          address, I sought the guidance of each of our local school  
15          district superintendents to gain further clarification  
16          about how, if at all, the Block Grant proposal would help  
17          the students in my districts.

18                    What I learned was very interesting. First and  
19          foremost, every school district intends to apply for the  
20          Block Grant. However, according to the Pennsylvania  
21          Department of Education's estimations, the amount my  
22          individual school districts may receive varies greatly.

23                    For example, the Jenkintown School District would  
24          only be eligible to apply for \$33,214 under the proposed  
25          Ready To Learn Block Grant. According to the Jenkintown

1 superintendent, those funds, if awarded, would be used for  
2 further curriculum development to meet the Pennsylvania  
3 Common Core curriculum development this year and will  
4 probably require an additional \$60,000 next year to fully  
5 complete the curriculum transition.

6 Not only will Jenkintown's non-guaranteed share  
7 of the Ready To Learn Block Grant not cover the added  
8 expense of Pennsylvania Common Core, it will not even come  
9 close to the added expense of the additional teachers they  
10 will need to hire for remedial instruction for those  
11 students who need extra help passing the Keystone exams in  
12 Biology, English, and Algebra.

13 And as I am sure you know, our current students  
14 will be required to pass these Keystone exams prior to high  
15 school graduation by the year 2017.

16 Despite the fact that Jenkintown is a rather  
17 small and affluent school district compared to other  
18 districts throughout southeastern Pennsylvania and the  
19 Commonwealth, they already have teachers teaching six  
20 sessions, whereas most other schools have teachers teaching  
21 five sessions. They will incur added costs in meeting the  
22 Keystone exam mandate but will not receive any financial  
23 support from the State to meet those requirements.

24 This problem is directly due to Governor  
25 Corbett's last three State budgets that, as you know,

1       sorely lacked adequate funding for basic education subsidy.  
2       And, again, with this budget, additional funding for basic  
3       education is frozen. Instead, revenue is diverted into the  
4       new Block Grant Program that will require each of our  
5       school districts to apply and compete for these critical  
6       dollars.

7                 Much like Jenkintown, the second school district  
8       I would like to share with you, Springfield Township, is  
9       projected to receive \$104,906 if successful in its grant  
10      application. There are 2,200 students in Springfield.  
11      That amounts to approximately \$47 per student. When  
12      weighing the amount of time, planning, and cost Springfield  
13      will need to exert in the grant application process, that  
14      \$47 per student is reduced even further.

15                The final and largest school district in my area  
16      is the Cheltenham School District. Cheltenham is projected  
17      to be eligible for \$465,999. And while I appreciate this  
18      is a sizable amount of funding, here again, it is the  
19      strings attached to this money that gives our school  
20      officials pause. There's great need in Cheltenham that  
21      does not fall within the purview of the Governor's Block  
22      Grant proposal.

23                Rather, their needs would be more easily  
24      corrected by simply increasing the basic education funding  
25      subsidy that they could use for the needs that they have

1 instead of needs identified by the Administration.

2 For example, Cheltenham is currently struggling  
3 with an entire middle school building soon to be closed  
4 within the next month due to a mold problem. And because  
5 the State's PlanCon funding option which school districts  
6 historically have been able to apply for relief in such an  
7 emergency has no money available, Cheltenham is now faced  
8 with handling this matter on their own. Furthermore,  
9 Cheltenham is currently owed \$108,000 from the Commonwealth  
10 for two prior PlanCon projects, leaving them with little  
11 hope that the State will be of assistance for this new  
12 more-immediate concern.

13 To its credit, Cheltenham School District is  
14 committed to building a new middle school. What is worse  
15 though is the fact that Cheltenham is not alone in this  
16 struggle of adding this increased debt into its future.

17 The State currently owes school districts  
18 throughout the Commonwealth over \$1.2 billion for completed  
19 or planned schools in the pipeline.

20 I would like to take this opportunity to  
21 personally thank Representative Steve Santarsiero, who has  
22 been a great advocate and is taking the lead on restoring  
23 the PlanCon funding. He, too, has a school district in  
24 immediate need of building repairs and replacement. This  
25 is just yet another example of a failed promise for our

1 schools by this administration, unfortunately.

2 Based on the projected amounts each of my school  
3 districts would receive compared to each of their  
4 individual needs, the Ready To Learn Block Grant is not a  
5 panacea of recovery. In fact, I would argue it is yet  
6 another Harrisburg-mandated, politically charged sound bite  
7 that does little to fully support our schools and our  
8 students.

9 Sadly, I do not understand why the Administration  
10 seems to have this blanket mistrust of our public schools  
11 and their ability to determine the best course of action  
12 for their own students. Having taught for over 30 years, I  
13 can tell you firsthand that our school administrators and  
14 teachers go into education because they have an interest or  
15 a calling to do so. And thank goodness they continue to do  
16 so in the face of such adversity.

17 Our forefathers called for a free and adequate  
18 education for all children because they knew the inherent  
19 value to a thinking, highly functioning society. If other  
20 nations are truly beating us in the so-called race to the  
21 top, they are only doing so because they continue to invest  
22 in, respect, and value the educational system.

23 If we want to produce competitive learners in a  
24 global market, then we need to reinstate the respect,  
25 support, and pride in our citizenry that was the norm not

1 very long ago. Positive reinforcement goes a long way in  
2 challenging our students and our teachers and our citizens  
3 to reach higher limits.

4 I do not think the Ready To Learn Block Grant  
5 provides our students, administrators, or teachers with  
6 enough of that sort of respect and support. Nor do I  
7 believe block grant funding restricted to limited uses with  
8 limited funds is a wise undertaking for this General  
9 Assembly.

10 I strongly urge the Appropriations Committee and  
11 the full Legislature to give serious consideration to  
12 reinstating full PlanCon funding for our school districts  
13 to prevent our statewide school infrastructure from  
14 becoming a mirror of our roads and bridges crisis  
15 throughout this Commonwealth.

16 Likewise, I urge us to consider some of the  
17 Governor's policies but in a much broader context that  
18 allows our administrators, teachers, and students the  
19 leeway to use those resources in a way that makes sense for  
20 their own school districts versus having to console the  
21 Governor's politically charged agenda.

22 Again, I want to sincerely thank you for the  
23 opportunity to present my testimony today. I hope I was  
24 able to provide you with an adequate understanding of how  
25 Governor Corbett's Ready To Learn Block Grant would

1 influence the three school districts in my legislative  
2 district and provide you with some further information  
3 about the Governor's education program.

4 Thank you.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much,  
6 Representative.

7 The next testifier will be Representative Jerry  
8 Knowles from the 124th Legislative District.

9 Good afternoon, Representative.

10 REP. KNOWLES: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman Adolph, Chairman Markosek, as well as  
12 members of the Committee, I want to thank you for the  
13 service you provide. This is a grueling process, a  
14 necessary process. And I commend all members of the  
15 Appropriations Committee for the job that you do. I know  
16 that you'll all work together and do a good job.

17 Jobs, jobs, jobs. If I've heard it once, I've  
18 heard it a thousand times. Doing what we can to get people  
19 back to work and laying the groundwork for the private  
20 sector to create the jobs it needs to facilitate those  
21 workers has been a mission at the State level since I've  
22 been in office.

23 We live in a world where we're closely examining  
24 economic reports from month to month to anxiously track  
25 progress. And at the State level, we're just holding the



1 unemployment line at 7 percent. I feel as though we have  
2 an opportunity in Pennsylvania to help get more trained and  
3 highly skilled tradesmen and technicians dispersed among  
4 our State's skilled labor workforce.

5 Since its inception in 1905, the Commonwealth has  
6 owned the Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, which  
7 occupies 32.5 acres in Lancaster. It is our only  
8 State-owned, two-year college of technology. I'm proud to  
9 say that I'm a graduate of Thaddeus Stevens.

10 It enrolls students from all across Pennsylvania,  
11 students representing 57 of our 67 counties. And 56  
12 percent of the students are the first generation in their  
13 families to pursue higher education.

14 Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology received  
15 more than 3,400 applicants last fall. The institution  
16 could only take 550 of those applicants. Some of the  
17 programs that currently exist at Stevens, machine  
18 technology, metal fabrication, electrical technology, and  
19 HVAC and refrigeration, would greatly benefit from  
20 expansion.

21 Nowadays, there are many options for our young  
22 people to seek out once they've graduated from high school.  
23 We're finding more and more that, for some of our kids,  
24 going to a four-year college program isn't the right fit.  
25 It's like fitting a square peg in a round hole in some

1 cases.

2 We see the same circumstances repeatedly.  
3 Whether a student gets accepted, goes to college, and  
4 decides it isn't for them or whether he or she stays the  
5 course for four years and then is left with a degree that  
6 leads to no gainful employment, the writing is on the wall  
7 that college isn't for everyone.

8 And you know what? That's okay. Because we're  
9 hearing more and more from business and industry that they  
10 need more skilled workers to hire. That's where  
11 institutions like Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology  
12 become the answer. The demand is there. But  
13 unfortunately, the institution can only accept one in every  
14 five applicants at its current funding level.

15 Graduates have a 96 percent placement rate upon  
16 graduation. The best part of that for the State, 95  
17 percent of those graduates are then employed in  
18 Pennsylvania. The growth is apparent. But as the  
19 institution explains it, TSCT has a bottleneck. The great  
20 demand of applicants is there on one end and the great  
21 demand for employers is also there on the other end of the  
22 equation.

23 I'm here before you today because I believe that  
24 by providing more funding to Thaddeus Stevens College of  
25 Technology, we are investing in our future workforce. The

1 institution would like to create additional programs in  
2 water and waste management, industrial maintenance, diesel  
3 mechanics, welding, Smart Cam, computer engineering, and  
4 residential remodeling.

5 It's important to note that increasing funding to  
6 this institution would go toward changing lives and helping  
7 students to become technically skilled, productive  
8 citizens. Some institutions in this State request more  
9 funding for reasons that fall under the glitz and glamour  
10 category, but that is not the case here.

11 In a recent news story, Dr. William Griscom, the  
12 President of Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology,  
13 explained that one year, 30 Pennsylvania companies competed  
14 against each other to hire the school's 13 machine majors.  
15 The stories we've heard from recent college grads over the  
16 last five to ten years have been the complete opposite.

17 Times are changing. And we must do all we can  
18 when it comes to allocating funding at the State level. I  
19 am asking all of you who have the power to include more  
20 State funding for this institution to seriously consider  
21 doing so.

22 Again, Chairman Adolph and Chairman Markosek and  
23 members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to  
24 speak before you today.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much,

1 Representative Knowles. We're looking forward to working  
2 with you during this process.

3 REP. KNOWLES: Thank you.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: For the members'  
5 information, there were a couple other members that  
6 submitted written information. I will make sure that  
7 Chairman Markosek has it. He can distribute it to his  
8 members.

9 Representative Jim Roebuck has submitted written  
10 testimony as well as Representative Mike Hanna. And I also  
11 believe that Representative Knowles has also submitted some  
12 additional requests. He considered our five-minute  
13 limitation on testimony.

14 (The following is written testimony provided by  
15 Representative Jerry Knowles.)

16 I commend the House Veterans Affairs and  
17 Emergency Preparedness Committee for hosting a hearing to  
18 further investigate ways to increase recruitment and  
19 retention of our volunteer emergency services personnel.  
20 While I regretfully am not able to present my testimony  
21 before the Committee in person today, I appreciate the  
22 opportunity to submit my comments for the record.

23 Pennsylvania's volunteer services have seen a  
24 drastic decrease in their ranks with a more than 10 percent  
25 decrease during the past decade. This is especially

1       unsettling in the rural regions of the State, like the  
2       district I represent. We rely solely on volunteer  
3       emergency responders to keep our communities safe, and if  
4       we continue to see dwindling numbers of volunteer emergency  
5       services, these volunteer companies may eventually no  
6       longer be in existence. In response to these alarming  
7       statistics, I recently introduced two pieces of legislation  
8       dealing with emergency services.

9               Last fall, I sponsored House Bill 1632, which  
10       aims to strengthen the ranks of volunteer emergency service  
11       personnel in Pennsylvania. It would authorize tax credits,  
12       not to exceed \$10,000 to a single taxpayer in any fiscal  
13       year, for private-sector employers that allow their  
14       employees to leave work to respond to an emergency or  
15       attend training while still receiving compensation.

16              The Commonwealth and political subdivisions would  
17       be authorized to grant leave to an employee who leaves work  
18       to respond to an emergency call without any adverse  
19       treatment from an employer.

20              House Bill 1632, which passed the House  
21       unanimously, would also maintain current provisions that  
22       protect an employee-volunteer who responds to a call prior  
23       to showing up for work and extends those provisions to  
24       include when an employee is authorized to leave work to  
25       respond to an emergency call. The bill is currently

1 awaiting consideration in the Senate.

2 I also introduced House Bill 2060 to help our  
3 fire and EMS departments. The bill would amend Chapter 78  
4 of Title 35, the Fire and EMS grant program. Under current  
5 law, if two or more fire companies merge, the newly formed  
6 entity is authorized to continue to receive each individual  
7 fire company's grant in the aggregate for up to five years  
8 after the merger. My bill would do away with the five-year  
9 provision so that fire companies can continue to receive  
10 the aggregate in perpetuity.

11 An example, under current law, if three fire  
12 companies merge and each was receiving \$12,000 from the  
13 grant program, the new entity would be entitled to receive  
14 the aggregate of \$36,000 for five years. At the end of the  
15 five years, the newly formed fire company would receive  
16 only \$12,000. With my legislation, they would continue to  
17 be eligible to receive \$36,000 into perpetuity. I believe  
18 that we must find ways to encourage the cost-saving measure  
19 of consolidating fire companies, and this piece of  
20 legislation would be one way to do just that.

21 Although I am not a member of this Committee, as  
22 a former active volunteer firefighter, I recognize the  
23 important work your Committee does to maintain the overall  
24 safety of all Pennsylvanians and I commend you for working  
25 on this issue.

1           (The following is written testimony provided by  
2     Representative Mike Hanna.)

3           Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the  
4     Appropriations Committee, for allowing me to present some  
5     brief remarks today regarding two issues: Higher education  
6     funding and payment in lieu of taxes and its relationship  
7     to the Forest Reserves Municipal Financial Relief Law.

8           Since 2004, I have been a member of the Board of  
9     Governors for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher  
10    Education. I am well aware of the impacts that State  
11    funding cuts implemented in 2001 by Governor Tom Corbett  
12    have had on our State-owned colleges.

13          I can assure you that the PASSHE Board, on which  
14    I serve, takes great care in crafting a spending plan that  
15    will minimize any potential impact on Pennsylvania's  
16    college students and their families. But we can't do it  
17    alone. In order to keep tuition in check, the State must  
18    provide adequate funding and the budgets proposed by the  
19    Corbett Administration have shown that he doesn't hold  
20    higher education to be a top priority.

21          The Governor's 2014-2015 budget proposal does not  
22    restore his massive cuts to colleges and universities,  
23    locking in between a 4.5 percent and 19 percent decrease in  
24    State funding.

25          In a nationwide comparison put together by

1 Illinois State University's Center for the Study of  
2 Education Policy Grapevine Report, Pennsylvania's five-year  
3 change in overall funding for higher education is at  
4 negative 18.2 percent for just State dollars and negative  
5 20.5 percent when you include loss of Federal Government  
6 stimulus dollars.

7 The report also shows that in funding per \$1,000  
8 of personal income, which is a good measure of how much of  
9 the State's wealth is going to higher education,  
10 Pennsylvania ranked 48th for 2013-2014 at \$3.02 per \$1,000.  
11 The national average was 5.45. And in terms of funding per  
12 capita, Pennsylvania ranked 47th at \$138.64 per person.  
13 The national average is \$241.66.

14 Finally, Pennsylvania now ranks third in the  
15 nation for average student debt. Yet in his proposed  
16 budget, the Governor proposed no increases for institutions  
17 of higher education. This continues to show an incredible  
18 lack of foresight by the Governor into the best interests  
19 of our students, who are Pennsylvania's future .

20 (The following is written testimony provided by  
21 Representative James Roebuck.)

22 I want to thank the House Appropriations  
23 Committee for providing me with the opportunity to present  
24 written testimony concerning the Governor's proposed budget  
25 for 2014-'15. I ask that my testimony be included in the



1 record of presentations made to the Appropriations  
2 Committee.

3 As Democratic Chairman of the House Education  
4 Committee, I wanted to address several concerns I have  
5 about the Corbett Administration's budget proposal  
6 regarding funding for basic and higher education for our  
7 citizens and children.

8 While the Governor's proposal does provide \$240  
9 million for a new Ready To Learn Block Grant, I am  
10 disappointed that the Governor's proposal provides no  
11 increase in the basic education line item that provides for  
12 the maintenance of our public school system and does not  
13 fully address the nearly \$1 billion cut in basic education  
14 funding over the last two years. And like last year, the  
15 funding increase in this new Block Grant funding is tainted  
16 because wealthier school districts will get larger  
17 percentage increases than lower-income districts.

18 I am particularly concerned in this budget about  
19 the Corbett Administration's continuing attempts to move  
20 toward only providing increases in basic education for  
21 specific State-desired activities by school districts. The  
22 Ready To Learn Block Grant is another attempt by the  
23 Corbett Administration to tie any increase in basic  
24 education funding to specific activities by school  
25 districts.

1           This approach to funding basic education is  
2 different from all previous administrations that have  
3 provided increases in basic education funding and then  
4 offered funding for specific educational initiatives. This  
5 new approach by the Corbett Administration not only denies  
6 local school districts control over how to best allocate  
7 State funding but also places the entire burden of  
8 maintaining existing education services on the backs of  
9 local taxpayers. There needs to be some State funding  
10 increase for the basic education funding to provide for the  
11 maintenance of our public school system.

12           Failure to provide any increase in basic  
13 education funding this budget year, particularly given the  
14 \$1 billion of State funding cuts since 2011, means the  
15 State is abdicating its responsibility to maintain a  
16 quality public education.

17           Increasing capital funding needs of basic and  
18 higher education are once again not addressed in the  
19 Governor's budget proposal. There is no increase in  
20 funding to reimburse school districts that have already  
21 started needed school construction projects. This is  
22 already resulting in school districts having to pick up the  
23 State share of payments on their school construction bonds  
24 and will likely lead to increased property tax increases.

25           It also appears that there will be a continuation

1 for the third straight year of a construction moratorium on  
2 new needed construction by school districts. This  
3 continuing construction moratorium will affect not only our  
4 school district construction needs but adversely affect our  
5 construction industry and construction-related jobs as  
6 potential school construction projects are placed on hold  
7 due to the moratorium.

8           Additionally, there is no new funding for  
9 building maintenance needed by public higher education  
10 institutions and particularly for community college needs.  
11 How can we expect to meet the workforce needs of our  
12 business if we do not have the facilities needed,  
13 particularly by community colleges, to train the workers  
14 for our new economy?

15           Finally, like last year's budget, higher  
16 education was once again flat funded and no effort has been  
17 made to restore the 20 percent cuts in higher education  
18 funding since the beginning of the Corbett Administration.  
19 The Corbett Administration proposes no increase for any  
20 public higher education institution for 2014-'15, even  
21 though the Governor's Advisory Commission on postsecondary  
22 education recommended in 2012 that the State provide for  
23 public higher education an initial performance fund of \$256  
24 million to be earned over two years, 2014-'15 and 2015-'16.  
25 Public higher education institutions signed off on these

1 recommendations that included no increase in funding in  
2 2013-'14 in exchange for some funding increase in 2014-'15  
3 and 2015-'16.

4 Public higher education institutions have kept  
5 their tuition down under the expectation that the State  
6 would live up to the agreement in the Governor's Advisory  
7 Commission. Unfortunately, the Corbett Administration has  
8 not lived up to its part of the agreement. I hope that the  
9 General Assembly in its consideration of the 2014-'15  
10 budget will make good on this agreement with our higher  
11 education institutions and commit to future increased  
12 investments in higher education for our citizens and  
13 students.

14 In closing, I want to once again thank the House  
15 Appropriations Committee for providing me with the  
16 opportunity to present written testimony concerning the  
17 Governor's proposed budget for 2014-'15. I'd like to  
18 remind all members of the General Assembly and the public  
19 that unlike other areas of public policy, we have a  
20 constitutional requirement to provide a thorough and  
21 efficient system of public education for the benefit of all  
22 our students and citizens of our Commonwealth.

23 There can be no more important investments in our  
24 State's future than investing in our children's education.  
25 I am hopeful that we can improve on the inadequate funding

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of education in this year's Governor's budget and make  
greater investments in education in the future.

(The hearing concluded at 2:15 p.m.)

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I hereby certify that the proceedings and  
evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes  
taken by me on the within proceedings and that this is a  
correct transcript of the same.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jean M. Davis  
Notary Public