

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
MAJORITY CAUCUS ROOM
ROOM 140
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2009
2:13 P.M.

PRESENTATION ON SENATE BILL 850

PANEL 10 OF 15

BEFORE:

HONORABLE DWIGHT EVANS, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE MATTHEW D. BRADFORD
HONORABLE WILLIAM C. KORTZ III
HONORABLE DEBERAH KULA
HONORABLE BRYAN R. LENTZ
HONORABLE TIM MAHONEY
HONORABLE JOSH SHAPIRO
HONORABLE MATTHEW SMITH
HONORABLE MARIO J. CIVERA, JR., MINORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE GORDON DENLINGER
HONORABLE JOHN R. EVANS
HONORABLE MAUREE GINGRICH
HONORABLE DAVID R. MILLARD
HONORABLE RON MILLER
HONORABLE DOUGLAS G. REICHLEY
HONORABLE RICHARD R. STEVENSON

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

HONORABLE KEVIN P. MURPHY

JEAN DAVIS REPORTING

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ALSO PRESENT:
MIRIAM A. FOX
MAJORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
EDWARD J. NOLAN
MINORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEBRA B. MILLER
REPORTER

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

2 * * *

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Again, what I
4 would like to do is have you introduce yourself for
5 the purpose of the record, and then you can begin
6 your testimony.

7 MS. WOODINGS: Good afternoon.

8 My name is actually Karen Woodings, and I'm
9 here representing the Pennsylvania Association of
10 Regional Food Banks.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay. Karen what,
12 again?

13 MS. WOODINGS: I was supposed to speak at 1
14 and there was some snafu.

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay; no problem.
16 Don't worry about it. Don't even worry about that.

17 MS. WOODINGS: The girl kept saying sneak up
18 there, sneak up there.

19 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Your name again
20 is?

21 MS. WOODINGS: Karen Woodings.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay, Karen.

23 MS. WOODINGS: And I work for the
24 Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, but I'm here for the
25 statewide association.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay; sure. No
2 problem at all.

3 Let's go through real quick and have people
4 introduce themselves, and then I'll come back to
5 you.

6 MS. PACHECO: Good afternoon. My name is
7 Ana Pacheco, and I'm a citizen.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay; that's good.

9 MR. LETTIERI: Good afternoon. I'm
10 Robert Lettieri. I'm the Chairman of the Citizens
11 for the Arts in Pennsylvania.

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay; sure.

13 Yes?

14 MS. SCULLION HAZAM: Good afternoon. My
15 name is Fran Scullion Hazam. I'm here with the
16 Mental Health Association of Southeastern
17 Pennsylvania, a Consumer Advocate.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

19 Yes?

20 MS. PLOTNICK: Good afternoon. I'm
21 Debbie Plotnick. I'm Director of Advocacy for the
22 Mental Health Association of Southeastern
23 Pennsylvania.

24 MR. FONTANA: Good afternoon. I'm
25 Bill Fontana, the Executive Director of the

1 Pennsylvania Downtown Center.

2 MS. PHILO: Cynthia Philo. I'm the Chair of
3 the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, also a Supervisor
4 in Doylestown Township, Bucks County.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

6 Well, why don't we start with you and then
7 we'll go back. You may make your presentation.

8 MR. FONTANA: Okay.

9 Good afternoon, Chairman Evans,
10 Representative Civera, and honorable Committee
11 Members.

12 On behalf of the hundreds of members, the
13 board, and the staff of the Pennsylvania Downtown
14 Center, I would like to take this opportunity to
15 thank you for allowing us to address you today.

16 I'm here today to request your support for
17 the reinstatement of the \$15 million in funding for
18 the New Communities Program that was eliminated by
19 Senate Bill 850.

20 As I am sure all of you know, for the past
21 year, we as a nation have been dealing with how the
22 collapse of Wall Street has impacted Main Street. We
23 are here today to ask you not to let this impact be
24 further exacerbated by Senate Bill 850.

25 I will take just a few moments to provide

1 you with some of the details concerning Main Street
2 and Elm Street Programs in Pennsylvania. Let me
3 start with Main Street.

4 Since 1980, the Main Street Program has been
5 the primary program for the revitalization of
6 Pennsylvania's traditional and historic downtowns.

7 During that time, with relatively small
8 levels of Commonwealth funding -- in fact,
9 6/10,000ths of the State budget -- a statewide
10 structure of dedicated volunteers and professional
11 Main Street managers has created an unparalleled
12 network of human and organizational resources second
13 to none in this nation.

14 Just over the last 4 years at any one time,
15 somewhere between 65 and 75 communities have
16 participated annually in the Main Street Program.

17 During that timeframe, the Commonwealth has
18 provided \$7 million annually to the Main Street
19 Program, or about \$100,000 per community per year.

20 During that same 4 years, here are the
21 numbers: a net increase of 3,765 businesses and
22 11,096 jobs. That's one job created in Main Street
23 communities for every \$2,523 spent on Main Street.
24 And 1,481 building renovation or new construction
25 projects have generated \$256,600,000 in total

1 building investment; 484 public space projects have
2 generated \$163 million in new community
3 infrastructure; more than 268,000 volunteer hours
4 have equalled more than \$5,286,000 worth of human
5 labor costs; and 873 vacancies have been filled.

6 For the \$28 million the Commonwealth has put
7 into the Main Street Program during that 4-year
8 period, the State has seen \$419,600,000 invested in
9 these communities. That's a return of almost 15 to
10 1, and I think these numbers are conservative.

11 And while these numbers are impressive, I
12 have not even begun to mention the countless fairs,
13 festivals, parades, farmers markets, art-related
14 activities, community murals, and other projects
15 carried out by Main Street organizations that make
16 our communities desirable places to live.

17 In February 2004, the Elm Street Program was
18 signed into law, and after only 5 short years, some
19 of the same types of results that we are seeing in
20 the Main Street Program are beginning to emerge in
21 the neighborhoods that surround our traditional
22 central business districts.

23 With Elm Street funds, homes are being
24 renovated, streetscapes improved, crime issues are
25 being addressed, community parks and gardens are

1 being enhanced.

2 In just one year, in an annual survey of
3 Elm Street residents, their perceptions indicated
4 that the percentage of residents either satisfied or
5 very satisfied with their Elm Street neighborhood
6 increased from 71 to 82 percent.

7 The indices for people who felt that their
8 Elm Street neighborhood was a good place to live and
9 a good place to raise kids increased by 4 percent and
10 7 percent respectively.

11 And the indices for the number of people who
12 felt empowered to change things in their Elm Street
13 neighborhood increased by 16.5 percent.

14 These programs are making a difference in
15 people's everyday lives.

16 The reality of 21st century economies is
17 that quality of life and the ability to live in a
18 community where one's lifestyle preferences can be
19 attained is as important a factor in economic
20 development location decisions as rail lines or
21 access to natural resources have been in the past.

22 In his book *The Rise of the Creative Class*,
23 Professor Richard Florida states, "It is the ability
24 to attract talent that creates regional advantage....
25 In this regard the quality of a city or region has

1 replaced costs and access as the pivot point of
2 competitive advantage.... It is clearly in the
3 regional economic interest to have a variety of
4 methods that attract" and retain "bright young
5 people."

6 Main Street and Elm Street Programs are
7 among the most important tools we have to enhance the
8 quality of a borough or a city or a town. To
9 eliminate these programs is to make Pennsylvania less
10 economically competitive.

11 I do not envy you your jobs. I know these
12 are difficult times and the situation you are dealing
13 with is real and not political. I know that you are
14 thinking about the future economic health of the
15 Commonwealth that we all care so much about. But let
16 me close with a bit of prognostication based on doing
17 community development work for more than 30 years.

18 I have worked on the revitalization side of
19 community development with the Main Street and
20 Elm Street Programs, but I have also worked on the
21 redevelopment side of community development, having
22 spent 17 years with the Allegheny County
23 Redevelopment Authority.

24 I can tell you with absolute certainty that
25 redeveloping towns that are allowed to decay due to

1 blight and neglect is hundreds of times more
2 expensive than the slow and steady improvements made
3 by the Main Street and Elm Street Programs.

4 There is not enough money in the entire DCED
5 budget to undertake the types of activities that will
6 be required in the cities and boroughs of
7 Pennsylvania if the Main Street Programs and Elm
8 Street Programs are allowed to die.

9 Finally, more than anything, what you give
10 to communities with these programs is a renewed sense
11 of hope, a feeling that someone in Harrisburg cares
12 not just about Pittsburgh or Philadelphia, who, by
13 the way, are in the Main Street and Elm Street
14 Programs, but about places like Lansdowne and
15 State College and Butler and York and McKeesport and
16 I can go on and on, and the point is that just about
17 everybody on this committee has either a Main Street
18 or Elm Street Program either in their district or
19 close to it, and there are many, many more.

20 Representative Evans, thank you very much,
21 and we will be happy to answer any questions you may
22 have later on.

23 MS. PHILO: Thank you.

24 I know that the committee has very limited
25 time, so I just wanted to echo what Bill has said

1 here and really ask you for your support to help our
2 downtowns, both Main Street and Elm Street, because
3 not only does it help bring a community back, but it
4 will also help support all the people you heard
5 testify here today about various things.

6 It really is community working together, and
7 with you all helping us here achieve that goal, as
8 you have said here today as well as yesterday when I
9 was watching you all on the video, about putting
10 everything on the table and really trying to hammer
11 everything out.

12 Helping Main Street and Elm Street and
13 restoring that money to the budget will enable us to
14 not only help our communities but to help everyone
15 else here that is in the room.

16 Thank you very much. I appreciate your
17 time.

18 MS. PLOTNICK: Chairman Evans, Members of
19 the committee, good afternoon, and thank you very
20 much for the opportunity to speak today.

21 My name is Debbie Plotnick, and I'm the
22 Director of Advocacy at the Mental Health Association
23 of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

24 And I have some graduate degrees and I get
25 to put fancy letters after my name, and I have a good

1 deal of professional experience working with mental
2 health consumers, with family members, with
3 policymakers. But what it is that gives me the
4 legitimacy to come here today to speak to you, I have
5 come here today to implore you to reject what would
6 be shameful cuts to community behavioral health in
7 Senate Bill 850.

8 The legitimacy that I have to ask you this
9 is that I'm the mother of a remarkable, resilient,
10 successful young woman. She has a college degree,
11 she's a registered nurse, and she happens to have a
12 major mental illness -- bipolar disorder.

13 And for most of her teenage years, my
14 daughter tried very hard to be dead, and she almost
15 succeeded many, many times. And I can tell you as a
16 parent, there is nothing more harrowing than that --
17 nothing at all.

18 But what it was that prevented my daughter
19 from becoming homeless, from becoming drug-addicted,
20 from being incarcerated, was having access to
21 treatment and having strong community supports.

22 Community treatment and supports mean really
23 a lot more than medication. It includes promising
24 and best practices in recovery and community
25 integration, such as peer-support services,

1 Housing First programs, other supportive housing
2 programs, vocational training, and forensic diversion
3 programs.

4 While it may look like funding for such
5 community supports could be expendable in difficult
6 economic times, such essential behavioral health
7 programs realize substantial benefits in productive
8 lives, and they actually achieve real and substantial
9 savings of tax dollars. And that's what we're
10 talking about here -- saving tax dollars.

11 The large cuts that have been proposed in
12 Senate Bill 850 to community behavioral health are
13 anything but fiscally prudent. They are
14 shortsighted, and they really will result in higher
15 out-of-pocket taxpayer costs, even if there are no
16 increases in State taxes.

17 County governments are required by statute
18 to provide mental health services. Counties will
19 have no choice but to raise their taxes to provide
20 what will then be a reduced level of services and
21 reduced community mental health services, behavioral
22 health services. They absolutely result in an
23 increase in the most expensive types of community
24 services, things like crisis, emergency department
25 use, inpatient use, shelter usage.

1 And when people can't obtain the kinds of
2 services they need, services are very highly likely
3 to increase in the highest of all economic and social
4 cost area: involvement with the criminal justice
5 system.

6 It makes no sense to cut funding at a time
7 when there are growing numbers of individuals who are
8 newly in need of community mental health, community
9 behavioral health services, such as folks who have
10 recently lost their jobs and returning veterans from
11 overseas.

12 The severe proposed funding cuts in
13 Senate Bill 850 will reduce funding beyond where
14 behavioral health has cut back to the bone on what
15 the Governor had already proposed in his budget.

16 And if more cuts are put forth, community
17 behavioral health will be forced to close programs,
18 reduce staffing, and it eliminates services for
19 people who are already in the systems. This would
20 leave no opportunity for people who newly are in need
21 of the services and no lifeline for people who don't
22 have insurance or don't qualify for Medical
23 Assistance.

24 Pennsylvania has been a leader in recovery
25 transformation. We have so much to be proud of in

1 Pennsylvania's leadership on community integration on
2 recovery. The nation looks to us.

3 But the proposed reductions in Senate Bill
4 850 threaten to derail the recovery process for
5 thousands of Pennsylvania citizens who already are
6 doing well in recovery from a severe mental health
7 condition.

8 Such cuts, if they were to go through, it
9 would back up the system that functions but still
10 struggles, and it would pull the plug on the promise
11 that has been made to further community integration,
12 to move people out of State hospitals, to get them
13 into the community, to become productive, taxpaying,
14 educated citizens like my daughter.

15 We all understand that hard times call for
16 hard choices. However, cutting essential community
17 mental health services, it might seem like it
18 wouldn't be too painful an option among many bad
19 options, but the consequences will be so hard on the
20 counties, harder on the taxpayers, and very, very
21 hard on the citizens in need.

22 Please, don't make such a costly mistake.

23 Thank you.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

25 Next.

1 MS. SCULLION HAZAM: Good afternoon.

2 Thank you for the chance to speak out on
3 Senate Bill 850.

4 I would like to give you a little bit of an
5 example of the domino effect of the cuts in 850.

6 Next September, John, an unemployed father,
7 will suffer a back injury and be left with serious
8 chronic pain accompanied by depression. He will
9 receive excellent hospital care for the injury, but
10 he will find there is no one to care for him at the
11 community mental health center, because funding for
12 new clients was cut by Senate Bill 850.

13 When he cannot cope, John begins drinking to
14 medicate his physical and mental pain. John then
15 loses his temper with his 8-year-old son and beats
16 him severely.

17 The school counselor reports the abuse, and
18 now John stands before a judge on serious charges.
19 The judge sentences him to jail for 1 year. He is
20 still depressed and addicted to alcohol.

21 Once John is in jail, the State of
22 Pennsylvania will pay for his pain medication and a
23 psychiatrist will treat his depression and addiction.

24 His son now needs services for PTSD caused
25 by the trauma, but he, too, will not receive

1 behavioral health services in the community due to
2 cuts from Senate Bill 850.

3 The local child protection agency spent
4 thousands on this investigation and prosecution.
5 Pennsylvania funded thousands in court costs and jail
6 costs.

7 With unemployment at over 7 percent and over
8 40 million uninsured, this scenario will be repeated
9 many times next year in families across Pennsylvania.

10 John could have been diverted from jail into
11 a rehab program if he could have had his case heard
12 in one of Pennsylvania's new Mental Health Courts.
13 But Senate Bill 850 eliminated the funding to expand
14 those courts.

15 Just because these courts save lives and
16 save money does not mean the State of Pennsylvania's
17 elected officials saw that they benefited their
18 communities.

19 If John is lucky, he will respond to
20 outpatient treatment in the community. But some
21 consumers will require longer intensive care in a
22 State hospital. New State mental hospital admissions
23 will be curtailed if Senate Bill 850 becomes law.

24 When poor care and inhumane conditions
25 permeated our State mental hospitals, caring

1 community members set out to close them and provide
2 quality services in their community. That community
3 integration process will come to a screeching halt
4 with the passage of Senate Bill 850.

5 Person's who have lived through those
6 traumatic experiences are still cared for by the
7 State and now live as independently as possible in
8 the community. They depend on Pennsylvania to
9 continue to fund their recovery.

10 As a mental health consumer, I was lucky
11 enough to have Medicaid cover my treatment for
12 depression after a serious physical problem similar
13 to John's. Community support made my recovery
14 reality.

15 As a community organizer, I have seen how
16 rapidly poor services for physical and mental health
17 can devastate individuals and then neighborhoods. I
18 think you all remember what happened to neighborhoods
19 when drugs just crashed through in the seventies when
20 the crack epidemic hit, and very nice neighborhoods
21 just went downhill.

22 As a Consumer Advocate with the Mental
23 Health Association, I have met citizens like John
24 from all neighborhoods in Philadelphia and towns
25 across the southeastern counties. And I have met the

1 grownup children of persons like John who, decades
2 later, still suffer the ravages of that untreated
3 childhood trauma.

4 It is time for Pennsylvania to officially
5 become the State of caring communities and honor our
6 moral obligation to care for those who cannot care
7 for themselves.

8 We can do better. Recovery from mental
9 health disorders and addictions is a process that
10 depends on supportive communities. That translates
11 to Pennsylvania spending the dollars needed to
12 provide those supportive services.

13 Local governments are not equipped to do
14 this job. I urge you to open up the Rainy Day Fund,
15 raise taxes, or develop new dedicated funding sources
16 to fully fund community behavioral health services in
17 Pennsylvania.

18 Challenge your colleagues who think that
19 Senate Bill 850 is okay after the testimony you have
20 heard in the last 2 days and ask them to seek other
21 means to address our 2009 Pennsylvania budget
22 dilemma.

23 Thank you.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Can you mention
25 your name again for the stenographer?

1 MS. SCULLION HAZAM: Frances Scullion Hazam.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you very
3 much.

4 Robert.

5 MS. SCULLION HAZAM: Could I just put in a
6 plug?

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Sure.

8 MS. SCULLION HAZAM: I was listening to the
9 first panel this afternoon, and at the time that I
10 had the problem, I was out of work. I had a problem
11 with my hand with the computer. And the Assistive
12 Technology Library, someone from OVR borrowed
13 computer mice from them. And he opened the box in
14 front of me, and it must have had more than a dozen
15 different adaptive computer mice for me to use.

16 I was able to use the mouse. I started a
17 new job. I worked at that job for several years.
18 And then when I left that job, I took my mouse and
19 went to my next job, and I'm still using that one
20 mouse that has enabled me to go back to work.

21 And so I really have to put in a plug for
22 that whole system that helps persons with
23 disabilities, you know, to find other ways to do
24 things.

25 Thank you.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

2 MR. LETTIERI: Good afternoon.

3 I'm Robert Lettieri from Scranton, the new
4 upstate region of the State, and it's an honor for me
5 to speak before you and a pleasure to speak about the
6 arts.

7 Thank you for having me, and thank you for
8 understanding that the arts are an important part of
9 the fiber of life here in Pennsylvania by introducing
10 House Bill 1416.

11 I'm the Chairman of the Citizens for the
12 Arts in Pennsylvania, the statewide advocacy agency
13 and service organization.

14 An annual objective of our organization is
15 to advocate for the State funding for the arts
16 through the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

17 I want to talk to you today about mom and
18 apple pie. What do you think when you think about
19 mom and apple pie? You think of a thread that ties
20 us together as a family.

21 Since the birth of civilian, the arts have
22 been the thread for which histories of people have
23 been remembered.

24 When you think of the Renaissance, you think
25 of the cathedrals and painted ceilings and the

1 endless paintings and sculptures that fill museums.

2 The arts provide the warmth and energy for
3 our citizens to remove themselves from the troubles
4 that may confront their daily lives, which are like
5 the comfort we derive from mom and apple pie.

6 Last Friday, after the Arts and Business
7 Council Awards Luncheon in Philadelphia, I attended
8 the Cézanne Exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of
9 Art, which was crowded with enthusiastic patrons
10 bedecked in earphones clamoring for information about
11 individual works.

12 This is an occurrence that is repeated
13 hundreds of times around the State in museums and
14 art galleries, both large and small.

15 The week before, I attended a Bach choir
16 performance in Bethlehem. The choir performed the
17 very difficult music of Bach with the clarity and
18 precision that even Bach could not achieve in his
19 day, according to the guest lecturer. The church at
20 Lehigh University was packed.

21 Programs and venues like these are kept
22 alive by State funding.

23 A child brings home a crayon drawing from
24 school created with a product made by a Pennsylvania
25 company, Crayola, headquartered in Easton. A proud

1 mom puts it on the refrigerator door -- and the first
2 glimpse of her child's creativity.

3 A summer program in Lackawanna County brings
4 high-schoolers together for several weeks of dance,
5 painting, singing, and acting. Along with the
6 students, the teachers are also trained to implement
7 art programs during the school year.

8 These are but a few dozen State-funded
9 programs that inspire, motivate, and encourage our
10 youth to think creatively, not only in art but every
11 subject that they encounter. Test scores prove
12 that.

13 Fifty years ago, I brought back art programs
14 from college and encouraged the Scranton Chamber of
15 Commerce to provide more than just job opportunities
16 to our citizens.

17 Soon, festivals and concerts highlighted
18 family activities. These activities became an
19 industry in itself. The economic development in
20 Scranton has been based a great deal on the art
21 component. Scranton has an arts personality.

22 In Spain, the city of Bilbao invested
23 \$161 million to build the Guggenheim Museum and has
24 made that city a worldwide destination. Pennsylvania
25 is an arts-destination State.

1 That is why I mentioned the Arts and
2 Business Council Luncheon in Philadelphia.
3 Businesses there are providing volunteers for arts
4 organizations. Why? Because the arts are good
5 business.

6 The statistics are overwhelming. The number
7 of jobs, revenue, and the economic impact of arts
8 businesses, both nonprofit and for-profit, are very
9 compelling. Don't forget about architects, ad
10 agencies, and TV production companies. They're
11 artists, too.

12 Every move we make from the building we
13 occupy to the desks and chairs we are using and the
14 band that I brought for a little background music
15 earlier are all part of the arts, and this is why the
16 arts and education are important. They are like mom
17 and apple pie. You just can't turn your back on them
18 or deflate their importance by inadequate funding.

19 Please vote for full approval of HB 1416,
20 and thanks very much for listening.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Can you have that
22 band here Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday?

23 MR. LETTIERI: A little background music.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: That was good. We
25 needed that. That band was fantastic.

1 Go ahead.

2 MS. PACHECO: Good afternoon, Chairman Evans
3 and Members of the House of Representatives
4 Appropriations Committee.

5 Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to
6 speak to you today. I'm here to tell you today how
7 our lives are close to start falling apart.

8 As I said before, my name is Ana Pacheco,
9 and I'm the mother of the wonderful 20-year-old young
10 man, Joel Emilio, and he is here with me and with us.

11 Joel has developmental and physical
12 disabilities and special health-care needs. Joel
13 leaves us with his presence in our home -- not a
14 house, a home -- and in our loving and natural
15 environment -- our community.

16 Joel does not just participate in community
17 activities. He is known by his neighbors. He
18 participates around his neighborhood, from going to
19 the convenience corner store, like many of us do,
20 walks around the block, watching games at the
21 community park, and when the opportunity is
22 appropriate, voting at the school next to our home,
23 which, by the way, is an accessible voting place.

24 I have to say proudly that they do not
25 remember me but they remember him, because he has

1 been exercising his right to vote several times.

2 Joel received waiver services through the
3 mental retardation system, so that means that he
4 meets the ICF requirement for an institution. These
5 services and support make it possible for Joel to
6 have daily living and, again, to live in the
7 community where he is respected, welcome, and
8 loved.

9 My husband and I both are able to work
10 because Joel receives the services and support that
11 he needs. We bought our house 10 years ago, and we
12 have complied with the responsibility that these
13 represent. In other words, we have been following
14 the rules.

15 This house has the modifications that
16 satisfy Joel's physical cares, allowing us and other
17 people to safely support him. Because my husband
18 and I have the opportunity to work, we are able to
19 support our house, personal expenses, health
20 insurance, pay taxes, and do every day our best as
21 parents and citizens to contribute to our society.

22 The Senate Bill 850 will take away Joel's
23 services and supports. His meaningful life in the
24 community will disappear, together with the
25 opportunity for us to continue working, and will wipe

1 away our many years of progress and hard work.

2 Without services, Joel will be forced to
3 live in an institution. To my best understanding,
4 this situation is a lot more expensive than the
5 supports and services that he receives right now or
6 even in the future in the community.

7 If he is forced to live in an institution,
8 you will be taking away his daily family life, and
9 just because he has disabilities, you will be paying
10 more in the long term to take care of him.

11 If we decide to keep Joel at home with the
12 services that he really needs, my husband and I will
13 be forced to quit our jobs to care for Joel. We will
14 be living off of the public system, adding two more
15 dependents to the already overburdened system.

16 If you allow for these cuts to go through,
17 it will affect thousands of individuals with
18 disabilities served in the system and their family
19 members. People will be forced to go to institutions
20 or live at home without any services.

21 Even though I'm talking to you about Joel
22 today and my family, like us, there are thousands.
23 Besides the devastating change to individual lives,
24 these cuts do not make sense at all.

25 While this may look like savings now, in

1 reality, it will certainly be a lot more expensive in
2 the long-term.

3 Cutting these necessary services, people
4 with disabilities and their family will be forced
5 into much more expensive options, such as residential
6 school, group residences, and other forms of public
7 assistance.

8 Do not let us forget about entire jobs that
9 we will be losing in Philadelphia -- I'm sorry, in
10 Pennsylvania; I'm from Philadelphia -- from family
11 members quitting their job with a loss of income and
12 tax revenue to the State, city, and Federal
13 government.

14 Direct-care professionals who were with our
15 sons and daughters, like my son, Joel, will lose
16 their job along with many other professionals who
17 serve our children. People that today are working
18 and paying taxes, tomorrow will be costing millions
19 to the system.

20 Again, cutting the services for Joel will
21 drive at least two people in our family to need to
22 stay at home, 24 hours a day, to collect unemployment
23 and eventually go on welfare. It will require the
24 two people who were with him to also become
25 unemployed.

1 The tremendous economic and social impact
2 that it will have on Joel and our family will be
3 devastating.

4 I urge you to think about this before
5 destroying lives and bringing more people onto
6 unemployment and the already stressed welfare
7 system.

8 Think of the people whose lives will fall
9 apart. Think of the work that we have done over the
10 past 40 years to create a community system that will
11 support people in their home, in their own homes, and
12 with one stroke of the pen will harm and destroy
13 lives.

14 I respectfully urge you to consider my
15 comments before supporting such a drastic bill.
16 Consider when the bottom line is drawn the true
17 economic impact of one person losing services and the
18 really devastating effect across our Commonwealth.

19 Thank you very much.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

21 Karen, right?

22 MS. WOODINGS: It is. Karen Woodings with
23 the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: The Central
25 Pennsylvania Food Bank.

1 MS. WOODINGS: The Central Pennsylvania Food
2 Bank, and I'm here representing actually the
3 Statewide Association of Regional Food Banks.

4 We have been to visit every single Member of
5 the General Assembly, and I want to thank you so much
6 for Fran and John and from your office for inviting
7 us to come.

8 It's perfect that I follow this nice lady,
9 because we in House Bill --- or not House Bill,
10 Senate Bill 850, we were flat funded for our State
11 Food Purchase Program. We didn't go up; we didn't go
12 down. They kept us flat funded, which is remarkable
13 considering all of the stories that I have been
14 listening to.

15 But, you know, in talking to your office,
16 the message is that the recession has not been very
17 kind to food banks. And what food banks do is we
18 have big warehouses that we distribute food to little
19 pantries through churches and soup kitchens and
20 emergency feeding programs.

21 And our concern is that Senate Bill 850 is
22 going to create even more poverty for people who are
23 so vulnerable right now. The slash and burn to human
24 services, it's just frightening on our end.

25 We have seen -- and all my numbers are in

1 there. You know, I can't read without these, so, you
2 know, I would rather just talk to you.

3 We have seen our demand increase 20 percent
4 statewide. Actually, I think it's about 22 now. In
5 central Pennsylvania, we cut a swath from New York to
6 Maryland and cover 27 counties, and we have seen over
7 a 33-percent demand.

8 The face of hunger is changing, and it's
9 just so important that you know that. It's, you
10 know, it's people like Joel who have disabilities.
11 It's working families. It's working poor.

12 From March '08 to March '09, 200,000 people
13 applied for unemployment, and in that application,
14 that created 200,000 more people who are at risk of
15 hunger in Pennsylvania, because their unemployment
16 isn't going to equal their compensation through their
17 jobs.

18 I wanted to just talk to you a little bit
19 about, like, the people. We never or very seldom do
20 we have people who show up at the Food Bank, because
21 they understand that they need to go to their local
22 pantries and soup kitchens and what have you.

23 And just in the last week, we've had three
24 people walk through the door. We had a dad carrying
25 a 2-year-old and his other three children were in

1 school, and he's like "I have nothing to feed my
2 children." And he works. I mean, he's employed.

3 You know, the stimulus was great and it was
4 very helpful to people, the poorest of the poor in
5 Pennsylvania. I think it bumped their food stamps,
6 which now it's called the SNAP program, up 4 percent.
7 But that is just gradually going to decrease.

8 You know, I would say to you that a family
9 of four who makes more than \$28,000 will get no food
10 stamps at all, and that is where we kind of come in
11 as food banks. You know, we are the safety nets.

12 You know, food is simply a basic need. We
13 need to make sure that people -- you know, one in
14 nine Pennsylvanians live in poverty. One in seven
15 children in Pennsylvania are at risk of hunger. The
16 numbers are just staggering, and we need to do
17 better.

18 You know, I get all emotional when I talk
19 about this. Sorry.

20 What I would say is, in the materials I gave
21 you it lays out what we feel that we need as an
22 association to feed people. We need money just for
23 basic food, but the demand has gone up 20 percent.

24 You know, food prices have increased
25 20 percent over the last year. So we have to feed

1 20 percent more people with, you know, 20 percent
2 less buying power.

3 Just, you know, at some point, we need air
4 to breath and water to drink and food to eat, and we
5 need to make sure that we're taking care of the most
6 vulnerable people in Pennsylvania.

7 And sorry if I got a little emotional there.
8 It's powerful stuff. I mean, it's the seniors; it's
9 the Farmers Market Nutrition Program; it's the State
10 Food Purchase Program.

11 We did a little program -- that was the
12 Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System -- that was
13 Pennsylvania growers giving food to Pennsylvania's
14 hungry, and like all the money stayed within the
15 State of Pennsylvania.

16 And so I hope that in your deliberations,
17 you know, that you understand, I mean, while we did
18 not take the kind of hits that everybody else took,
19 all of the hits that everyone else took are certainly
20 going to affect us in our ability to do and serve our
21 fellow Pennsylvanians.

22 Thank you for your time.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

24 One, I want to thank all of you, seriously,
25 for taking this time--- Representative Reichley.

1 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Excuse me,
2 Mr. Chairman, and I apologize for slowing the process
3 down here, because I know it's late in the day and a
4 lot of folks have sat here through a lot of
5 testimony.

6 I would like to ask a couple of questions of
7 you, though, while you're here, and these are going
8 to be very crude examples. And it is not meant to
9 demean anyone of the particular programs you have
10 advocated for here.

11 Just of the people sitting here at the table
12 right now, how many of you bought a new car this
13 year?

14 How many of you bought a new house?

15 How about a new plasma television?

16 And yet, you essentially are asking us to do
17 that, to buy a new house, a new car, a new plasma
18 television, everything, right now.

19 If I get the program money for you, Ma'am,
20 for the food banks, I probably have to take it away
21 from Mr. Fontana for the Downtown Centers, or
22 Mr. Lettieri for the arts programs. Do you want me
23 to do that?

24 MS. WOODINGS: No.

25 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Okay.

1 MS. WOODINGS: It's not my position to say
2 -- you know, you guys have to have the wisdom of
3 Solomon.

4 I mean, I don't know how you're going to
5 split the baby, and I don't want and I would never --
6 I'm never going to be in your position, trust me.
7 But I think that there are -- there were things in
8 the Governor's budget, revenue enhancements, that the
9 Senate did not even consider.

10 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Okay.

11 MS. WOODINGS: And I think that -- and I'm
12 not advocating for taxes. I am not advocating for
13 taxes. I'm advocating that we cannot -- it costs us,
14 and it's all, I mean, I put all of the statistical,
15 the stuff that substantiates in the back of the
16 testimony. You know, it costs Pennsylvania
17 \$3.2 billion when we don't feed people---

18 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Okay.

19 MS. WOODINGS: ---because they call off
20 work. They lose their jobs. They have higher
21 health-care needs.

22 I mean, it's proven. It's a statistical --
23 you know, it's estimated at \$3.2 billion.

24 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: All right.

25 MS. WOODINGS: And so what I would say to

1 you is that, you know, spending \$24 million for the
2 State Food Purchase Program to, you know, be that
3 safety net for people who may not, you know, the
4 working poor -- the people who are coming to us are
5 the lady at Walmart who is ringing you up, and the
6 guy who is swiping your card at the gas station.
7 Like, they're working, and they are working hard.

8 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Okay.

9 MS. WOODINGS: And so I would suggest,
10 respectfully suggest, you know, that we look at, how
11 do we enhance revenues to the State?

12 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Well, how---

13 MS. WOODINGS: How do we do that?

14 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Yeah. And I
15 appreciate that remark.

16 MS. PLOTNICK: Excuse me.

17 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Okay. Sure,
18 Ms. Plotnick.

19 MS. PLOTNICK: With all due respect---

20 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Sure.

21 MS. PLOTNICK: ---we are not asking to buy
22 new cars or new plasma TVs.

23 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: Right.

24 MS. PLOTNICK: What we are asking is to not
25 be pennywise and pound foolish, and that is really

1 what Senate Bill 850 is.

2 By reducing community services, people will
3 not be able to maintain jobs. People with severe
4 behavioral health issues will end up inpatient. They
5 will end up using shelters. They could end up in
6 prisons.

7 This is very, very expensive. So this isn't
8 buying a new TV or a new car. It is keeping the
9 Commonwealth from incurring higher costs. It is
10 spending wisely. It is using what we must do to
11 protect ourselves fiscally as well as helping our
12 citizens at the same time.

13 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: And I agree with
14 you, and that's why I said it's a crude example. But
15 let me put it in maybe another analogy to you then.

16 What you are asking us to do is maintain the
17 used car, but we don't have as much money as we used
18 to.

19 MS. PLOTNICK: That is correct, but---

20 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: We have \$3 billion
21 -- okay. Hold on.

22 MS. PLOTNICK: That's correct.

23 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: We have \$3 billion
24 less than what we use to pay for maintenance and gas
25 and everything else.

1 MS. PLOTNICK: That's correct.

2 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: And every one of
3 the people who have come in here in the last 2 days
4 believe passionately in their programs, and we
5 appreciate that and we have listened to it sincerely,
6 and we will continue to listen to it sincerely.

7 MS. PLOTNICK: Right.

8 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: But I think it is
9 important to understand that -- I'll just take your
10 example here -- how many recipients you have in your
11 area compared to how many taxpayers are in your area,
12 and that guy working at that gas station or the
13 person doing the bagging at Walmart is concerned
14 about how he is going to make ends meet. And if we
15 increase taxes or if we increase, let's say the
16 tobacco tax, well, the guy who works the tobacco
17 warehouse may now be told, I'm pulling out of
18 Pennsylvania; I'm eliminating the 15, 20 jobs that I
19 have here in this warehouse. So now we have
20 maximized that problem.

21 And the issue that 253 of us here are
22 confronted with is just as compelling as all of your
23 arguments are, or the arguments from the other people
24 who are going to be paying the taxes to support all
25 these programs, is they can't give any more.

1 MS. PLOTNICK: Well---

2 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: They are concerned
3 about their ability to offer that.

4 MS. PLOTNICK: We do have to pull together.
5 If we don't maintain our used car, we can't get to
6 work. If we can't get to work, we can't pay our
7 mortgage. If we can't pay our mortgage, we are not
8 paying property taxes; the bank is foreclosing. We
9 are making credit tighter.

10 So we're in a tough spot. We need to weigh
11 which of the bad choices. If we all pull together
12 and we all ask for just pennies more from every
13 citizen in the Commonwealth, we'll actually be doing
14 fiscal good. We will not be losing that job, that
15 house, and so on down the line.

16 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLEY: And I appreciate
17 that, and I have prompted a whole series of comments
18 now. I see that.

19 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Excuse me. Hold,
20 Representative Reichley.

21 I'm going to do one man, and I got
22 Representative Lentz.

23 Go ahead.

24 MR. FONTANA: Yes. Representative, I would
25 suggest that, you know, as I said earlier, these are

1 very difficult decisions, and we realize these are
2 not political decisions. These are real-world
3 decisions that you're talking about.

4 But there are thousands and thousands of
5 people who stand to lose their jobs as a part of
6 those cuts, and I suggest to you that if you would
7 ask them would they be willing to pay a few more
8 dollars in State taxes annually or lose their jobs,
9 that the vast majority of those folks would say we
10 would be willing to pay a few more dollars than lose
11 our job.

12 REPRESENTATIVE REICHLLEY: Put people who are
13 in those programs---

14 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Representative,
15 hold for a second. Hold. I know you haven't been
16 around for awhile, but you know how I am, right? You
17 know.

18 Representative Lentz.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LENTZ: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman.

21 I just wanted to point out in response to
22 Mr. Reichley's comments that it is not like we are
23 talking about a budget that has no cuts and a budget
24 that has all the cuts that Senate 850 has. The
25 Governor's budget has substantial cuts in it, but not

1 the kind of cuts that people are here talking about
2 today.

3 And the Governor's budget doesn't
4 essentially sabotage the Federal stimulus bill, which
5 is what Senate Bill 850 does. It sabotages the
6 Federal stimulus bill and attempts to get in the way
7 of that legislation.

8 And then finally, I don't think we have to
9 worry about the tobacco warehouse leaving
10 Pennsylvania, because the question is, where would
11 they go? All 49 of the other States already tax
12 their products. So there is nothing about that tax
13 which would cause them to leave Pennsylvania.

14 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: It's not even
15 Memorial Day yet.

16 I want to thank all of you, seriously, for
17 coming to testify, for taking your time. Thank you
18 for what you do every single day. Seriously, I thank
19 you, because what you do helps us.

20 We are working together. This is a
21 conversation, and we all are working together --
22 Representative Reichley, Representative Lentz. We
23 all work together, so I want you to understand.

24 Don't mislead sometimes questioning as that
25 we ultimately are not. We are going to get through

1 this. We are going to work together. We want to
2 work with you and you are going to work with us.

3 We thank you sincerely.

4

5 (The hearing concluded at 3:03 p.m.)

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

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Debra B. Miller, Reporter

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