

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING

STATE CAPITOL  
MAJORITY CAUCUS BUILDING  
ROOM 140  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2009  
6:19 P.M.

PRESENTATION ON SENATE BILL 850

PANEL 14 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**

**7786 Hanoverdale Drive • Harrisburg, PA 17112**  
**Phone (717) 503-6568 • Fax (717) 566-7760**

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

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

DEBRA B. MILLER  
REPORTER

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

I N D E X

TESTIFIERS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
REV. VLADIMIR BEAUFILS CHAIRMAN, FIRM FOUNDATION OF PA, INC.; REPRESENTING HARRISBURG'S WEED AND SEED PROGRAM.....	4, 46
DANIEL BETANCOURT PRESIDENT AND CEO, COMMUNITY FIRST FUND; MEMBER, PA MICROENTERPRISE COALITION (PMC)...	4, 36
MARSHA CROSS CITIZEN, REPRESENTING THE FAMILY SAVINGS ACCOUNT PROGRAM.....	4, 40
ROGER JACKSON CEO, THE ARISE ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL, PHILADELPHIA.....	5, 33
BARRY CASSIDY REPRESENTATIVE, PA MAIN STREET MANAGERS.....	5, 25
DIANNE REED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CADE KIDS.....	5, 18
ANTHONY MURPHY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TOWN WATCH INTEGRATED SERVICES.....	5, 15
NIKITA JACKSON DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR PROGRAM SUPPORT AND PROGRAM MANAGER, BLUEPRINT FOR A SAFER PHILADELPHIA FOR THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA URBAN AFFAIRS COALITION (GPUAC).....	5, 6
CLARK HAMMAKER CO-OWNER, JEMIC SHIELDING TECHNOLOGY.....	5, 43

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

2 \* \* \*

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: What I would like  
4 to do, you know, is have you introduce yourself for  
5 the purpose of the record, and then we can go  
6 through.

7 If you'll start.

8 REVEREND BEAUFILS: Good evening. I'm  
9 Rev. Vladimir Beaufils.

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay, Reverend.

11 REVEREND BEAUFILS: Chairman of the  
12 Firm Foundation.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: What foundation  
14 again?

15 REVEREND BEAUFILS: The Firm Foundation of  
16 PA.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

18 Next?

19 MR. BETANCOURT: Dan Betancourt, President  
20 of the Community First Fund and also a member of the  
21 Pennsylvania Microenterprise Coalition.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay; sure.

23 MS. CROSS: My name is Marsha Cross, and I'm  
24 here as a citizen for the Family Savings Account  
25 Program.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

2 MR. JACKSON: Good evening. Roger Jackson,  
3 CEO of the Arise Academy Charter High School.

4 MR. CASSIDY: Barry Cassidy, representing  
5 the Pennsylvania Main Street Managers.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

7 MS. REED: Dianne Reed, Executive Director  
8 of CADE, a participant in the Blueprint for a  
9 Safer Philadelphia project in Cobbs Creek and  
10 Point Breeze.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Next?

12 MR. MURPHY: Anthony Murphy, Executive  
13 Director of Town Watch Integrated Services, a part of  
14 the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition,  
15 working with the Blueprint.

16 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

17 MS. JACKSON: Nikita Jackson, Deputy  
18 Director for Program Support and Manager for the  
19 Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia for the Greater  
20 Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: No problem.

22 And?

23 MR. HAMMAKER: Clark Hammaker. I'm a  
24 business owner and past participant in the SEA  
25 Program.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay; sure.

2 So why don't we start with you, Nikita, and  
3 then go around.

4 MS. JACKSON: Well, good evening,  
5 Chairman Evans and Members of the House  
6 Appropriations Committee.

7 Again, my name is Nikita Jackson. I am the  
8 Deputy Director for Program Support and Manager for  
9 the Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia for the  
10 Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, known  
11 as GPUAC.

12 I am pleased to be here representing GPUAC.  
13 Sharmain Matlock Turner, our President and CEO, sends  
14 her regrets that she cannot be here in person.

15 She did want me to convey to the committee  
16 both her personal and professional concern regarding  
17 the grave impact Senate Bill 850 will have on the  
18 availability of services and programs that assist  
19 Philadelphia's most vulnerable individuals and  
20 families.

21 The majority of my testimony will be on the  
22 impact Senate Bill 850 has on the funding for the  
23 Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia. However, I want  
24 to briefly discuss the work of GPUAC and our overall  
25 position regarding Senate Bill 850.

1           Now celebrating our 40th year of service,  
2 GPUAC is committed to improving the lives of working  
3 families in Philadelphia. GPUAC's mission is to  
4 unite government, business, neighborhoods, and  
5 individual initiatives to improve the quality of life  
6 of individuals in our region and solve emerging  
7 issues.

8           As a fiscal sponsor, we represent a  
9 coalition of more than 90 grassroots organizations,  
10 with over 500 employees serving tens of thousands of  
11 residents throughout Philadelphia, southeast  
12 Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

13           As an organization that drives change, GPUAC  
14 offers programs that build wealth in our communities  
15 and improves the life chances of youth and young  
16 adults.

17           Our position on Senate Bill 850:

18           The funding for many of our program partners  
19 is threatened because of the bill passed by the  
20 Senate. Even before the current economic crisis hit,  
21 many Philadelphia families and individuals were  
22 struggling to make ends meet.

23           In 2008, the poverty rate for families in  
24 Philadelphia was nearly 20 percent, meaning that one  
25 in five families were living in poverty as defined by

1 the U.S. Census Bureau.

2 We also have neighborhoods that have a long  
3 history of high unemployment rates. As many leading  
4 experts raise a concern about the unemployment rate  
5 reaching 10 percent nationally, there are communities  
6 in Philadelphia that are and have been challenged  
7 with unemployment rates of 10 percent or higher.

8 These individuals, families, communities,  
9 need government support, at least at the current  
10 level of funding, if not an increased level.

11 Senate Bill 850 strips many of the funding for the  
12 programs and financial services that support these  
13 families.

14 One major concern of GPUAC is the decrease  
15 in funding at both the State and city levels for  
16 prevention programs, especially violence prevention.

17 Over the last 5 years, Philadelphia has been  
18 progressive in developing prevention programs that  
19 address the needs of children, youth, and families  
20 before they encounter the child welfare or the  
21 juvenile justice system.

22 However, the city's Department of Human  
23 Services decreased the prevention budget during this  
24 current fiscal year based on a decrease of their  
25 needs-based plan and budget from the Department of

1 Public Welfare.

2 This body has approved an allocation for DHS  
3 of \$721.1 million. However, in January of this year,  
4 DPW revised the funding level to \$709.5 million, a  
5 decrease of \$11.6 million.

6 DPW made these unilateral cuts in funding,  
7 even though this body had approved the \$721 million  
8 funding allocation.

9 Many of the programs that support violence  
10 prevention, including Town Watch Integrated Services,  
11 known as TWIS, who you will hear from in a few  
12 minutes, were included in these decreases.

13 For example, the city completely cut funding  
14 for the Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership,  
15 known to most of us as AVRPP, a program aimed at  
16 serving younger youth who were identified as being at  
17 risk of becoming serious juvenile offenders and  
18 design-based on the city's proven Youth Violence  
19 Reduction Partnership.

20 Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia:

21 As the city continues to be faced with crime  
22 and high homicide rates, we cannot lose funding that  
23 is aimed at reducing and stemming the tide of  
24 violence, crime, and keeping our children and youth  
25 safe and secure with the opportunity to grow and

1 prosper.

2           At the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs  
3 Coalition, we are especially concerned about the  
4 total cut in funding for violence prevention in the  
5 allocation for the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime  
6 and Delinquency.

7           We know that to address the growing increase  
8 in crime, we need a systemic approach that includes  
9 research-proven interventions. This understanding is  
10 what is behind the impetus for the Blueprint for a  
11 Safer Philadelphia, with, of course, the leadership  
12 of Representative Dwight Evans.

13           The mission of the Blueprint for a Safer  
14 Philadelphia is to stem the tide of youth homicides  
15 in the city of Philadelphia by the year 2016.

16           One of these youth killed was 10-year-old  
17 Faheem Thomas-Childs as he was entering his  
18 elementary school in North Philadelphia. Faheem was  
19 in the cross-fire of a gun battle between drug  
20 dealers outside of his school.

21           To ensure that more children are not killed  
22 in this unnecessary violence, we understand that we  
23 need to make changes in our communities,  
24 systematically throughout the city, and in our  
25 culture and in our thinking. The Blueprint is

1 designed to do this.

2           At the heart of this model -- a true  
3 collaboration of GPUAC; Philadelphia  
4 Antidrug/Antiviolence Network, known to many of you  
5 as PAAN; Motivational Educational Entertainment,  
6 known as MEE Productions; and CHOICE -- and, of  
7 course, again, our extraordinary leader,  
8 Representative Evans.

9           Darryl Coates, the Executive Director of  
10 PAAN, put it best: "We have no other choice but to  
11 work together, and the Blueprint is that vehicle that  
12 unites us all."

13           As a sidebar, Mr. Coates is an advocate; he  
14 has been an advocate for many, many years. He  
15 recently lost his nephew to gun violence, only a few  
16 days ago -- shot five times, several in the face.

17           This model, a Blueprint, works, because it  
18 unites organizations, communities, and the city as a  
19 whole.

20           There are no silos here. It uses a  
21 multipronged approach to reach, educate, involve, and  
22 serve all Philadelphians. We believe this model is  
23 necessary because Philadelphians are affected by the  
24 high crime rates and the devastating loss of so many  
25 of our youth to violence.

1           The specific components of this approach are  
2 a place-based strategy focused in two high-crime  
3 neighborhoods; a strategically-targeted social  
4 marketing campaign; a citywide resource hotline -- I  
5 would like for you to call it, 1-888-570-BLUE; a  
6 violence prevention content expert; performance  
7 management, evaluation, and outcomes; community-based  
8 ambassadors further laying the foundation to help  
9 anchor youth violence prevention activities, and I  
10 stress the community-based ambassadors.

11           During this current fiscal year, 2008-2009,  
12 we have identified Point Breeze and Cobbs Creek,  
13 those two high-crime areas of the city, as the focus  
14 of the place-based strategy. It is not surprising  
15 that while fighting high crime rates, these areas of  
16 the city were also faced with a dearth of resources.

17           For this reason, we identified 10  
18 community-based ambassadors, programs that could  
19 serve this area. GPUAC focused on providing them  
20 with technical assistance to strengthen their  
21 organizations and, ultimately, improving the quality  
22 of their services to youth, which is critical.

23           We cannot do this work without our Blueprint  
24 ambassadors, and on behalf of GPUAC, I want to thank  
25 them.

1           Each organization and their contact  
2 information is listed in the PowerPoint that we have  
3 attached to our written testimony.

4           In addition, you will hear from three of  
5 these ambassadors: Changing Attitudes, Decisions and  
6 Environments, which is CADE; Town Watch Integrated  
7 Services, which is TWIS; and again, MEE Productions.

8           The commitment of our ambassadors is  
9 demonstrated by the fact that since February 2008,  
10 they have collectively touched the lives of  
11 approximately 8,000 youth residing in the identified  
12 neighborhoods.

13           What is also impressive is that within the  
14 last year, our ambassadors have increased the number  
15 of youth served by the Blueprint over 50 percent.

16           We are also reaching vulnerable and at-risk  
17 populations. An estimated 90 percent of the youth we  
18 served were African-Americans.

19           In addition, we are also reaching out to  
20 youth between the ages of 8 and 16. We selected  
21 these ages because it has been well established that  
22 non-school hours can be the time that youth are at  
23 the greatest risk of being involved in crime as  
24 either a victim or a perpetrator. These risks can be  
25 reduced significantly through participation in

1 high-quality, out-of-school-time programs.

2 In addition, research has shown that the  
3 younger the age of offense, the greater the risk of  
4 re-offending, and often for more serious crimes. In  
5 other words, if we do not want to pay the costs of  
6 incarcerating these youth as adults, we need to  
7 invest in prevention now.

8 Given our multipronged approach, we need to  
9 reach the community as a whole. That is the purpose  
10 of our Social Marketing Campaign. And again, you  
11 will hear later from MEE Productions, who is managing  
12 that part of Blueprint.

13 However, I do want to read a winning essay  
14 from the GreatVine. It's a Website designed to honor  
15 youth and provide positive stories about youth in  
16 Philadelphia.

17 The GreatVine essay winner is TiJuana  
18 Pressley:

19 "Last year we had the highest death rate  
20 ever seen in the city of Philadelphia.

21 "Last year one of my coolest friends died.  
22 He died to gun violence at the age of 18. On July 6,  
23 2008, a friend that was more like a brother died due  
24 to a drug war. Some people say it was his fault and  
25 that he was mixed up in with the wrong crowd and

1 others say he was just another statistic, just  
2 another number.

3 "I say they're all wrong. He was a boy who  
4 didn't have a path to follow, a mother deceased and a  
5 father jailed. There was no one to really look after  
6 him.

7 "Last year, we had more deaths than days in  
8 the year. That's why this year I decided to take a  
9 role in the Blueprint, so I can know my friends by  
10 names and not by numbers."

11 My conclusion is simple: All Philadelphia  
12 youth should have the opportunity to grow and thrive.  
13 They should be concerned about attending the prom and  
14 not funerals. No youth should be faced with knowing  
15 friends by numbers and not names.

16 And you can help. Please vote against  
17 Senate Bill 850. Support a fiscal year 2009-10  
18 budget that includes funding for violence prevention  
19 initiatives such as the Blueprint for a Safer  
20 Philadelphia.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. MURPHY: Good evening.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Good evening.

24 MR. MURPHY: Anthony Murphy, Executive  
25 Director of Town Watch Integrated Services.

1           Good evening, Chairman, and to the board.

2           After listening to the statement previously  
3 read, my information is already submitted.

4           I would like to say that as an ambassador,  
5 not just for the Blueprint but an ambassador for  
6 putting prisons out of business, turning the tide  
7 with our young people, what we have been able to do  
8 in Philadelphia through, one, the Blueprint, and one  
9 is a strong collaboration, is begin to impact on the  
10 lives of our youth, but more importantly impact on  
11 their parents and on their family as a nucleus.

12           You see, when you can get men who are  
13 willing to volunteer their time during the course of  
14 the day to make sure that children can get to school  
15 and from school safely, then getting them involved  
16 with a positive activity in the evening, such as the  
17 Blueprint provides, providing them with workshops  
18 that help them understand that there is more than one  
19 way to solve a problem, through discussion of  
20 conflict resolution, discussing various methods to  
21 solve problems, you begin to make a change.

22           When children also, who seem to show no  
23 interest in things such as cooking or chess because  
24 they've had no one to show them how valuable those  
25 lessons are, spend the time at a cooking class just

1 to learn to make ice cream -- and I'm sure some of us  
2 can remember the day when that was the only ice cream  
3 we had -- they are learning it. They are learning to  
4 make a taco.

5           You see, what we managed to do is take  
6 education out of the classroom from being the only  
7 place you can learn. So you can learn on the streets  
8 of Philadelphia, and the things that we want you to  
9 learn are the values of life, the things that make a  
10 difference, the things that help you make a  
11 difference.

12           So through this collaboration, we are able  
13 to do that, and I'll cite one example and not take  
14 too long.

15           A week ago, a young man came in GPUAC and  
16 said he was a member of the Bloods, and I want you to  
17 realize that if the Bloods are in Philadelphia now,  
18 they will be in Scranton; they will be in York; they  
19 will move across this State.

20           He was afraid for his life. He had been  
21 stabbed in his hand, and as their rules say, blood  
22 in, blood out. By definition, "blood out" means that  
23 you have to die in order to leave.

24           We, as a part of that collaboration, were  
25 able to, one, counsel him; two, get him home safely;

1 and three, get him into a system that would help him  
2 and then begin to move him out of that situation.

3           What I want you to understand is that as you  
4 listen to all of the men and women who spoke today  
5 and all the men and women who have different views of  
6 what needs and needs not to be, the one thing we  
7 cannot afford to do is sacrifice tomorrow for today.

8           The challenge we face today -- and I say  
9 it's a challenge we will meet -- it is being prepared  
10 for tomorrow. That must be our goal.

11           Thank you.

12           MS. REED: Good evening, Appropriations  
13 Chairman Evans and Members of the committee.

14           My name is Dianne Reed. I'm the Executive  
15 Director of CADE Kids, a nonprofit organization that  
16 has been providing classroom-based  
17 antidrug/antiviolence prevention education in the  
18 Philadelphia public schools since 1987.

19           I'm here to provide information on why cuts  
20 to violence and drug prevention funding in SB 850  
21 should not only be eliminated, but rather funding  
22 should be increased to inflation-adjusted levels  
23 equivalent to at least fiscal year '06 as a prudent  
24 leverage against directly-related, more-costly  
25 spending areas.

1           I have been working with a network of  
2 coalitions to assemble cost-benefit information and  
3 Philadelphia legislative district profiles of  
4 behavioral health statistics, and I am delighted to  
5 share some of this data with the committee today.

6           The first thing to understand is that  
7 impulse control is at the heart of violence and  
8 substance abuse problems in Philadelphia. Ask  
9 Police Commissioner Ramsey what the principal cause  
10 of crime in the city is, and he will tell you it is  
11 lack of impulse control.

12           The second thing to understand is that both  
13 children and adults can learn to control their  
14 impulses.

15           When I was here in Harrisburg meeting with  
16 Legislators and their staffs in early April, one  
17 State Senator's chief of staff told me that "people  
18 with drug and alcohol problems" are stigmatized.  
19 That stink bomb has got to go out the window with the  
20 buggy whips.

21           When you break the stereotype down, at the  
22 bottom is the assumption that people cannot learn to  
23 control their impulses. This is a belief that's way  
24 behind the learning curve.

25           For one thing, there is a nationally

1 validated curriculum for teaching self-management  
2 techniques. One of those we are using in Cobbs Creek  
3 and Point Breeze is Promoting Alternative Thinking  
4 Strategies, PATHS.

5 PATHS is a districtwide initiative in  
6 Baltimore schools and at Girard College. PATHS is  
7 part of the framework of the book *Emotional*  
8 *Intelligence*.

9 Second, teaching children to control their  
10 impulses, conduct positive social decisionmaking, and  
11 build self-esteem are all mainstream methodologies  
12 today.

13 Children can learn these key skill sets,  
14 especially when skills-building is taught as part of  
15 their daily classroom experience using a nationally  
16 validated, age-appropriate curriculum, as is the case  
17 with CADE Kids.

18 And the successful recovery rates in  
19 national studies for adults is between 40 and 50 and  
20 60 percent after 5 years, as noted in my attached  
21 op-ed piece from the Philadelphia Daily News today,  
22 which is in your packet.

23 Senate Bill 850 cuts \$26 million from  
24 behavioral health funding, eclipsing the Governor's  
25 budget cut of \$3.6 million. The cost of failing to

1 adequately fund these programs is too high.

2           Take Pennsylvania's persistently dangerous  
3 schools as an example. All 20 of them are in  
4 Philadelphia.

5           One of the schools we are serving in with  
6 Blueprint support, Edwin Vare, is a PDS school.  
7 Three others -- Childs, McDaniel, and Harrity --  
8 feed into PDS high schools South Philadelphia and  
9 West Philadelphia.

10           There are two attachments to my testimony  
11 that relate to this part of town. One is a  
12 Daily News article about the two boys recently shot  
13 in the head in South Philly by two other boys.

14           "Gabe" is a pseudonym in Ronnie Polaneczky's  
15 story for the boy we honored at our April event. His  
16 essay is attached.

17           Gabe is a boy who was expelled from Vare,  
18 got into plenty of fights, but now in his new high  
19 school is working with his CADE Kids prevention  
20 specialist to turn his life around.

21           He has achieved the Most Improved Student  
22 Award for three marking periods at his school. He  
23 got the CADE Kid Award for the year from Commissioner  
24 Ramsey, made Bill Giles weep with pride for his  
25 achievement, and received a standing ovation from the

1 audience of business leaders and public officials at  
2 our event.

3 Gabe was successful in freeing the "champion  
4 inside," learning how to say no to violence, drugs,  
5 gangs, weapons. Thanks to Blueprint, we are sharing  
6 the same skills with 1,100 children grades K to 12.

7 And I should say that Gabe was the best  
8 friend of the boys who were shot. There was this  
9 incredible contrast just because of impulse  
10 control.

11 A nice story you say, but what does it mean  
12 to you as Legislators?

13 Students' lack of impulse control impacts  
14 government spending in our economy, since students  
15 who cannot get themselves under control cannot focus  
16 on task, cannot behave appropriately in the classroom  
17 or on school premises, and are not likely to stay in  
18 school.

19 We'll take the worst risk factor first.

20 The boys who shot Gabe's best friends shot  
21 them even knowing they weren't the ones they came to  
22 harm. To you, at \$37,500 per treatment for a gunshot  
23 wound, this would be part of the 812 gunshot wounds,  
24 youth gunshot wounds, in 2008, racking up a  
25 \$30 million cost. With adults included, the cost was

1 \$60 million.

2           There were more youth gunshot victims than  
3 adult gunshot victims, as is often the case. There  
4 are six gunshot victims for every homicide in  
5 Philadelphia.

6           It costs \$38,000 to put a CADE Kids  
7 prevention specialist into our PDS school system,  
8 reaching up to 1,000 students per year.

9           At the truancy-risk level, an average of  
10 15,000 students are absent from Philadelphia public  
11 schools daily, resulting in \$200 million in lost use  
12 of resources, of which the State is paying  
13 60 percent, about \$120 million. This number of  
14 students who are absent daily is more students than,  
15 I think, in any of the school districts in  
16 southeastern Pennsylvania.

17           At the dropout-risk level, consider that  
18 30,000 students dropped out of Philadelphia public  
19 schools from 2000 to 2005. What that means to you is  
20 a loss of \$275 million to the State's economy, plus  
21 another third in taxes.

22           That's the difference in earnings between a  
23 dropout and a grad. It's about \$9,200. So every  
24 hundred kids that stay in school puts \$100 million of  
25 wages into the State's economy.

1           At the statewide estimate of 36,000 dropouts  
2 per year, the total mounts to big numbers:  
3 \$1.6 billion in lost wages over a 5-year period, plus  
4 \$530 million in lost tax revenue.

5           And in terms of the grownup extension of  
6 this trend, of the 25,000 former offenders  
7 re-entering the community every year, 13,500 lack a  
8 high school diploma. This represents a loss of  
9 \$124 million to the economy in lost wages alone.

10           Legislators have another reason to have a  
11 stake in funding drug and alcohol and behavioral  
12 health programming, as shown in the attached  
13 behavioral health profiles for House and Senate  
14 districts in Point Breeze and Cobbs Creek, which are  
15 the focus of Blueprint funding.

16           At the district level, a tranche of  
17 approximately 60,000 residents, which is the size of  
18 State Legislator districts -- Rep districts, I should  
19 say -- shows high levels of homicides, death with  
20 drugs present, drug sales, and weekly recovery  
21 meetings. Patterns are mirrored at the Senate  
22 level.

23           I am also providing copies of behavioral  
24 health profiles for all Members of the Appropriations  
25 Committee in Philadelphia. I would produce them for

1 other areas of the State, but comparable base  
2 zip code data are not available outside of  
3 Philadelphia.

4 To help Philadelphia help itself, we want  
5 not only an end to D&A/behavioral health funding  
6 cuts, but also a \$14 million restoration of funding  
7 at an inflation recovery rate as shown in the  
8 analysis attached to the testimony.

9 We support the Governor's revenue proposals,  
10 including a smokeless tobacco tax producing  
11 \$38 million in revenue, a 5-percent severance tax on  
12 natural gas production yielding \$107 million, and a  
13 payment from the Rainy Day Fund, which should be used  
14 to fund tangible services rather than sit idle in an  
15 economic downturn.

16 We would be happy to host a VIP visit to any  
17 CADE Kids classroom.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. CASSIDY: Barry Cassidy, Phoenixville,  
20 PA.

21 Good evening. I would like to thank  
22 Chairman Evans and the Appropriations Committee for  
23 letting me speak today.

24 I am here today with Lee Senior and  
25 Joe McNulty from the University City District, and we

1 are representing the professional Main Street  
2 people.

3 My name is Barry Cassidy. I'm the  
4 Main Street Manager for the borough of Phoenixville.  
5 I am representing the Main Street managers and  
6 programs in over 60 communities across the  
7 Commonwealth.

8 I am the senior Main Street Manager in  
9 Pennsylvania, having worked as a Main Street Manager  
10 since 1985. I have managed programs in Lock Haven,  
11 DuBois, Downingtown, Kensington Avenue, and South  
12 Street in the city of Philadelphia and now  
13 Phoenixville.

14 I am the cofounder of the Pennsylvania  
15 Downtown Center, a technical assistance organization  
16 that assists Main Streets, and I think that  
17 Bill Fontana was here earlier.

18 In my 25 years administering the program, I  
19 have seen it grow, both in the amount of dollars  
20 provided by the Commonwealth and the number of  
21 communities involved.

22 The program is a success. Dollars invested  
23 from the public sector for facade improvement and  
24 administrative staff helps local businesses and  
25 property owners be successful. The Main Street

1 Program has been a prime factor in many  
2 revitalization efforts.

3 In the past 5 years, Phoenixville has had  
4 over \$10 million invested by the private sector  
5 partners in rehabilitating downtown buildings.

6 The cost to purchase a building in the  
7 downtown over that 5-year period has increased from  
8 \$200,000 to approximately \$800,000.

9 Many of the towns in your district that have  
10 been accepted to the Main Street Program have  
11 experienced similar results, as towns across the  
12 Commonwealth have utilized the program to spur  
13 economic development.

14 The public dollars being leveraged by the  
15 private investment has created a win-win situation  
16 for both the public and private sectors.  
17 Public-sector incentives draw private capital  
18 investment to small towns instead of sprawl-related  
19 development.

20 Although many have told me to come here  
21 today and spout off numbers to show that the program  
22 is a big contributor in economic development by  
23 retaining and creating jobs and increasing the  
24 assessed value, I would like to address the benefits  
25 of the program that are sometimes hard to convey in a

1 public forum, how the Main Street Program has  
2 succeeded in preserving and reviving small-town life  
3 in downtowns throughout the Commonwealth, how the  
4 community is judged many times as defined by the  
5 downtown. In an urban area, the neighborhood  
6 commercial district often defines the sections of a  
7 city.

8           How many times have you passed through a  
9 town and noticed the gas station and the pizzeria and  
10 thought to yourself "That's not much of a town,"  
11 regardless of what the housing stock consists of or  
12 whatever the demographics were of the town.

13           The same thing happens when there is a town  
14 in your district that has issues, whether it be  
15 disinvestment, shady people making it uncomfortable  
16 for shoppers, lack of viable stores. The downtown  
17 sometimes can define the town in a negative  
18 manner.

19           The Main Street represents just that,  
20 Main Street America -- the local business people in  
21 your community, the local appliance stores, the  
22 framing shops, and the local restaurants that you  
23 shop at and visit on your trips back to your  
24 districts. It is the local business people that  
25 provide you with goods and services as well as a

1 plethora of complaints about issues beyond your  
2 control.

3           The program is unique because it covers a  
4 wide range of issues, including historic restoration,  
5 business recruitment, community festivals, and the  
6 elimination of crime, which is part of an overall  
7 effort to reposition the downtown and the regional  
8 marketplace.

9           By repositioning the downtown, the entire  
10 borough or city thrives. For example, in  
11 Phoenixville, after strategic repositioning, people  
12 who lived on Valley Forge Mountain near Phoenixville  
13 and had a Phoenixville address were no longer  
14 complaining that they had to change their Postal  
15 Service designation and visited the downtown  
16 regularly. People in the region all of a sudden  
17 started to feel good about the town.

18           Success breeds success, and people want to  
19 be part of the community and live in an idyllic  
20 existence in a town where they can walk and receive  
21 goods and services and entertainment.

22           The Main Street Program provides this  
23 intangible to the community because it deals with the  
24 one symbol of economic and social health of the  
25 community -- the downtown.

1 Times have been tough for Main Streets  
2 across the Commonwealth since the economic crisis,  
3 with private foundation and discretionary  
4 philanthropy decreasing as endowments have lost, in  
5 many cases, 30 percent of their portfolio. Business  
6 sales have also slowed, and advertising and  
7 sponsorships have slowed in proportion.

8 Main Street is feeling the repercussion of  
9 what has happened on Wall Street.

10 Senate Bill 850 calls for the elimination of  
11 the Main Street Program. The problem with ending a  
12 program like the Main Street Program is that the Main  
13 Street is a process and is not something that can be  
14 stopped and started easily.

15 A community gets together and tries to  
16 revitalize the downtown by putting a significant  
17 amount of resources and dollars into projects as well  
18 as the hopes and dreams of the entire community.

19 If something happens like the loss of  
20 funding from the public sector, that effort will not  
21 repeat itself in the near future. Utterances like  
22 "We tried that once" or "It doesn't work" will greet  
23 the second wave of citizens attempting to revitalize  
24 the downtown. The Main Street Program is better  
25 operated continuously and able to build on past

1 successes.

2 Recently, House Bill 102 passed the House by  
3 extending the Main Street Program from 5 to 10 years  
4 based on the Department of Community and Economic  
5 Development assessment of performance.

6 In these perilous times, when Main Streets  
7 see funding sources shrinking while the nation  
8 rebounds from the financial crisis, the bill was  
9 welcomed by the Main Street Programs across the  
10 Commonwealth. We ask the bill be considered  
11 positively as part of the budget process.

12 In times of fewer dollars, it is necessary  
13 to concentrate resources where there has been success  
14 -- by cutting back on construction grants given to  
15 non-Main Street towns and concentrating the effort in  
16 Main Street communities where there will be more than  
17 enough money to provide additional administrative  
18 dollars to Main Street.

19 A single \$500,000 housing and redevelopment  
20 assistance grant given to a town that does not have a  
21 Main Street Program designation will fund two  
22 Main Street Programs for 5 years or 10 Main Street  
23 Programs for a year.

24 In the past, dollars were more concentrated  
25 in the designated Main Street communities and

1 Enterprise Zones. A cutback in the budget should  
2 affect the non-program affiliated one-time  
3 construction grants rather than program-affiliated  
4 administrative grants.

5 Single construction grants given to a town  
6 without a proven process for revitalization often  
7 creates an island of revitalization in the downtown  
8 that soon fails because of lack of critical mass.

9 The Main Street Programs are required to  
10 have an economic development strategy, goals, and  
11 objectives for development of the downtown.

12 A simple change in policy could expand the  
13 pool of dollars for Main Street Programs, as  
14 House Bill 102 outlines.

15 Everyone who has testified today realizes  
16 that these are times of tight funding and hard  
17 choices. You have been given two options -- of  
18 securing more revenue or cutting back on needed  
19 programs. I believe, and I am sure the people of  
20 Pennsylvania believe, that a combination of the two  
21 will be necessary to achieve a proper budget.

22 You are trusted today to hear the testimony  
23 from everyone with an opinion and make the decisions  
24 for the people of Pennsylvania. Please accept my  
25 comments as part of your deliberative process.

1 MR. JACKSON: Good evening, Chairman Evans  
2 and honorable Members of the committee.

3 I trust that you have been provided with a  
4 copy of my testimony, and as such, I know you are all  
5 very intelligent. I won't bore you with reading it.

6 I promise to be brief as long as the  
7 committee does not interpret my brevity as lack of  
8 import about my request this evening.

9 I have the privilege of serving as the CEO  
10 of the Arise Academy Charter High School in  
11 Philadelphia.

12 The Arise Academy is the first public  
13 charter high school in the country specifically  
14 designed to service youth who are in foster-care  
15 placements.

16 As the Chairman, I'm sure, is aware and as I  
17 hope many Members of the committee are aware, charter  
18 high schools work in Pennsylvania, and charter high  
19 schools are working in Philadelphia.

20 They are working so well, in fact, that a  
21 major part of our new Superintendent's reform effort  
22 to deal with the lowest-performing schools is to turn  
23 them into charters. So we know that charters are  
24 working.

25 In fact, if charter schools in Philadelphia

1 were their own school district, it would be the  
2 second largest district in the State.

3           You'll be pleased to know that my request of  
4 you this evening doesn't cost any money -- or not  
5 much -- and I am hopeful that you will respectfully  
6 consider the "how" of funding rather than the "how  
7 much."

8           As many people have already testified,  
9 Senate Bill 850 does not adequately fund public  
10 education, does not adequately fund services to  
11 children and youth who are in need of mental and  
12 emotional supports.

13           However, I come to you today with a concern  
14 of the "how" rather than the "how much."

15           Even as Philadelphia is poised to receive  
16 over \$200 million in stimulus funding, at the same  
17 time, they are taking a posture that they may not  
18 honor a commitment to fully fund charter schools  
19 which they have recently approved.

20           Because we are such a major partner with the  
21 School District of Philadelphia, educating nearly  
22 one-fifth of the students in the city, I'm  
23 respectfully suggesting that in decisions in awarding  
24 stimulus funding, that charter schools be considered  
25 equally with the school district.

1           I know that there are provisions made for  
2 charter schools to attempt to apply for and compete  
3 for stimulus funding, but we respectfully request  
4 that we be treated just as a school district will be  
5 treated in terms of receiving direct allocations of  
6 stimulus funding.

7           Additionally, we are requesting that the  
8 State Department of Education be required to fully  
9 fund and timely release implementation dollars for  
10 which first- and second-year charter schools are  
11 eligible, as these dollars are vital for the  
12 operations of start-ups and second-year charter  
13 schools.

14           Lastly -- and this is the "not much" funding  
15 part -- we recently had a partnership with the  
16 Department of Human Services to provide much needed  
17 emotional and mental health supports for our  
18 students, which is one of the most vulnerable  
19 populations of students in the State.

20           Due to recent programmatic cuts across all  
21 areas in the State, the Department of Human Services,  
22 we were one of the casualties of their cuts, to the  
23 tune of \$270,000.

24           While that amount does not seem like much  
25 money, the impacts of the supports of the students in

1 our particular school, who, again, are students who  
2 are in foster-care placements, the impact is  
3 tremendous.

4 So I respectfully request of the committee  
5 this evening that once we figure out how we are going  
6 to fund public education and supports for children  
7 and youth and behavioral and emotional health, that  
8 we figure out the "how" and review our public charter  
9 high schools as partners and given every opportunity  
10 to receive direct funding as any other school  
11 district in the Commonwealth.

12 I thank you for your time.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

14 MR. BETANCOURT: If the Chairman will allow  
15 me to talk about the three economic development  
16 programs, and we have two clients, if that's okay  
17 with you.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Sure.

19 MR. BETANCOURT: Okay.

20 Chairman Evans and Committee Members, thank  
21 you for giving us an opportunity to speak today.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Just mention your  
23 name for the stenographer.

24 MR. BETANCOURT: Oh, yes; I'm getting to  
25 that.

1           My name is Dan Betancourt, and I'm the CEO  
2 of Community First Fund. We are a CDFI. We cover  
3 central Penn. And I'm also past Chair of the  
4 National Association of Microlending Organizations,  
5 AEO.

6           PMC represents 10 economic development  
7 organizations across the region, and we primarily  
8 serve underserved business owners. We provide them  
9 training and also asset-building programs.

10           I'm going to talk about three of those  
11 today.

12           Obviously, we're not in agreement with the  
13 Governor's budget and the Senate budget reducing  
14 these three programs.

15           The first is the Pennsylvania Community  
16 Development Bank, which I know the Chairman is very  
17 familiar with. We worked with Craig Lehman to  
18 restore that a few years ago.

19           And the Family Savings Account also in DCED.

20           And, of course, the SEA Program, the  
21 self-employment program in the Department of Labor.

22           These three programs, which promote economic  
23 development, have a proven track record.

24           Specifically, the Pennsylvania Community  
25 Development Bank has a program specifically for

1 revolving loan funds or CDFIs in Pennsylvania.

2 In the last 3 years alone, we have been able  
3 to provide over 500 loans equalling \$38 million for a  
4 small investment of \$2 million back in 2006 when you  
5 helped restore that.

6 One of the interesting things about this  
7 program for our organization is that it's a matching  
8 program. We get Federal dollars for a revolving loan  
9 fund, and they require a dollar-for-dollar match.

10 So we have been able to raise in our  
11 organization alone about \$10 million in the last  
12 couple of years, primarily because of this matching  
13 program at PCD Bank, the Pennsylvania Community  
14 Development Bank.

15 The second program I want to talk about is  
16 SEA, and this is a program that works with dislocated  
17 workers and provides them training so they can open  
18 up a new business.

19 In fact, you are going to hear from a  
20 business owner -- he is here -- and he has been able  
21 to grow his business into the millions of dollars  
22 just in the last couple of years.

23 This program has helped over 1,500 business  
24 owners and provided \$30 million in revenues to  
25 Pennsylvania.

1           Last year, the money was cut from \$3 million  
2 to a low of \$375,000. We are asking this program to  
3 be restored at the \$3 million level.

4           And the third and final program I want to  
5 talk about is the Family Savings Account, which is  
6 really interesting, because this is a program that  
7 teaches people how to save money so they can start a  
8 business.

9           You are going to hear from Marsha Cross in a  
10 few moments.

11           This program allows people to, of course,  
12 save money, and there's a dollar-for-dollar match at  
13 the Federal level on that money.

14           They have used the money for things such as  
15 buying a home, fixing up their home, buying a car to  
16 go to work, and, of course, to open up the business.  
17 And again, the Federal Government provides a million  
18 dollars to Pennsylvania, and it does require a  
19 match.

20           Now, last year it was funded at an \$850,000  
21 level, and what my concern is on this program, I have  
22 to say, is that we leave money on the table, that  
23 there is money there at the Federal level and we  
24 don't match it here in Pennsylvania, and the money  
25 doesn't go to people like Marsha Cross.

1           Again, there are really very few other  
2 private dollars that could be used for that  
3 program.

4           I think these three programs show that  
5 economic development can work. We can help people  
6 create jobs, expand the tax base where they live at.  
7 So we are asking you today to support the  
8 Pennsylvania Community Development Bank at a  
9 \$2.2 million level, restore the SEA Program at  
10 \$3 million, and also provide a match, a Federal  
11 match, for the Family Savings Account.

12           And I would like Marsha Cross to talk about  
13 how this FSA, or the Family Savings Account, worked  
14 for her, and then a few moments later we're going to  
15 hear from Clark Hammaker, and he is going to talk  
16 about how the SEA Program, or the training program  
17 for dislocated workers, helped him build his  
18 business.

19           So Marsha.

20           MS. CROSS: Thank you.

21           Good evening, Chairman Evans and honorable  
22 Members of the committee.

23           My name is Marsha Cross, and I'm in the  
24 Family Savings Account Program. Well, actually, I'm  
25 a graduate.

1           And I'm 50 years old, and I have four adult  
2 children and one teenager. I'm a grandmother of  
3 11 grandchildren.

4           And I would like to describe the program a  
5 little bit, how I got in the program.

6           I started -- I went to the Women's  
7 Opportunity Research Center, and I got in the program  
8 because I wanted to save money to do repairs on my  
9 home. I'm a first-time home buyer, and I saved  
10 \$1,476, and they matched what I had.

11           I used the money for home repairs. My  
12 carpet was torn downstairs. It was old and worn out,  
13 and I used the money to repair my floors from my  
14 family room almost to my garage, and I put ceramic  
15 tile down there.

16           Also, up in my living room, I didn't have  
17 any -- my sockets weren't working, so I used the rest  
18 of the money to purchase or to get electrical wiring  
19 done up there.

20           The other usage of the money, that I could  
21 have used the money for, was to open up a business or  
22 the closing of a home or my children's education or  
23 get a car for work.

24           I enrolled in a program -- I originally  
25 enrolled in the program in 1999, but I dropped out.

1 I wasn't committed. But I came back in the program  
2 in 2004. I saw an article in the paper about a woman  
3 that was in the same program I was, and she inspired  
4 me to get back in, and I was committed to this  
5 program.

6 The classes that I attended while I was in  
7 the Family Savings Program, you can come there every  
8 evening from 6 to 8, but I decided to do it on line.  
9 And I went to the library every day, just on my time,  
10 and I did the programs.

11 Each course that I completed, I had to check  
12 it off. It taught me how to save and manage my  
13 money, how to repair my credit and credit repairs,  
14 how to attend loans and grants conferences, and the  
15 insurance.

16 The skills I learned, it taught me  
17 discipline, how to save my money, and the importance  
18 of an emergency account.

19 Right now, I have like \$500; I saved that  
20 up. And I still save my change, and it helps me.

21 And I repaired my credit, so my credit is  
22 good.

23 Also, I taught my children the value of  
24 saving and the strategies that they have, like every  
25 dollar they break, if they would put it in a little

1 piggy bank, they could just save their money and it  
2 would be out of sight and out of mind.

3           Since I graduated from the program -- like I  
4 said, I'm still saving money -- I got involved with  
5 my church. So I'm a van driver. So I pick the  
6 members up at my church and take them and bring them  
7 to Sunday School.

8           I recently lost my job, but I'm trying to  
9 become an entrepreneur, so they do have classes for  
10 that. And I started in the travel business so that I  
11 can travel.

12           I just want to let you know the importance  
13 of the Family Savings Account Program, that it helped  
14 2,900 families, and I include myself, how we  
15 completed the program, and I ask that you would keep  
16 this program going.

17           Thank you for listening to me.

18           MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

19           MR. HAMMAKER: Hi. My name is  
20 Clark Hammaker. I am a co-owner of a company called  
21 Jemic Shielding Technology.

22           (Logo shown to stenographer.)

23           My partner's wife is a court stenographer,  
24 so I know what that word would have done to her.

25           I am what is typically classified as an

1 "AMPutee." I worked for AMP, Incorporated for almost  
2 19 years. When Tyco purchased AMP, my partner and I  
3 found ourselves laid off.

4 We stumbled accidentally across the SEA  
5 Program, and the SEA Program stands for  
6 "Self-Employment Assistance."

7 Both John and I are degreed engineers. We  
8 know how to do the engineering. We had a product  
9 line that we wanted to do, but the running of the  
10 business part was what we were lacking. Still to a  
11 degree lacking; we're engineers.

12 Attended the SEA Program; both of us did.  
13 This is 10 years now. Our primary product is  
14 electronic gaskets. It doesn't mean a whole lot to  
15 anybody.

16 Hollywood out at Penn National. We  
17 manufactured the gaskets for every one of those slot  
18 machines in that building.

19 We recently, 4 weeks ago, found ourselves in  
20 the White House consulting with the Secret Service.

21 We developed this product right here for the  
22 Department of Energy. These are pouches that are  
23 used for BlackBerries, cell phones, pagers, that  
24 block the transmission of the signal to and from the  
25 cell phones. Totally takes your BlackBerry off the

1 grid.

2 The Secret Service has a cabinet in their  
3 one room down there, the situation---

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Not to interrupt  
5 you, but my staff is begging for them.

6 MR. HAMMAKER: I have samples with me today  
7 if you would like some.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: They know they  
9 need not to have those, but go ahead.

10 MR. HAMMAKER: I have some samples with me.

11 But the Secret Service has a cabinet in the  
12 situation room that holds 50 cell phones that they  
13 need the signals blocked in those cell phones,  
14 obviously for security reasons.

15 We did not know -- my partner and I did not  
16 know we were going to end up there. It was a shock  
17 to us. And if you can't believe it, I still have  
18 troubling wrapping my head around it, that 10 years  
19 of working at this business that we would end up in  
20 the White House working on something like that.

21 My goal, obviously, is to represent the  
22 people who participate in SEA and let you know the  
23 benefits of a program like that for people who want  
24 to get started in a business who don't know how to do  
25 it, who know their portion of it.

1           If I could do anything when I walk out of  
2 here, when you hear "Hollywood," you are going to  
3 think of the SEA Program, because each and every one,  
4 again, those slot machines have our gaskets in them.

5           When you see the White House, when you think  
6 of -- we have pouches that hopefully we're going to  
7 have made that will have a nice emblem on here, and  
8 no name, because they don't want his name on there,  
9 just simply a number, 44. We were told we have to  
10 make 43 and 42 and 41 also for the rest of them.

11           When you see the President, when you hear of  
12 him talking about his BlackBerry, I'm hoping you  
13 think "I know somebody that makes a pouch for that,  
14 and he graduated from the SEA Program."

15           So that's what -- you know, we're on Cameron  
16 Street right across from River Rescue. If you want  
17 to stop in, you're welcome to stop in.

18           MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

19           REVEREND BEAUFILS: Good evening.

20           My name is Rev. Vladimir Beaufils, and I'm  
21 representing the Firm Foundation of PA, as well as  
22 I'm here to really represent the Harrisburg's Weed  
23 and Seed and ask the Chairman and the distinguished  
24 Members of the committee to really do whatever is  
25 feasible, possible, to turn around Senate Bill 850

1 and these draconian cuts. I mean, they're worse than  
2 that. I don't know what you can call them -- to just  
3 eliminate funding for something as important as you  
4 have heard today, prevention projects.

5 I would just like to ask a question, if  
6 anybody here on the panel or if the distinguished  
7 committee has been to a Weed and Seed site? We would  
8 certainly welcome you to come to Harrisburg's  
9 Weed and Seed site on Allison Hill and to see the  
10 good work for yourself that has been going on for  
11 several years now -- the tremendous outcomes, the  
12 lives that have been changed by the effort of  
13 Weed and Seed in our community.

14 You know, Weed and Seed really impacts a lot  
15 of what is typically called third-tier cities, of  
16 which there are several, you know, cities such as --  
17 third-class cities, excuse me -- like Erie, Scranton,  
18 Williamsport, Allentown, York, and of course here,  
19 the Capital City.

20 You know, here in the Capital City, right  
21 now we have a situation that is pretty desperate by  
22 way of security, by way of police officers.

23 Right now, we are down well over 20 police  
24 officers on the streets, that we need at least 20 to  
25 really be at the level that the mayor and everybody

1 else says that we should be at with the crime and  
2 everything else.

3           And so the funding for Weed and Seed and the  
4 programs and the activities that Weed and Seed are  
5 providing through that really limited amount of  
6 money, the miracles that are happening with  
7 organizations such as the Center for Champions and  
8 the Firm Foundation and so many -- the Joshua Group  
9 that are here behind me -- and so many others that  
10 are here represented. The miracles that they do with  
11 just a little bit of money is just amazing, the lives  
12 that are changed, that are represented here in this  
13 room.

14           You know, keeping the streets safe, reducing  
15 blight, reducing trash, reducing litter: Those are  
16 some of the focuses of the Weed and Seed Program here  
17 in Harrisburg. And it's so important that that  
18 happens here in our Capital City where we have all  
19 these issues that have just been really left to their  
20 own for so long.

21           The Capital City currently is at least, as I  
22 said, over 20 police officers short, and, you know,  
23 that's going to take at least, from what I'm  
24 understanding with the testing and everything that it  
25 takes to hire these police officers and get them on

1 the rolls, it is going to be at least another 2 to  
2 3 years before at least that many are on. And then  
3 to really get up and running, the old community  
4 policing again and the things that we know, the  
5 research shows, really make a difference in impacting  
6 neighborhood crime, and especially the drug dealers  
7 and so forth.

8 Weed and Seed funding is often the only  
9 funding that directly attacks drug sales outside of  
10 the limited amount that the police are able to do.

11 You know, what message are we sending to the  
12 citizens of these cities where Weed and Seed is going  
13 on, or all the other programs that have been  
14 mentioned here today, by eliminating the funding for  
15 these programs? We are saying we don't care about  
16 prevention. We are saying, you know, you taxpaying  
17 citizens, hey, you've got to fend for yourselves.

18 And what message are we sending the  
19 criminals?

20 You know, the ironic thing about Weed and  
21 Seed is that it's a program which is actually a  
22 process that was first proposed by a Republican  
23 Administration at the Federal level. I think that's  
24 a little ironic. And now they want to eliminate this  
25 highly successful program that they brought to bear

1 to begin with that had tremendous success.

2 I can understand cutting things that aren't  
3 working. I mean, that's frugal; that makes sense;  
4 that's, you know, a wise thing. But when something  
5 is working, when something is making a difference,  
6 when something is making a change, you know, we need  
7 to be more proactive as a society, as a government,  
8 here in our Commonwealth rather than reactive.

9 Right now, we are building three prisons as  
10 we speak, the enormous amount of money that goes into  
11 building three prisons. Right now, the DOC tells me  
12 that every bed is full at the State level -- the  
13 Department of Corrections.

14 I mean, there's an issue there; there's a  
15 problem there. And taking away the funding from  
16 Weed and Seed will only exacerbate that situation.

17 So it just seems to me that it makes all the  
18 sense in the world to keep prevention. Be proactive.  
19 Let's stop being so reactive as a society and trying  
20 to deal with issues after they have already done  
21 their damage.

22 I mean, we know, we have research-based  
23 methodologies, as was spoken of before, that work,  
24 that the outcomes are there. They are being proven  
25 every day.

1           There is a young man behind me. His name is  
2 Buddy. I would like to give him a chance just to  
3 share. But he's got his son, his 7-year-old son,  
4 Stewart, here.

5           Buddy. Would you stand, Buddy?

6           Buddy was homeless at 15, on the streets  
7 with no hope. Through Weed and Seed efforts, he is  
8 now a paraprofessional at the Harrisburg School  
9 District and a coach for baseball and football in his  
10 community and a custodial parent of his son --  
11 through the efforts and the funding of Weed and Seed.  
12 And there are hundreds of Buddys right here in  
13 Harrisburg, and that is what you want to cut, or the  
14 Senate through 850.

15           I just can't understand it. It just doesn't  
16 make any sense.

17           You know, a wise man once told me that the  
18 definition of insanity is doing the same thing but  
19 expecting different results. We've got to change  
20 some things because we're not, or we got to get some  
21 better results.

22           And going back to the draconian ways and  
23 eliminating prevention and eliminating all the things  
24 that we see are finally working and starting to make  
25 some significant change in our neighborhoods and in

1 our streets where the underserved and the populations  
2 that need it the most are, you know, that is going to  
3 be the measure of our society and the legacy we all  
4 leave behind.

5 Thank you for allowing me to share.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: One, I would like  
7 to thank all of you, one, for what you do every  
8 single day on the streets of the Commonwealth of  
9 Pennsylvania, in every neighborhood, every township,  
10 every borough, every county. I know it's not easy.

11 But the purpose of this hearing, or this  
12 conversation, I should call it, more than a hearing,  
13 is really for you to become very engaged.

14 I will say this one thing that 850 has done:  
15 It certainly has gotten the attention of an awful lot  
16 of people. And I promised myself I would stay here.  
17 As long as you wanted to be here, I would be here. I  
18 don't have anything else to do but just kind of hear  
19 what you have to say.

20 What we're going to do is the testimony that  
21 is being taken down will be shared with every Member  
22 in the House, Democrat and Republican. So I want to  
23 let you know that what is taken here, I want them to  
24 have a little focus as we move down the line about  
25 what you have said.

1           So I don't want you to think it is just lost  
2 here. Also, it's on public television. It's  
3 streamlined. We've done everything we can to make  
4 sure that the public itself outside this building is  
5 aware of this.

6           Again, I want to thank you. Thank you very  
7 much for your testimony.

8

9           (The hearing concluded at 7:20 p.m.)

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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.

5

6

7

Debra B. Miller, Reporter

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25