

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
MAJORITY CAUCUS ROOM
ROOM 140
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2009
7:23 P.M.

PRESENTATION ON SENATE BILL 850

PANEL 15 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

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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: What I would like
4 to do is get the next group. Come on up.

5 You have your whole Capitol to yourself.
6 This is your Capitol. You know that you all pay for
7 this. You know, you pay the bills for this Capitol,
8 so this is your building.

9 You can hang out in Tim's office and my
10 office, right, Tim? Matt Bradford is over there;
11 Kevin. You can hang out there.

12 Well, what we'll do is start with you and
13 then go around, and introduce yourself for the
14 purpose of the record.

15 MR. MOORE: Good evening. I'm George Moore,
16 the Executive Director of Community Progress Council,
17 the community action agency for York County,
18 Pennsylvania.

19 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay; sure.

20 Yes. Next?

21 MR. GLINSKY: Hello. My name is
22 Luka Glinsky. I'm a high schooler who will be
23 testifying.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

25 Yes?

1 MS. JACKSON: Good evening. My name is
2 Alicia Jackson, and I'm with Motivational Educational
3 Entertainment.

4 MS. YODER: Hi. I'm Alice Yoder. I'm the
5 Director of Community Health at Lancaster General
6 Hospital. I'm here to represent the Nurse Family
7 Partnership Program.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

9 MR. SCHWARTZ: I'm Ed Schwartz. I'm
10 President of the Institute for the Study of Civic
11 Values in Philadelphia.

12 MS. BELISARIO: Hi. I'm Mary Anne
13 Belisario, and I work for Autism Living and Working.

14 MS. SCHWENK: Hi. I'm Beth Schwenk. I'm a
15 parent of a student at the Scranton State School for
16 the Deaf.

17 MS. GRIFFIN STANTON: Good evening. My name
18 is Martha Griffin Stanton, and I'm an independent
19 artist living in central Pennsylvania.

20 MR. ASANTE: Good evening. I'm Kofi Asante.
21 I'm the Executive Director of the National
22 Comprehensive Center for Fathers and the Deputy
23 Director of the Development of Men's Programs for the
24 Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition.

25 Good to be here, and thank you.

1 MS. JAMES HOLDSWORTH: I'm Cassie James
2 Holdsworth. I'm Policy Director at Liberty
3 Resources, I'm Chair of the Community Living Advisory
4 Committee for the State, and most of all, I'm a
5 person with a disability who wants to remain in the
6 community and be free, and bill 850 threatens that.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay.

8 And the gentleman there?

9 MR. OLSEN (speaking through a
10 Voicing Assistant): Hi. I'm Gary Olsen. I'm an
11 Advocate for the Scranton State School for the Deaf
12 Alumni.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

14 One thing I would like to say before we
15 start, the way I have been trying to conduct this, as
16 you have been observing, is really like a
17 conversation -- and this is our second day -- and
18 really a discussion on short-term and long-term
19 strategies.

20 This kind of came together because of
21 Senate Bill 850 that came out of the Senate along
22 partisan lines. What I have been attempting to do is
23 not have things be so partisan.

24 It's pretty tough. I have been here for
25 29 years, and I have tried to have us focus on what

1 is most important to all Pennsylvanians, no matter if
2 they are Democrat, Republican, liberal, moderate,
3 Black, White, wherever you may be from.

4 I have tried to have that happen, and we
5 decided -- this is the first time this has ever been
6 done in my years of ever being here where we actually
7 had a hearing, a discussion, where we invited those
8 who, you know, pay the bills to come in and for you
9 to really give your input.

10 And it builds around SB 850. So we'll get
11 your reaction to that, but mainly, you know, we can
12 move from there.

13 So, Cassie, why don't we start with you.

14 MS. JAMES HOLDSWORTH: Thank you.

15 First of all, I want to thank the
16 Appropriations Committee and Representative
17 Dwight Evans for holding the hearing and giving the
18 taxpayers a chance to respond to this terrible
19 legislation, SB 850, proposing cuts in all the
20 important and human work -- the work we can all be
21 proud of.

22 My focus will be on home- and
23 community-based waivers and Act 150.

24 I am here as a taxpayer, mother, disabled
25 person, and user of Act 150. I am representing

1 myself and all the consumers at Liberty Resources,
2 Inc., an independent living center in Philadelphia.

3 Because of the State program, Act 150, I
4 receive attendant care. Due to this, I have saved
5 the government loads and loads of money.

6 Attendant care enables me to work full time,
7 raise my daughter, and enjoy a full life.

8 With attendant-care services, I get
9 assistance in dressing, getting in and out of bed. I
10 have a liver condition as well as being in a
11 wheelchair, so I experience good days and bad days.

12 On my bad days, my attendant helps me with
13 meals, get coffee, tea, water, and allows me to have
14 the bedrest I need and keep my house and clothes
15 clean.

16 Presently, I work as a Policy Director at
17 Liberty Resources. My job demands travel to
18 Harrisburg and Washington on a daily basis. This
19 would not be possible without the assistance of my
20 attendant.

21 She helps me pack and unpack, clean my
22 clothes, and assists me in getting my clothes put
23 away.

24 When my liver condition acts up and I need
25 total bedrest, she gives me the support by helping me

1 with all my daily activities, and I get the support
2 to regain my strength and get back to work as soon as
3 possible.

4 God blessed me with a miracle in my forties,
5 and I gave birth to a beautiful daughter, Danielle.
6 She is now 8. Attendant care allows me to keep a
7 house decently clean and allow her a normal life and
8 a place to bring her friends.

9 Without these services, I would not be able
10 to hold a full-time job. I would not have the
11 support to keep a decent home for my child. And with
12 my autoimmune hepatitis, I might even be at risk of
13 being forced into a nursing home for needed support.

14 I used to spend lots of time in the hospital
15 trying to do everything myself, but with the social
16 supports of attendant care, I have remained out of
17 the hospital for years.

18 I want to thank the Rendell Administration
19 for all the focus on rebalancing. The goal of moving
20 to 50/50 by 2011 is a huge goal to our community.

21 Many of us were involved in creating
22 Act 150. At one time, Act 150 was the only
23 attendant-care program in Pennsylvania.

24 As a disability activist, I fought for
25 almost 30 years for resources and services that would

1 allow my friends to get the hell out of those places
2 called nursing homes.

3 In the Ridge Administration, there were huge
4 waiting lists, people on the edge existing, some in
5 the community, some in nursing homes, literally
6 dying, in hopes of receiving services or in hopes of
7 receiving help so that they wouldn't be forced to
8 remain in nursing homes or end up in one.

9 I was 1 of the 50 activists that slept
10 across the street from the Capitol to get 800 people
11 off the attendant-care waiting list. During that
12 budget fight, we were offered some money to expand
13 our programs, but not enough to get services to those
14 who needed it, so we moved to Governor Ridge's
15 backyard.

16 Eventually we won, and we were able to get
17 all those people services, and we were starting to
18 make a decent dent on nursing-home transition with
19 the CSPPPD waiver.

20 This waiver originally was quite "medical
21 model," but we challenged the State and CMS to allow
22 consumers to hire, fire, and direct their own
23 attendant-care services.

24 I have seen people who have been
25 institutionalized almost their entire life come out

1 of these institutions and, in 2 years, become
2 contributing members of the community, giving back by
3 becoming peer counselors to help people come out of
4 nursing homes, doing specialized services for people
5 who are in nursing homes.

6 In fact, one of the Directors at Liberty
7 Resources who is in charge of the nursing-home
8 transition is herself someone who came out of a
9 nursing home under CSPPPD.

10 She is a young, beautiful, intelligent woman
11 using her tremendous skills to assist others in her
12 community to come out of nursing homes and teaching
13 service coordinators how to do this work. Wouldn't
14 it have been a terrible waste if she had never gotten
15 out of the nursing home?

16 Look at all she has done, all the people she
17 has helped. Every waiver in Pennsylvania is needed,
18 and without these services, people live their lives
19 dependent on others or incarcerated in nursing homes,
20 which are often worse than jail and even harder to
21 get out of.

22 How can the sponsors of SB 850 say they are
23 being adults? Do adults sentence people to cruel and
24 unusual punishment?

25 Look at the lack of care in nursing homes --

1 the bedsores, the malnutrition, the abuse stories.
2 All you have to do is check the CMS Website, and year
3 after year we give them more money and it never seems
4 to trickle down to change the life for the patient in
5 there.

6 The patients continue to be neglected. I
7 have friends with cerebral palsy that lost the
8 ability to speak in nursing homes because the staff
9 never took the time to talk to them or try to
10 understand what they were saying.

11 What really makes me angry is that this is
12 not about money. It might be about money that goes
13 into some people's pockets from the nursing-home
14 industry, but it is not about saving money.

15 Everyone in Pennsylvania knows by now that
16 it is cheaper on the aggregate to give people support
17 to remain in the community rather than nursing homes.

18 And even people with significant
19 disabilities and frail health who may cost more still
20 are better supported in the community and tend to
21 have better health and social outcomes living in the
22 community.

23 Would the sponsors of this bill like to go
24 live in a nursing home and try it if this is the
25 "adult" thing to do?

1 I talk to people every day who are so glad
2 to be free. They take nothing for granted: the right
3 to choose when you go to bed; the right to have the
4 TV on until 1 in the morning; the right to choose
5 your friends, have relationships, fall in love.
6 These things don't happen in nursing homes very
7 often. They are just not allowed.

8 Supporting people in the community is the
9 right thing to do. Yes, that's right, but it is also
10 the cost-effective thing to do.

11 The problem in Pennsylvania is that for
12 everyone we get out, someone else goes in. Aging and
13 disability is not tragic; it is what choices our
14 States make that can be tragic.

15 Are disabled people expected to run for
16 their lives and live in another State to remain
17 living in the community? Are families expected to
18 starve their other children, quit their jobs, live in
19 poverty, to take care of elderly and disabled family?
20 Is that what you consider "adult" behavior?

21 Getting rid of the Medicaid bias and
22 allowing more and more people attendant care and
23 supports in the community will not only save money,
24 but it will bring in more Federal dollars and create
25 more jobs in these difficult economic times.

1 Would the Republicans give up the stimulus
2 money that comes in for Medicaid this year and force
3 us to live in nursing homes to make some political
4 statement? Don't use us in this political game. We
5 are real people with real lives.

6 We could be your child, your mother, your
7 neighbor, your friend. I do not believe this is
8 adult behavior at all. I believe this is downright
9 cruel.

10 Do you really believe we don't need these
11 services? Do you really believe we can live without
12 them? Or do you just want to use us as cash cows and
13 get the nursing-home industry to pay for your next
14 campaign?

15 There are other options. We can create jobs
16 in the community. We can offer the elderly and
17 disabled real lives. We can allow them the right to
18 manage their services. Meanwhile, we can close beds
19 and change the nature of what these facilities do and
20 still bring money into Pennsylvania.

21 I know that Act 150, the program that
22 supports me, is most at risk because it is all State
23 dollars. But even talking about the expansion of the
24 waivers makes my skin crawl, to think that we would
25 leave people in nursing homes that don't want to be

1 there.

2 We know right now 200 names of people trying
3 to get out. We are getting extra enhancements
4 because of "money follow the person" in Medicaid
5 dollars.

6 I could write a book about the lives of
7 people that I know who have come out of nursing homes
8 and lived to tell the tales, and I say to you, if any
9 of these cuts take place for home- and
10 community-based services, I will move right across
11 the street again and I will fight. We will let the
12 taxpayers know that we get nothing for what we pay in
13 our taxes.

14 The Rendell Administration has worked hard
15 to start the rebalancing process, and I'm sure that
16 some of it has been to save money. This is not a
17 Democrat or Republican issue. This is a bipartisan
18 issue if ever there was one.

19 Any of us, regardless of income, race,
20 religion, can become disabled and need these
21 supports.

22 If we are lucky, we will all get old, and
23 most of us love the bits of life that we get to
24 control -- going to the movies, staying up late,
25 eating our favorite ice cream.

1 These simple choices are choices that I will
2 never take for granted, because I have met many
3 people, disabled and elderly, who have had these
4 choices stripped from them in the name of care.

5 I bet if I asked the sponsors of this bill
6 if they want to live in a nursing home, they would
7 say no. But they want to sentence many of
8 Pennsylvania's loved ones to a place where they can
9 only dream of simple pleasures.

10 Sorry that this is not the policy-wonk
11 testimony. This is from the heart of a person that
12 has gone in and out of nursing homes all of her life,
13 which have no resemblance to any home I have ever
14 lived in.

15 And even if you might believe in these
16 places, which some might, let's face it: They will
17 only become easy to manage when they become the last
18 resort.

19 Rendell's Administration is finally getting
20 to a point where they know how to do this. They know
21 how to do this rebalancing of the system. They are
22 creating lots of options and choices. Don't threaten
23 this progress for political gain or games.

24 Please, I beg you to continue these
25 rebalancing efforts. The baby boomers certainly are

1 not going to want to exist in a nursing home. Many
2 of them are you and me.

3 Disabled people want to work, pay taxes, and
4 give back to our society like we all do. This can
5 only happen if we offer services and supports to
6 people when they need them.

7 We have come so far in our civil rights
8 movement. Don't hurt the poorest of the poor because
9 of a system where you have to become impoverished to
10 get services.

11 A lot of the elderly and disabled people I
12 know are not as lucky as me as far as having a nice
13 income. They live on very minimum money, below
14 poverty levels. Elderly often live on very little,
15 even though they have worked most of their lives.
16 Despite this, they are just so happy to be able to
17 direct and manage their own support. They value each
18 day.

19 Young disabled people are volunteering and
20 going to school and trying to gain skills. They
21 dream of getting a job, and because of these
22 supports, they just might.

23 Please keep going forward and rebalancing.
24 Let's all do our best to get to the 50/50 goal. And
25 if there are any cuts to Act 150 or the waivers, you

1 will be seeing a lot of disabled people around these
2 halls, and someone might just be moving into this
3 neighborhood right across the street. It looks like
4 a great place to pitch a tent or at least set up a
5 sun chair.

6 Thank you for this opportunity to tell you
7 about the people who have been neglected and locked
8 behind walls -- out of sight, out of mind. Nursing
9 homes have become our poor houses.

10 I dream of a day when you will have to get a
11 waiver to get into the nursing home, of a day when
12 services and supports are just another consumer
13 resource like going to the market or renting an
14 apartment. We can all be included and free.

15 Thank you very much for this opportunity to
16 speak my mind and advocate for the community that I
17 am so lucky to be a part of.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. ASANTE: Good evening.

20 I would like to thank Chairman Evans and the
21 committee for this opportunity to speak about the
22 National Comprehensive Center for Fathers and the
23 work that we do and the demographics that we serve.

24 Again, my name is Kofi Asante. I'm the
25 Executive Director. And I'm here, of course, as many

1 are, in opposition of Senate Bill 850.

2 The men that we serve as a demographics have
3 been virtually ignored, and for the past 10 years, we
4 have been taking these men out of that abyss and
5 putting them into a light so that they can be
6 responsible for themselves and their children and be
7 responsible citizens.

8 The men that we serve come from halfway
9 houses, right out of the prison systems, some out of
10 drug and alcohol programs. Some are just dislocated
11 workers. Some are just uneducated, unemployed, and
12 virtually ignored. Most are African-American men.

13 The question of what to do with
14 African-American men that are in our urban areas is
15 something that is on the forefront of a lot of
16 people's minds.

17 Well, at the National Comprehensive Center
18 for Fathers, we have been addressing that issue to
19 the point of being able to employ them; to be able to
20 provide them with reconstruction in terms of their
21 spirit and who they are and how they develop
22 themselves to be responsible for themselves and their
23 children and their families; to the point where we
24 just were able to place our 1200th man in a job, the
25 average man making over \$10 an hour with benefits; to

1 the point in our Work 'N' Style program for men,
2 which is the first Work 'N' Style working wardrobe in
3 the tristate area. We just dressed our 6,000th man
4 that was either going to look for a job or going to
5 court.

6 It started in July with the restoration of
7 funds. We will be serving 350 men. We now serve 200
8 in our Fatherhood Initiative program. We want to be
9 able to do that, to serve these men that are TANF men
10 and that are Family Works eligible.

11 I sit here representing these fathers, the
12 hundreds of thousands of fathers that we've helped
13 for over the past 10 years.

14 This program was actually started by the
15 Ridge Administration in 1999, and here we are again.
16 And I have to think about what the gentleman said a
17 little while ago about here is a program that was
18 started by the Republican Party, and now here is an
19 act that is trying to be ended by the same entity.
20 It just doesn't make sense.

21 I'm glad to be here to be able to have a
22 voice or to be able to be an advocate for so many
23 fathers that we are now working with, to the point
24 where our replication project, our program is based
25 on a fraternity concept. It is Delta Alpha Delta

1 Sigma, DADS.

2 We now have chapters in Newark, New Jersey,
3 and in Camden, two of the worst urban cities in
4 New Jersey, and those programs are working --
5 providing jobs, providing opportunities, providing
6 change for this demographics of men.

7 And now we are here in Pennsylvania with the
8 opportunity to replicate in Norristown, Allentown,
9 Reading, Easton, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh. We
10 cannot do that if we do not have the proper funds to
11 be able to make that happen.

12 I'm here to be able today to say that we
13 need that support. We need the committees and the
14 great people that are in this room to make that
15 difference.

16 As I sit here, the men that I brought with
17 me, as an example, these gentlemen that are right
18 here, they belong to the Delta Alpha Delta Sigma.
19 Stand up, men.

20 You talk about rehabilitating. The
21 gentlemen that you see before you, some of them were
22 some of the worst menaces to society that you could
23 ever think about. You would not want to be caught in
24 the midnight hour looking in their face.

25 And they have paid a lot of their debt to

1 society, but now they found themselves in a program
2 that is being able to provide them with opportunity
3 such that -- thank you; you all may sit down now --
4 such that we have just partnered with Villa Nova
5 University. And they have just completed a
6 documentary, particularly on one of the men that is
7 sitting here -- his name is Robert Childs -- and how
8 the program turned his life around. It's called the
9 *Price of Life*. We are going to send you a copy so
10 you can see it. It's a fantastic piece, such that it
11 is being entered into the Sundance Film Festival and
12 is now being considered also in the "Documentary"
13 category of the Academy Awards. It's really that
14 good. And no bragging, just fact.

15 We do have five direct service areas that we
16 provide. That's our Fatherhood Initiative program,
17 our Delta Alpha Delta Sigma that really provides life
18 skills and educational advancement; our job
19 management specialists that do outreach and
20 recruitment, and have done it so well that they have
21 obtained two additional contracts for us, one with
22 the Department of Human Services and one with the
23 Bureau of Child Enforcement as an agent that goes out
24 and finds men that are not in compliance to whatever
25 the program is so they don't go back to jail.

1 We also have a mentoring program, the
2 3M Project, and we also have a legal services program
3 that gives the men an assessment of where they are in
4 traffic court, criminal court, and family court.

5 And we also have our Work 'N' Style for men,
6 the first working style wardrobe in the tristate
7 area. And we opened it just recently with a
8 three-chair barbershop and a tailor shop so we can
9 also earn income.

10 We are on the ground doing the work like so
11 many other people that are in this room, and we want
12 to be able to continue that work.

13 At the National Comprehensive Center for
14 Fathers, we have just developed a re-entry coalition
15 that is made up of faith-based organizations, the
16 Department of Corrections, Blueprint for a Safer
17 Philadelphia, where we are now having dialogue that
18 deals with something that a gentleman said earlier
19 about the three prisons that just were built.

20 You can't do anything that much about the
21 prisons that are going to be built, but for every
22 brick they put a dollar in, we'll put \$2 -- one for
23 prevention and one for re-entry. It's not a math
24 test; it makes sense. We want to be a part of what
25 makes change.

1 The National Comprehensive Center for
2 Fathers has a particular sensitivity to the people
3 with criminal records. They face a daunting array of
4 challenges while trying to become fully engaged
5 citizens after incarceration.

6 Unaffordable housing, no Federal finance
7 support, no driver's license, lack of drug and
8 alcohol treatment, no rights to vote, no access to
9 college loans: These challenges of ex-offenders
10 compromise everyone's safety and the well-being of
11 our communities.

12 State Legislatures and Congress have taken
13 action to facilitate the ability of ex-offenders to
14 live productive and law-abiding lives. They have
15 done their time, and now this Fatherhood program
16 provides them with assistance to navigate through the
17 services that are available with love and respect and
18 give them the confidence and direction they need.

19 Now, I would just like to take another few
20 minutes to be able to have -- Mr. Robert Childs,
21 would you stand up, please?

22 And, Robert, if you could just give a few
23 moments of your own testimony and why and what NCCF
24 has done for you and the travel, the path, that you
25 come from.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Can you use that
2 mike? If you stand over there, you can use that
3 microphone there.

4 MR. CHILDS: Thank you.

5 Just real briefly, I came through the
6 program in 2004. At the time, I was completely
7 without any hope. I pretty much had given up on
8 myself.

9 I wanted to do better, but I didn't really
10 know how to do better, you know. I kept running into
11 the same old, same old.

12 It was through a cousin of mine who went
13 through the program, who passed word to my mom that
14 the program helped him, maybe it can help me.

15 When I went through the program in 2004, the
16 rector there, you know, he asked me, he said, you
17 know, you're going through all that you're going
18 through; are you really comfortable with living like
19 that the rest of your life? And of course the answer
20 was no.

21 He said, if you aren't willing to live like
22 that the rest of your life, are you willing to trust
23 in us to allow us to guide you to live a better life?
24 And I was so in a complete state of desperation, I
25 was willing to do anything to change.

1 I was tired of causing harm. I was tired of
2 seeing the pain on my mother's face and my son and my
3 nieces and the shame and the guilt. I was just sick
4 of all of that.

5 Through this program, I have been working
6 now for 3 years straight. I haven't committed any
7 crimes or been re-arrested in over 5 years. I'm a
8 productive member of society. I'm paying bills --
9 just a sense of pride. My head is held up high. I
10 walk with a sense of purpose. I care about people.
11 I have a sympathy and empathy towards the people in
12 my community and people not in my community.

13 I'm tired of the pain and I'm tired of the
14 suffering. What is happening in my community is not
15 unique, but as I open my ears, I'm finding out that
16 these issues are national issues, crossing all racial
17 boundaries, economic status, education status.

18 This is America's issues, and I want to be
19 involved in trying to be a part of the solution now.
20 To cut funding to this program could make that
21 struggle difficult. But I'm so determined that
22 regardless of what happens, I'm going to stay on this
23 path.

24 And I just thank the National Comprehensive
25 Center for Fathers for the opportunity, because they

1 have given me back a life that I thought was beyond
2 my dreams. Like, you know, my two nieces -- I have a
3 6-year-old niece and a 3-year-old niece, and when I
4 come home from work, they both run to me, you know,
5 Uncle, Uncle, and they're just so happy to see me.

6 It wasn't always like that. I was a source
7 of shame, you know, and embarrassment for my family
8 for a lot of years, you know, and it was through this
9 program that I was able to get in touch with
10 accountability and own up to the part that I played.

11 I had to become responsible. I had to be
12 willing to make amends. I had to be willing to say
13 like, okay, I did this wrong; whatever punishment you
14 have for me to own up to this wrong, I'll do that.
15 But after that is over, would you be equally willing
16 to give me a shot to leave that wrong and that past
17 behind me?

18 And through the National Comprehensive
19 Center for Fathers, I have been able to obtain some
20 measure of that, you know, and for that I'm forever
21 grateful. I'm grateful for just being allowed to
22 come and speak here.

23 I have been getting a wonderful education
24 ever since I have been here. And I have been
25 listening to everyone's issues, you know, because

1 again, their issues I believe are my issues, and
2 whatever I can do to be a part of a solution for
3 anyone's issue is a solution for my issue.

4 I just want to thank you all.

5 MR. ASANTE: The National Comprehensive
6 Center's mission is to empower fathers and unite them
7 with their families by providing the resources for
8 fathers to become more socially and economically
9 responsible. Please continue to provide the
10 resources and support to help us do just that.

11 Thank you for your time.

12 MS. GRIFFIN STANTON: Good afternoon,
13 Chairman Evans. Or good evening, Chairman Evans --
14 this was written some time ago -- distinguished
15 Committee Members, and concerned citizens.

16 This was to be my 15 minutes of fame, but I
17 cut it back to 5 due to budgetary constraints.

18 My name is Martha Griffin Stanton. I'm a
19 self-employed, multidisciplinary artist and
20 specialties designer with a permanent psychiatric
21 disability. I have resided in central Pennsylvania
22 for the past 17 years.

23 I come before you today to lend my voice in
24 support of continuing State funding for the arts.
25 The zero funding currently being proposed placed many

1 organizations and the artists affiliated with them on
2 the critical list.

3 I realize in light of our current economy
4 that it's imperative to trim the fat wherever
5 possible. However, I challenge the notion that the
6 arts are a luxury item easily deleted from any budget
7 with impunity. I question the concept that a
8 cultural enrichment is a privilege reserved only for
9 those who can afford it.

10 I suggest an alternative viewpoint, one in
11 which a creative perspective offers both a mirror and
12 a portal for all humanity. From a simple
13 entertainment to a thought-provoking exchange, the
14 language of the arts is essential to our success as a
15 society.

16 Fortunately, I was brought up in an artistic
17 environment, attended a public school with a full
18 range of enrichment programs, and took advantage of
19 every creative opportunity available to me and my
20 community. I sang; I danced; I acted. I worked in
21 every conceivable artistic medium.

22 My father's family started the first paint
23 shop in this country, and so I divided my time
24 equally between a crew of old-world decorative
25 painters and my mother's lifelong passion, the

1 Parrish Art Museum.

2 I learned how to mix paint colors by eye and
3 to handle priceless works of art during exhibition
4 installations. Due to this incomparable childhood, I
5 was able to attend Vassar College for art history,
6 English, and fine art.

7 I subsequently transferred to the Fashion
8 Institute of Technology, where I polished off my
9 training with an applied science degree.

10 I have spent the last 45 years as a fine
11 artist, 40 years as a decorative painter and custom
12 fabricator, 30 years as an interior designer,
13 15 years as a sculptor, and 15 years in theatrical
14 design and production.

15 When my daughter, Emily, was born, I
16 discovered a tremendous need for art education
17 alternatives, as schools began to cut back on their
18 programming.

19 In 1965, most public schools provided a full
20 range of enrichment offerings. In 1995, such was not
21 the case in central Pennsylvania.

22 In order to give my daughter the same
23 educational experiences I had enjoyed as a child, I
24 had to seek out offerings in the private sector, an
25 option inaccessible to most.

1 So utilizing my own background and
2 resonating with the strong artistic traditions of
3 Pennsylvania, I designed art programs for both
4 children and adults which used recycled and found
5 objects and did not squander precious natural
6 resources.

7 Due to an almost nonexistent material cost,
8 these programs were universally accessible and have
9 been successfully implemented in schools, museums,
10 and theater settings.

11 Since relocating to Pennsylvania, in
12 addition to my work as a solo artist, I have had the
13 privilege of collaborating with a broad spectrum of
14 art organizations, including Gamut Classic Theater,
15 the Susquehanna Art Museum, the State Museum,
16 Harrisburg Opera, the Art Association of Harrisburg,
17 the Greater Harrisburg Arts Council, Open Stage,
18 Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts, WITF,
19 PA Historical Drama Society, the Hershey Area
20 Playhouse, and Little Theater of Mechanicsburg.

21 From the honor of this vantage point, I have
22 often been privy to the inner workings and thus may
23 state with absolute certainty that their ability to
24 provide their immeasurable contribution to society
25 depends upon the support of their government.

1 Artists are by nature public servants,
2 offering their gifts to the world. Cultural
3 organizations are part of a community's permanent
4 assets.

5 Creative pursuits demand perseverance and
6 determination in order to remain viable in an
7 ever-changing and evolving culture. I believe that
8 these are qualities which we would all do well to
9 emulate.

10 I offer this up as an example of creative
11 thinking used to address a societal need. I propose
12 the notion that we are a nation of creative thinkers.
13 Two hundred and fifty years ago, our forefathers
14 forged a new world out of a wilderness.

15 On the front page of Tuesday's New York
16 Times, First Lady Michelle Obama described the
17 nation's creative spirit as "critical to its ideals
18 and its identity." Mrs. Obama said the arts need to
19 be nurtured during difficult economic times, for the
20 arts define who we are as a people.

21 At the reopening of the American wing at the
22 Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City,
23 Mrs. Obama stated, "My husband and I believe strongly
24 that arts education is essential for building
25 innovative thinkers who will be our nation's leaders

1 of tomorrow. The President and I want to ensure that
2 all children have access to great works of art."

3 "This is your place, too," she told the children.

4 I chose to live in central Pennsylvania,
5 trusting in the support of my community and my
6 government despite evidence to the contrary.

7 For example, in 1996, the mental health wing
8 of Polyclinic Hospital had a completely stocked and
9 staffed art therapy room.

10 In 2006, there was a staff-supplied art
11 closet. Patients' families provided their own
12 recreational items for the common room, where I, as a
13 fellow patient, held impromptu art classes using my
14 own materials.

15 I shudder to imagine what a future visit
16 might entail if government funding of the arts, not
17 to mention mental health, becomes extinct.

18 Surely the cost comparable to one CEO's
19 office renovation is a small price to pay for the
20 value received.

21 I have borne more than my fair share of the
22 expense for wanting better for myself and my family.
23 Over the past 30 years, I have provided thousands of
24 dollars in goods and services at a fraction of their
25 true cost.

1 When there was no budget for my endeavors, I
2 volunteered my time and skills. I am proof that
3 investment in cultural enrichment pays off a
4 thousandfold.

5 On a larger scale, in Philadelphia, each art
6 dollar invested by local government yields \$5 in tax
7 revenue, \$185 million in hotel, and \$250 million in
8 restaurant receipts.

9 Typically, programming is delivered at a
10 fraction of the true cost, with 43 percent of
11 admissions to arts organizations free to the public.

12 Furthermore, the public sector is doing its
13 part with level or increased attendance and
14 donations.

15 In closing, I humbly request that funding
16 for the arts be restored to PA's proposed budget. It
17 seems a small price to pay when one stops to consider
18 the alternative.

19 I earnestly believe that the contribution
20 made by artists to the world is incalculable and the
21 cost of their support truly negligible in the grand
22 scheme of things.

23 Funding for the arts is seed money towards a
24 brighter future here in Pennsylvania. Art
25 organizations create permanent infrastructure, and as

1 such, are not easily transportable to a more
2 favorable environment, unlike other ventures.

3 A nation sound in its currency is its
4 children. Our quality of life determines their's.
5 We sow the seeds of their future. Art provides a
6 lighthouse beacon illuminating our place in history.
7 Please keep the light on for them to steer by.

8 Thank you for your consideration.

9 MS. SCHWENK: Hi. My name is Beth Schwenk.
10 This is my son, Robert.

11 Robert is 17 and has been attending the
12 Scranton State School for the Deaf, or SSSD, for
13 3 years.

14 His previous education was at a
15 State-approved private school for the deaf, similar
16 to WPSD. This type of education failed my son
17 miserably. We felt that this private school was more
18 interested in the amount of money our son brought to
19 them than the value of his education. Many of their
20 teachers were fresh out of college and did not have
21 the experience of the seasoned employees at SSSD.

22 In addition to the teachers, SSSD employs
23 highly trained staff 24 hours a day for their dorm
24 program. This group of individuals not only cares
25 for our children in the dorm but also takes them into

1 the community and teaches them how to communicate in
2 a hearing world.

3 This is a lesson that many hearing parents
4 can't have the knowledge or the skills to teach their
5 children.

6 My sources who know someone that contacted
7 WPSD about the dorm positions was told they were
8 paying \$7.50 an hour. My daughter works at a grocery
9 store and gets paid more than that.

10 And they were also told that the dorm staff
11 positions were a temporary position. This is in the
12 transition plan.

13 We, like many other parents, fought to get
14 our son into SSSD over a period of 2 years and
15 finally succeeded. Since he began at SSSD, he's a
16 different child.

17 He's currently in the special unit due to
18 his much delayed level of learning. In reviewing all
19 of the information I could find on the transition
20 plan and searching the WPSD Website, I have not found
21 one mention of a similar program.

22 The only program similar is their life
23 skills program, and we have heard from a WPSD alumni
24 that these children are prevented from freely
25 interacting with the other students, thus eliminating

1 another opportunity for them to learn by example.

2 None of the information has been sent to us
3 by the PA Department of Education, who is
4 orchestrating this transition.

5 Another important program which is provided
6 by SSSD is the early intervention program. In all
7 the information I have gathered, I have been unable
8 to find even one mention of this valuable program.
9 What is to happen to all of these children and their
10 families?

11 According to the various news reports, the
12 plan is to transfer the high school from Scranton to
13 Pittsburgh. This would require my son to be on a bus
14 for over 5 hours each way.

15 No mention has been made of bathroom breaks,
16 lunch, or dinner breaks, but we have heard WPSD
17 bragging about the \$20,000 finish that they just
18 placed on their charter bus. I would rather see my
19 tax dollars and any other funds received by a school
20 be used to educate my child. What about you?

21 Robert would only be home and awake for
22 14 hours a week, during which time we need to wash
23 his clothes, schedule doctor's appointments, blood
24 tests, and any other necessary activities that can't
25 be done during his time at school. Have you ever

1 tried to get a doctor's appointment on a Saturday?

2 All throughout our children's education, we
3 have attended IEP meetings, open houses, parent
4 conferences, awards ceremonies, sporting events, and
5 many other similar programs as we were able. I
6 cannot envisioning this happening as often if he is
7 300 miles away.

8 The trip to WPSD will take us over 5 hours
9 to reach the school for our annual IEP meeting, which
10 usually takes 2 hours to review, then another 5-hour
11 drive home. This is a 12-hour day, not including
12 times for meals.

13 Then there is the cost factor. With the
14 cost of gas being \$2 to \$3 a gallon, it would cost
15 approximately \$60 for this trip -- 600 miles divided
16 by 25 miles per gallon times \$2.50, just for gas. I
17 doubt if we would be able to accomplish this trip
18 more than one or two times a year.

19 I want to be the first to say today, I'm not
20 asking you for more money. I am asking you to save
21 the taxpayers money.

22 The cost to send a child to SSSD per
23 residential student is \$14,533.21 to the sending
24 school districts. Using the current information
25 available, the cost to send a child to WPSD per

1 residential student is \$39,967.67 to the sending
2 school districts. This is an increase of 275 percent
3 to the local school districts per child.

4 If the child is currently a day student at
5 SSSD, the cost is \$9,000. If they close the
6 high school and force these children to go to the
7 dorm program in Pittsburgh, that cost now increased
8 440 percent per child to that school district.

9 Where will this money come? Of course, the
10 local taxpayers will pay for this decision for many
11 years.

12 Per Richard Rabuck -- I may have his name
13 wrong; he spoke here earlier -- he said the school
14 districts will receive a 3.1-percent increase from
15 the State. Where will the rest of that money come
16 from?

17 Another alternative we were being given our
18 children is mainstreaming. Many children in SSSD
19 come from failed attempts at mainstreaming.

20 A deaf student cannot watch an interpreter
21 and a speaker in a mainstream classroom. A deaf
22 student cannot read and transfer notes from the board
23 if they are watching the interpreter. Hearing
24 students in the classroom will be distracted by the
25 hand movements of the interpreter.

1 All of these will create an atmosphere of
2 distraction for all of the students and the teachers.

3 And if the interpreter doesn't show up, my
4 child would have no education for that day. The cost
5 to employ an interpreter is anywhere from \$40,000 to
6 \$60,000 per student per year. Again, this is an
7 increase of over 660 percent as a cost to the local
8 school districts.

9 The final alternative for the best
10 appropriate education of our children is to send them
11 to a school out of State. This solution will mean
12 our local PA taxpayers' hard-earned dollars are being
13 sent to another State.

14 We are not talking about 18-year-old college
15 students but 14- to 18-year-old high school students.
16 This is a time in their lives when they need parent
17 guidance the most, as the decisions they make now can
18 result in their lives forever being changed.

19 Don't allow this guidance to be provided by
20 their peers or other influences that do not reflect
21 their family values.

22 I thought this was only a proposal. WPSD
23 and the PA Department of Education are acting as if
24 this is a done deal. They have set up offices in a
25 connecting suburb of Scranton and have begun

1 contacting parents for meetings. Apparently your
2 vote doesn't count any more than mine.

3 This is not a decision that we as parents
4 have taken lightly. Many of us fought long and hard
5 to get our children where they are today and refuse
6 to allow anyone to make that decision for us.

7 To expect us to stand idly by when given
8 notice in February that our children's education is
9 being put at risk by the very organization which is
10 being given the responsibility of ensuring our
11 child's education is the best, no one asked us what
12 should be done. No one asked the students their
13 opinion. No one asked the staff for their input.
14 This decision was made without any consideration to
15 us at all.

16 Please reinstate the funding for the
17 Scranton State School for the Deaf and allow us time
18 to come up with an alternative plan that ensures our
19 child's and any other future deaf child's education
20 continues in Scranton as it has for the past
21 129 years.

22 Thank you.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

24 MS. BELISARIO: Good evening.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Good evening.

1 MS. BELISARIO: My name is Mary Anne
2 Belisario. I work for Autism Living and Working, but
3 more importantly, I am the mother of three boys.

4 My oldest son, Andrew, is 17 years old.
5 Andrew has autism, and he was born without eyes. He
6 also has mental retardation.

7 At 17 years old, Andrew can't talk, so I am
8 here speaking for him.

9 Andrew can be very calm at times, and at
10 other times he can have very difficult behaviors, to
11 say the least.

12 Andrew is blind and not totally toilet
13 trained. Sometimes he will take his clothes off in
14 public places. He jumps and screams and flaps his
15 hands. Of course, he cannot be left alone.

16 Although it has been difficult as a single
17 working mom, I have been able to keep Andrew living
18 at home with myself and his two brothers, as any
19 adolescent should be. I have only been able to do
20 this because of the supports he receives.

21 Andrew goes to school, and he also has staff
22 that comes to our home who help with his care.

23 Believe it or not, Andrew is one of the
24 lucky people with disabilities in Pennsylvania.
25 There are over 4,500 Pennsylvania residents with

1 mental retardation waiting to receive the services
2 they so desperately need.

3 Senate Bill 850 is proposing enormous cuts
4 in funding for people with disabilities. Senate Bill
5 850 would eliminate the emergency waiting list
6 initiative that would have provided services under
7 the consolidated waiver to nearly 800 new people next
8 year and cut an additional 550 people who are
9 currently receiving services, people like my son,
10 Andrew.

11 This bill is profoundly wasteful. It is
12 tossing away the last 5 years of work that was
13 started by Estelle Richman, the Secretary of Public
14 Welfare, and the Autism Task Force.

15 Pennsylvania has recently created and funded
16 programs designed specifically to benefit our
17 citizens with autism.

18 Pennsylvania will have 20,000 adults with
19 autism hitting the Pennsylvania service system in
20 the next 8 years. One of those people is my son,
21 Andrew.

22 Senate Bill 850 would cut over \$15 million
23 in State and Federal funding that would eliminate
24 services for up to 50 percent of the individuals with
25 autism who were about to begin receiving services.

1 If services are cut, it will isolate and put
2 even more stress on parents who are already very
3 thinly stretched.

4 These people in need of services will not
5 just go away. They will utilize services that are
6 more costly and less effective, like institutions or
7 nursing homes, which will cost the State much more
8 money.

9 Parents will have to give up jobs to care
10 for their loved ones, which would also cost the State
11 tax revenue.

12 The quality of life of people with
13 disabilities will be profoundly affected if this bill
14 is passed. The quality of life for people without
15 disabilities will be profoundly affected if this bill
16 is passed.

17 Having people with disabilities in our
18 communities is good for all people and gives all of
19 us a richer experience.

20 Andrew is a person who is a part of a
21 family. Andrew and our family should not be
22 dependent on a line item on a budget. This is our
23 moral obligation to help people in our community who
24 are most vulnerable.

25 Please help me keep Andrew living at home

1 where he should be.

2 Thank you for your consideration.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

4 MR. SCHWARTZ: The Institute for the Study
5 of Civic Values that I had, we created in the early
6 1970s in Philadelphia as an combination think-tank,
7 organizing center, and in many cases, program
8 deliverer, with the goal of strengthening
9 communities, promoting economic opportunity, and
10 helping citizens gain influence with government. We
11 were that then; we are that now.

12 Along the way, my own personal history
13 relevant to what I want to discuss with you today is
14 that I served on the City Council of Philadelphia
15 during the period of time when the Reagan budget cuts
16 were decimating our budget; sat there as \$43 million
17 in revenue-sharing went poof; when millions of
18 dollars were taken away from housing and job training
19 and whatever; when the concept of the homeless
20 emerged as not just a concept but thousands of people
21 lying in the streets.

22 Four years later, I was Director of Housing
23 and Community Development, and at that point the city
24 of Philadelphia itself was going under, as some of
25 you who have been around for awhile may recall.

1 But 6 years ago, under somewhat better
2 economic circumstances, I chaired Philadelphia's
3 Tax Reform Commission, which presided over and
4 created the most ambitious tax reduction program that
5 I believe not only Philadelphia has ever experienced
6 but I suspect most cities in the United States.

7 So what I'm saying to you here is that while
8 I certainly have a deep commitment to public-sector
9 investment in the community, whatever the
10 circumstance, I like to look at the economic
11 consequences of what is unfolding here.

12 And I knew quite well, before coming to
13 Harrisburg for this, that we would all hear a day of
14 people discussing the devastating impact of the cuts
15 that are represented in Senate Bill 850. But I want
16 to talk about the money, the revenue, the other side
17 of the issue that you have to address that will
18 determine whether you can deal with any of the things
19 that you've heard today.

20 And what makes the cutbacks in this bill
21 really puzzling to me is this strange theory of
22 public revenue that Senator Pileggi uses to justify
23 it. I took the trouble to listen to his speech that
24 he made in connection with this bill.

25 And in that speech he says the following,

1 that the only proper way to finance increased public
2 spending is to raise taxes to support it.

3 If the Governor later, he says, wants to
4 raise taxes by hundreds of millions of dollars or
5 even billions of dollars to pay for increased
6 governmental spending, he should say so honestly and
7 directly. He should identify which taxes he wants to
8 increase, and he should do so now, not later. Where
9 does this argument come from?

10 In 2007, when George Bush was President, the
11 households and communities of Pennsylvania received
12 more than \$117 billion in support from the Federal
13 Government, according to the Consolidated Federal
14 Funds Report that the Census Bureau keeps and shows
15 you in fact how much money is being spent on
16 everything that moves, in not only the State but in
17 counties throughout the country.

18 Delaware County, for example, which Senator
19 Pileggi represents, received \$6.6 billion from the
20 Federal Government. And \$2.2 billion of that was
21 military procurement contracts, and we all know that
22 if a military base is threatened with closure at any
23 point, every elected official for 300 miles around
24 will show up with the full understanding, not just
25 that this is a matter of waving a flag; this is a

1 matter of saving the local economy a devastating
2 disinvestment that will throw hundreds of people out
3 of work.

4 Suddenly, people who say that public money
5 doesn't have anything to do with economic success are
6 rallying precisely around a major project that
7 depends upon public money, and that creates economic
8 success.

9 And is the Senator therefore suggesting that
10 this \$6 billion should be returned to Washington?

11 I have a fondness for Lancaster. I play
12 jazz and I eat a lot at something called the Reading
13 Terminal Market, and as you undoubtedly know, from
14 Wednesday to Saturday the merchants from Lancaster
15 come into Philadelphia and I gain weight.

16 So I took a look; Lancaster received
17 \$2.7 billion in Federal funding -- \$2.7 billion. It
18 covers all those people who take Medicare, Medicaid,
19 Social Security -- all of that. You want to take
20 that away from them? What would happen to Lancaster
21 if we decided to take all of the \$2.7 billion and
22 send it back to Washington and perhaps redistribute
23 it in the form of tax incentives?

24 I think we would recognize that this would
25 be economic devastation.

1 So we have to start with the assumption that
2 the only way to raise money for the State or our
3 communities is not simply raising taxes, and
4 Rendell's budget reflects that position.

5 First, it uses \$728 million from the Federal
6 stimulus to increase Pennsylvania's support for basic
7 education, precisely what the Obama Administration
8 intended.

9 It uses \$750 million in Rainy Day funds to
10 make up for lost tax revenues in this difficult
11 economic period.

12 And the Rendell budget does propose a few
13 tax increases: a 10-cent increase in the cigarette
14 tax, a tax on cigars, and a severance tax on natural
15 gas. That is the major source of revenue that
16 buttresses the entire Rendell budget, not some
17 massive tax increase that it would sound like from
18 the way in which it has been characterized.

19 But Senator Pileggi rejects these three ways
20 of raising revenue. He proposes to use increased
21 Federal support for education this year to bring the
22 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's support for education
23 back to 2005-2006 levels. Isn't this using Federal
24 funds as an important source of revenue for the
25 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to replace State taxes?

1 If we are only supposed to use taxes to
2 raise revenues, why not return the money to
3 Washington in line with what a number of Southern
4 Governors got a lot of attention for proposing.

5 Here again, I return to some districts here.
6 I have my computer around and I know where these
7 databases are. So in the Lehigh Valley, I talked to
8 Representative -- the Representative of Berks County
9 there. He---

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Reichley.

11 MR. SCHWARTZ: I'm sorry?

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Representative
13 Reichley.

14 MR. SCHWARTZ: Reichley. Thank you,
15 Senator, or House Representative -- Dwight.

16 He was out in front of Emmaus High School.
17 It's a school in his district -- a terrific school.

18 Now, if you look at the formula for the
19 distribution of stimulus money, Emmaus High School is
20 supposed to get \$929,829 in new stimulus money.

21 Now, if we use that stimulus money simply to
22 replace the existing basic education, then we have to
23 go to that school and say, gee, we're sorry; that
24 amount that is on there now, that \$929,829, you can't
25 have that. We're taking that back. We can't afford

1 to give that to you.

2 Your Website offers -- very, commendably --
3 a complete breakdown of the school subsidies for the
4 previous fiscal year for the people who live in your
5 district. They can see exactly how much they are
6 getting, which I believe it is yours.

7 So I checked that out, too, again, for the
8 entire Lancaster County -- \$2,702,493. That is just
9 the basic education subsidy that the stimulus package
10 provides.

11 Now, under the bill that we are talking
12 about today, bye, that is gone. We take that away
13 from you. We can't afford it. We need to use it
14 just to replace the money that you already are
15 getting.

16 Precisely the opposite of what was intended
17 by the Congress when it insisted, in fact, that
18 States not get just general money, that it could use
19 it as it sees fit.

20 That was a version of the stimulus package
21 that existed in the House. It disappeared in
22 conference, and it specified that 75 percent of this
23 money was supposed to go to local school districts.

24 And the idea was to fulfill the Obama
25 Administration's mission of improving public

1 education and not using this money simply to replace
2 the existing dollars.

3 In some cases, there are States in such
4 economic trouble that their demand for cutbacks might
5 force them to cut local school districts. So this
6 money was also to be used to prevent that. But
7 that's a State like California, which is going
8 totally bankrupt, so this money protects it.

9 We are not going totally bankrupt. This
10 money should be used as the Rendell Administration
11 says it should be used, to increase public investment
12 in education, if we hope in fact to be consistent
13 with what the Federal bill allows.

14 Now, we also have this Rainy Day Fund here,
15 and there's no question at all that the Rendell
16 budget uses a lot of money. Not all; it is still
17 \$125 million left at the end of it, but a lot of it
18 is used to deal with the revenue shortfall that we
19 face right now.

20 Now, I don't know exactly what is more
21 justified than using the Rainy Day Fund than being in
22 a recession that is characterized as the worst
23 economic slowdown since the Depression.

24 So if you think in fact there is some other
25 thing that is supposed to happen here that would

1 justify the Rainy Day Fund that we need to be
2 concerned about, I really want to know what that
3 is.

4 I know Vice President Cheney is talking a
5 lot about a terrorist attack. Is that what's on
6 people's minds?

7 Because as Robert Inman, the economist who,
8 again, helped our Tax Reform Commission, said just
9 recently, a Rainy Day Fund is specifically for this
10 moment, to be used in points where revenues in fact
11 are difficult to raise because of the economic
12 circumstances, and it levies the playing field. And
13 it contributes to the investment that public-sector
14 spending creates in our communities and our State and
15 thereby speeds up the process of beginning to collect
16 revenues again.

17 And finally, Senator Pileggi rejects the
18 modest tax increases -- and they are modest -- on
19 cigarettes and cigars proposed by the Rendell
20 Administration. He says those are outright
21 unacceptable.

22 Well, you know, I'm sure that that Senator
23 and a number of other people would in a heartbeat see
24 to it that somebody who is caught with a few ounces
25 of marijuana got placed in a jail, because that's

1 dangerous for your health. So what is wrong exactly
2 with making it more expensive to smoke when smoking
3 kills about 600,000 people every year?

4 The \$97 million raised from the two taxes
5 that I just talked about would pay for just about
6 every cutback in health services that in fact would
7 be necessary under Senate Bill 850.

8 So Senator Pileggi tells us that we should
9 not use Federal stimulus money to increase support
10 for education. We should not use the Rainy Day Fund
11 to help finance economic development. We should not
12 use a higher tax on cigarettes and cigars to provide
13 support for health programs. That's the way you
14 could see it.

15 Instead, we should remove millions and
16 millions of dollars from Pennsylvania's communities
17 and from all of the programs that you've heard
18 described from this morning till now.

19 Is that really the choice that we want to
20 make? Is that going to benefit the economic life of
21 this city and this Commonwealth?

22 There is a serious underlying argument to
23 this, and I want to acknowledge that I know. And it
24 is not simply shared by Senator Pileggi; it's a
25 concern on all sides, and that is the concern that

1 goes something like, what happens when the stimulus
2 money disappears?

3 I know people in the Rendell Administration
4 are struggling over some budgets, desperate not to
5 take too much advantage of this so-called one-shot
6 funding, because it is going to go away and then
7 where will we be. And I think the serious component
8 of Senator Pileggi's argument might in fact revolve
9 around this.

10 Well, I spent a lot of time looking at the
11 Federal budget. It's an unhealthy habit I've
12 developed, so I really do follow it a lot.

13 And one of the things that President Obama
14 made very clear and was criticized for is that this
15 so-called stimulus package is not a one-shot
16 proposition. It is the beginning of an economic
17 recovery strategy. It lays the foundation of it.

18 And when you looked at his first issuance of
19 next year's Federal budget, all through it he refers
20 to the stimulus package as being the first step and
21 here's what we're going to do next. And now that the
22 budget is more fully presented, you can even see over
23 the 5-year plan that he is proposing what he intends.

24 And there are very clear increases, not
25 decreases. The money doesn't disappear. One of the

1 big ones is education. This is a central priority of
2 this National Administration.

3 It is also a priority shared by both the
4 Senate and the House budget committees, which
5 explicitly said that they were endorsing the Obama
6 Administration's proposals for education and early
7 childhood education, all of the kinds of things that
8 are central in fact to what we're discussing now.
9 That's not going down. That's not going to
10 disappear. That's going up -- significantly.

11 And so taking advantage of these resources
12 now is not in fact a prelude to suddenly losing them
13 altogether 3 years from now because the Federal
14 Government has withdrawn its support.

15 And the other much larger area of
16 expenditure -- Medicare/Medicaid -- they are huge.
17 Education really is not that big a portion of the
18 Federal budget. I mean, it's what? 3 months in Iraq.
19 That's what that is -- 4 months in Iraq.

20 Medicare/Medicaid are obviously very
21 different animals, but that is why we have an
22 enormous national debate now over national health
23 insurance.

24 Now, we will have either that kind of plan,
25 in which case all of the existing medical insurance

1 programs of the Federal Government are going to in
2 fact be altered and shaped around it, or if it can't
3 get through, can anyone seriously imagine this,
4 frankly, Democratic President pulling back on
5 Medicaid and Medicare if he hasn't been able to get
6 national health insurance?

7 So I think that in fact you can look forward
8 to this as a strategy for economic recovery, and
9 every one of you who has stood before a business or a
10 school or something and pointed out what a terrific
11 benefit it is to be part of that invention and
12 endeavor should see that as the example of what the
13 larger budget that the Rendell Administration is
14 proposing represents and why bill 850 should be
15 rejected by the House and abandoned as a source of
16 anything having to do with public policy in this
17 Commonwealth.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. YODER: Good evening, Chairman Evans and
20 the House Appropriations Committee Members. Thank
21 you for the opportunity to testify this evening.

22 My name is Alice Yoder. I'm the Director
23 of Community Health at Lancaster General Hospital,
24 and I'm here today to speak on behalf of the
25 Nurse Family Partnership Program and the impact that

1 Senate Bill 850 would have on the implementation of
2 current services to Pennsylvania's newest and most
3 at-risk mothers.

4 The Nurse Family Partnership Program is a
5 national evidence-based nurse home-visitation program
6 that improves the health, well-being, and economic
7 self-sufficiency of first-time, low-income parents
8 and their children.

9 The program has demonstrated numerous
10 improvements in short- and long-term medical, social,
11 and educational benefits. It also has been
12 identified as the most cost-effective program of its
13 kind by the Washington State Institute for Public
14 Policy.

15 The Nurse Family Partnership model is
16 designed to help families achieve three major goals.
17 One is to improve pregnancy outcomes; the second,
18 improve child health and development; and third,
19 improve parents' economic self-sufficiency.

20 By achieving these programs' objectives,
21 many of the major risks for poor health and social
22 outcomes can be significantly reduced.

23 Nurse Family Partnership was implemented for
24 replication and public investment only after it was
25 rigorously tested in a total of three randomized

1 control trials, the type of research conducted by
2 the Federal Drug Administration to test new
3 medications.

4 In each research demonstration, the program
5 proved to be effective. Attached to my testimony is
6 a document that you should have, which I asked to be
7 included in the record, entitled *Evidentiary*
8 *Foundations of Nurse-Family Partnership*, which
9 provides a detailed list of the program outcomes,
10 including 39 fewer injuries among children and
11 a 48-percent reduction in child abuse and neglect.

12 Few social programs have been so rigorously
13 researched. It is 1 of only 11 Blueprints for
14 Violence Prevention programs nationwide that meets
15 the highest standards of efficacy for reducing
16 adolescent violent crime, delinquency, and substance
17 abuse.

18 The powerful program outcomes has also
19 earned the distinction of being named an "exemplary"
20 program by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and
21 Delinquency Prevention and a "social program that
22 works" by the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy.

23 Nurse Family Partnership currently serves
24 approximately 18,000 families in 28 States and has
25 served over 12,000 families in Pennsylvania since its

1 inception in February of 2000.

2 As a statewide initiative, Pennsylvania's
3 Nurse Family Partnership Program is implemented by
4 25 agencies serving 40 of the Commonwealth's
5 67 counties.

6 In March of 2008, the Prevention Research
7 Center at Penn State University released a report
8 entitled *The Economic Return on the Pennsylvania*
9 *Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Investment in*
10 *Research-Based Programs: A Cost-Benefit Assessment of*
11 *Delinquency Prevention in Pennsylvania.*

12 The report examines the commission's
13 investment in evidence-based programs and cost
14 savings the programs provide to the Commonwealth and
15 its taxpayers.

16 Using cost-effectiveness figures based on
17 well established and conservative economic analyses,
18 the report concludes that for each dollar invested in
19 the Nurse Family Partnership Program, the statewide
20 economic benefit is \$3.59.

21 The report states that 25 Nurse Family
22 Partnership Programs statewide, serving 3,200
23 families, represents a total potential economic
24 benefit above and beyond the initial investment of
25 nearly \$120 million.

1 Beginning in fiscal year 2009-2010, two
2 Federal funding streams that have supported
3 Nurse Family Partnership over the last 9 years will
4 no longer be available to the program.

5 The budget proposed by the Governor
6 anticipated this reduction and increased State
7 spending to compensate for this loss. Unfortunately,
8 Senate Bill 850 does not compensate for the lost
9 Federal funding, which translates into a \$3.8 million
10 cut in program funding.

11 This reduction would translate into a
12 devastating loss of services for approximately
13 850 at-risk families, as much as one-third of
14 Pennsylvania's initiative.

15 While I understand the tremendously
16 difficult economic climate we face, I strongly
17 believe that the Nurse Family Partnership Program,
18 which has a demonstrated return on investment, should
19 remain a priority at its current total funding level.

20 As you perform the difficult task of sifting
21 through the myriad of budget priorities facing the
22 State, I ask you to visualize the impact the program
23 has on the most vulnerable children.

24 Research consistently shows that for every
25 100,000 families served by Nurse Family Partnership,

1 14,000 fewer children will be hospitalized for
2 injuries in their first 2 years of life; 300 fewer
3 infants will die in their first year of life;
4 11,000 fewer children will develop language delays by
5 age 2; 23,000 fewer children will suffer child abuse
6 and neglect in their first 15 years of life; and
7 22,000 fewer children will be arrested and entered
8 into the criminal justice system through their first
9 15 years of life.

10 Before making an investment of these public
11 service dollars, we must ask ourselves, is this a
12 wise investment? Is there evidence that this program
13 will actually work? The answer is clearly yes in the
14 case of the Nurse Family Partnership Program.

15 Funding this program at its current level of
16 \$13.8 million is imperative for the benefit of
17 Pennsylvania's communities and the most at-risk
18 children and families.

19 Thank you for this opportunity to testify
20 today and for your support for the Nurse Family
21 Partnership Program.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. JACKSON: Thank you, Chairman Evans and
24 Members of the House Appropriations Committee, for
25 the opportunity to testify on the impact that these

1 current budget deliberations will have on violence
2 prevention.

3 My name, again, is Alicia Jackson, and I am
4 the Senior Vice President of MEE Productions. MEE
5 Productions is a Philadelphia-based research and
6 communications firm specializing in motivating
7 hard-to-reach audiences.

8 My firm has developed and implemented the
9 strategically targeted social marketing campaign that
10 is a major component of the Blueprint for a Safer
11 Philadelphia initiative.

12 I would like to take a few minutes to tell
13 you about how our efforts are making a difference in
14 Philadelphia and why they should continue to be
15 funded at the current levels.

16 MEE was commissioned soon after the launch
17 of the initiative to develop and implement the social
18 marketing campaign that serves as a strong foundation
19 for community-level change.

20 As a result of this campaign, Blueprint
21 messages have begun to effectively penetrate and
22 mobilize the Philadelphia community to prevent
23 violence.

24 We have been extremely effective in raising
25 awareness of youth violence among residents in the

1 hardest hit communities, and we have begun a dialogue
2 that is generating potential solutions.

3 We have introduced the concept of violence
4 as a public health issue and begun to educate the
5 community about a preventive rather than a punitive
6 model of dealing with the issues surrounding youth
7 violence.

8 We have also assisted in the planning to
9 continue to serve the needs of the community by
10 conducting ground-level community canvassing in the
11 hardest hit neighborhoods.

12 Over the past 3 years, the campaign has
13 delivered positive and engaging messages for both
14 youth and adults in Philadelphia using a variety of
15 traditional and nontraditional communications
16 channels.

17 This campaign has led to increased awareness
18 of the negative impacts of youth violence and a
19 change in attitude citywide regarding our collective
20 ability and responsibility to do something about it.

21 Our multimedia messages have made the
22 Blueprint initiative a household name in
23 Philadelphia, and we won international health
24 communications industry awards for the campaign
25 documentary and television PSAs.

1 Last year, we created and disseminated to
2 local residents more than 10,000 copies of an
3 electronic resource directory. It contains hundreds
4 of up-to-date local resources and opportunities for
5 youth in Philadelphia and is available via the Web or
6 in hard copy. We believe in going green.

7 We also provided a series of personal
8 enrichment activities for youth who are members of
9 our Community Action Team, commonly called Street
10 Teams, and we created and enhanced the GreatVine,
11 which is a unique Website that highlights the
12 positive aspects of Philadelphia's youth, one of
13 the stories of which you heard earlier from
14 Nikita Jackson.

15 This year, messages, activities, and
16 programs are continuing to emphasize and amplify the
17 concept of education as a violence prevention
18 strategy. The Blueprint campaign is promoting
19 staying in school, increasing the graduation rate,
20 and improving literacy in the city of Philadelphia.

21 Tutoring and after-school programs, along
22 with other providers that support improved education,
23 are being aggressively and actively promoted in both
24 the targeted neighborhoods of Point Breeze and
25 Cobbs Creek and citywide.

1 We will continue to improve the
2 understanding of youth violence, its consequences for
3 the city of Philadelphia, with providing an expanded
4 call to action to begin to change community norms and
5 individual behaviors.

6 We will also continue to "brand" the
7 Blueprint campaign and continue to promote and
8 publicize its providers and programs through radio
9 PSAs, the Blueprint Website, transit, the newsletter,
10 customized print materials, and other collaterals and
11 grassroots outreach.

12 Ongoing mass media outreach and grassroots
13 outreach helped the Blueprint campaign keep its
14 antiviolence messages "top of mind" across a variety
15 of Philadelphia audiences.

16 One indication of our success is that we are
17 seeing many more community initiative activities that
18 have been spawned and inspired by Blueprint events.

19 We continue to deliver key violence
20 prevention messages to the hardest hit communities
21 while also including Philadelphia's more mainstream
22 residents who may perceive themselves as unaffected
23 by violence.

24 These conversations with the community
25 remind us all of our individual and collective roles

1 in preventing youth violence.

2 The Blueprint movement has clearly had an
3 overall positive impact on the thousands of
4 Philadelphians who have been exposed to its messages.

5 It is essential that we continue to work
6 together in a partnership to meet the growing needs
7 of our community. We hope that the Legislature will
8 find the resources to support our most vulnerable
9 citizens and to take full advantage of the brighter
10 long-term future we all know is possible for them.

11 Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

12 MR. GLINSKY: Hello. My name is
13 Luka Glinsky. I'm a high school senior, and I'll be
14 attending Carnegie Mellon University in the fall.
15 Thank you for the opportunity for allowing me to
16 speak here.

17 Let me start by asking you to look around
18 you and consider the building we are in right now.
19 When President Theodore Roosevelt dedicated the State
20 Capitol Building, he called it, quote, "the
21 handsomest building I ever saw," unquote.

22 It was designed by Philadelphia architect
23 Joseph Huston, who dubbed it "a palace of art" and
24 filled it with stained-glass paintings and fine
25 furniture.

1 In 1906, it cost \$13 million to build and
2 furnish our State Capitol Building. So when I come
3 here today and ask you to find \$14 million for
4 supporting the arts throughout the entire State of
5 Pennsylvania, I don't think I'm asking for an
6 extravagant amount of money.

7 That \$14 million will fan out across the
8 State, reaching thousands of people and supporting
9 many important programs. One of these is the Poetry
10 Out Loud National Recitation Contest, which is
11 supported in part by grants to the Pennsylvania
12 Arts Council and local arts councils around the
13 State.

14 For the past 3 years, I have participated in
15 the Poetry Out Loud contest. The event has been
16 truly revelatory to me, as it has been, I'm sure, to
17 many high school students, teachers, and parents.

18 The competition presented poetry to my peers
19 and me in such a way as to take it out of the
20 classroom and into ourselves. We became familiar
21 with poems at a more accessible level, as if
22 befriending them over a dinner table.

23 Poems were no longer puzzles stashed on a
24 high shelf to be taken down and extensively pondered.
25 They became works identifiably human and common.

1 Such is the power of an outreach program
2 like Poetry Out Loud, which this year reached
3 7,000 high school students across Pennsylvania
4 alone.

5 A similar event occurred when I was
6 privileged enough to attend the poetry recitations at
7 the Neighborhood Art House in Erie where I live.

8 The children participating in the event,
9 some as young as 9 years old, had been given the
10 courage and self-esteem to stand up in front of a
11 large crowd and deliver poetry.

12 For many of them, it was a first experience
13 in public speaking. Others had participated in the
14 recitation event in previous years. But all of them
15 at some level identified with what they were reciting
16 and had at least an idea of what an important,
17 unusual experience it was.

18 Though the arts may not directly cross our
19 paths every day, hard times certainly make us aware
20 of how vital they are in the preservation of us as a
21 people.

22 During the Great Depression, for example, my
23 grandfather, Vincent Glinsky, was commissioned by the
24 Federal Art Project of the WPA to create several
25 artworks for public buildings.

1 In fact, one of his works, "The Lumberman,"
2 was part of an exhibit at the State Museum a few
3 blocks from here, which just closed on Sunday.

4 "The Lumberman" is permanently installed in
5 the lobby of the Union City Post Office. Like so
6 many WPA works of the time, it is now regarded as
7 part of our national legacy.

8 I am proud to say that I come from a family
9 of artists who, through their art, have contributed
10 to the life of Pennsylvanians.

11 My parents are both professional musicians.
12 My father, a composer, has been awarded Arts Council
13 grants and honors numerous times. A newly composed
14 string quartet of his will be premiered at the end of
15 this month to commemorate the 250th anniversary of
16 Pittsburgh.

17 My sister, a dancer, is currently engaged in
18 Regional Dance America, a dance conference held only
19 a few blocks from this building.

20 As for myself, at Carnegie Mellon, I will be
21 pursuing both drama and the writing of poetry and
22 plays.

23 Pennsylvania has long been held up around
24 the country as a golden example in the fostering of
25 the arts. Time and time again, our Commonwealth has

1 shown itself to be a melting pot for imaginative and
2 forward-thinking minds.

3 This environment has proven and will prove
4 an unmatched advantage to Pennsylvania's youth, of
5 which I am proudly a part. You surely must also be
6 proud of this modern-day mecca you have helped to
7 create.

8 I now ask you, on behalf of Pennsylvania's
9 minds of tomorrow, to link arms with the arts once
10 more. We are the shining example. Let us show the
11 rest of the nation that in hard times, we are
12 uncompromising in the defense of our future and our
13 youth.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. MOORE: Good evening.

16 I absolutely have to compliment this
17 committee for its patience and the long hours on a
18 holiday Friday, and certainly we share that same
19 compliment with all those who I heard testifying
20 today. Quite a commitment on both parts. I think
21 it's a good encounter and appreciate, Chairman Evans,
22 you taking the time to coordinate this.

23 Again, I'm George Moore. I'm the Executive
24 Director of Community Progress Council, the community
25 action agency that is federally designated for

1 York County, Pennsylvania.

2 I want to take some time and just talk about
3 what we see as a really urgent need to continue
4 adequate funding for the Head Start Supplemental
5 Assistance Program to continue within Pennsylvania.

6 It's part of our continuum of early learning
7 programs. As part of the Head Start supplemental
8 funding for fiscal year '08-09, we were reduced by a
9 1.3-percent funding level. For the coming year, for
10 year '09-10, the Governor had recommended keeping
11 funding at at least a level amount. Senate Bill 850
12 looks to cut that.

13 We see this program, the Head Start
14 Supplemental Assistance Program, which is currently
15 funded at \$39.48 million for the year '09-10 budget,
16 along with funding for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts,
17 Child Care Works, and the Keystone STARS programs, as
18 an essential part of our Early Learning program
19 continuum.

20 Head Start programs have been successfully
21 serving low-income children and their families in
22 Pennsylvania for over 40 years.

23 The Head Start Supplemental Assistance
24 Program serves Pennsylvania's lowest-income,
25 highest-risk children.

1 Pennsylvania's lowest-income, high-risk
2 children and their families need the strengths of
3 Pennsylvania's Supplemental Assistance Program to
4 enable children to be ready for kindergarten and to
5 succeed in school and in life.

6 Head Start services the whole family by
7 providing appropriate health, dental, nutrition,
8 parent involvement, and family support services that
9 meet the needs not only of the Head Start child but
10 their economically challenged families.

11 By providing these services along with a
12 high-quality, individualized education experience for
13 each child, Head Start programs prepare
14 Pennsylvania's most at-risk children and their
15 families for success.

16 In 2008-2009, which is our current fiscal
17 year, over 5,700 3- and 4-year-old children are
18 participating in Pennsylvania's Head Start
19 Supplemental Assistance Program.

20 Head Start programs serve Pennsylvania's
21 most at-risk children. More than 90 percent of the
22 children enrolled in Head Start programs live in
23 families with incomes below the Federal poverty
24 guidelines.

25 For an example, a family of four must have

1 an income of less than \$22,000 a year. Of the
2 children enrolled, at least 10 percent of them served
3 must have and are children with disabilities.

4 Head Start regulations require programs to
5 be locally designed and to comply with very extensive
6 Head Start standards for health, dental, nutritional,
7 parent involvement, and family support services.

8 Head Start is one of the most highly
9 regulated and monitored programs of its kind in the
10 country.

11 For example, our program this year received
12 its triannual, once-every-3-year review. A team of
13 six reviewers spent 5 full days visiting every one of
14 our sites, visiting every classroom, going through
15 every record that we had. Fortunately, we came
16 through with an astonishing full compliance from the
17 review team.

18 Head Start assistance programs are regulated
19 and monitored also by the Federal Office of Head
20 Start to assure that Pennsylvania Head Start programs
21 provide the same high quality as the Federal
22 regulations.

23 The Head Start Supplemental Assistance
24 Program is needed in Pennsylvania. One in seven
25 children in Pennsylvania live in a family with income

1 below the Federal poverty guidelines.

2 There are over 13,000 Head Start eligible
3 children in Pennsylvania who are not currently able
4 to participate in the Head Start program.

5 Most Head Start programs have long lists of
6 Head Start eligible children waiting for an opening.
7 The need for Head Start programs in Pennsylvania is
8 expected to increase. Policy experts expect a
9 30-percent increase in the number of Head Start
10 eligible children in the next 2 years.

11 As an example, in York County, we have an
12 enrollment of over 500 children. After filling all
13 of our new spots for the upcoming school year to
14 begin in September, we still have 500 children
15 eligible on a waiting list, let alone children that
16 have not been contacted or reached.

17 Research has proven that Head Start is a
18 sound investment for low-income children and families
19 preparing their children for economic and academic
20 success.

21 Research shows that Head Start is a wise
22 investment for society. A randomly selected
23 longitudinal study of more than 600 Head Start
24 graduates in San Bernardino County, California,
25 showed that society received nearly a \$9 benefit for

1 every dollar invested in these Head Start children.

2 The benefits included increased earnings,
3 employment, and family stability, and decreased
4 welfare dependency, crime costs, grade repetition,
5 and special education.

6 Head Start supplemental program funding is a
7 significant economic stimulus in rural, urban, and
8 suburban low-income communities across the State of
9 Pennsylvania.

10 It creates jobs within Head Start programs
11 and provides a safe place for children to learn while
12 enabling parents to work.

13 Cuts to Head Start supplemental programming
14 funding will mean a loss of jobs in communities
15 across Pennsylvania.

16 The White House U.S. Department of Education
17 and congressional leaders have clearly stated that
18 it's in their intention to provide Head Start
19 Recovery Act funds in order to, A, expand Head Start
20 programs' capacities to serve the increasing number
21 of low-income children and their families; stimulate
22 the economy; and invest in Early Head Start, which
23 serves children birth through age 3.

24 Head Start ARRA funds cannot be used to
25 supplant current positions. ARRA funding to expand

1 Early Head Start services, ages zero to 3, cannot be
2 used to make up for a reduction in the Head Start
3 supplemental program or Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts
4 funding for children ages 3 to 5.

5 There will be a very small amount of funds
6 to increase Head Start program services, only
7 240 slots across the State, but because all grant
8 applications for expanded funding are competitive,
9 there is no guarantee that programs will be able to
10 replace any losses in State funding.

11 The Pennsylvania fiscal year '09-10 budget
12 will be passed before Head Start programs will be
13 informed whether they will be receiving funds to
14 serve more children through Early Head Start or
15 Head Start.

16 The Pennsylvania Legislature funds both the
17 Head Start supplemental program and the Pennsylvania
18 Pre-K Counts program, two different high-quality
19 pre-kindergarten programs, both with a unique
20 strength that benefits families with specific
21 characteristics and needs.

22 Both of these Early Learning programs are
23 needed to provide an effective continuum of Early
24 Learning programming in Pennsylvania.

25 Pennsylvania's lowest-income, highest-risk

1 children and their families need the strength of
2 Pennsylvania's Head Start programs to enable their
3 children to be ready for kindergarten and for their
4 children and families to succeed in school and in
5 life.

6 Pennsylvania needs both a Head Start
7 Supplemental Assistance Program and Pennsylvania
8 Pre-K Counts program for an effective, Early Learning
9 continuum. This continuum is the foundation for
10 Pennsylvania's short- and long-term educational
11 advancement and economic success.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to speak with
13 you today on behalf of the Community Progress Council
14 and Pennsylvania's Head Start community and with the
15 low-income children and families of Pennsylvania we
16 work to represent and to serve.

17 I again urge you to maintain the Head Start
18 Supplemental Assistance Program, HSSAP, funding of
19 \$39.48 million, providing Head Start programs and
20 funds to serve over 5,700 children and their families
21 in fiscal year '09-10, along with the Pre-K Counts
22 program, Keystone STARS, and Child Care Works.

23 Thank you. Have a good weekend.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

25 Gary? He's the last witness. Gary's the

1 last witness.

2 MR. OLSEN (speaking through a
3 Voicing Assistant): We have a situation. The
4 interpreter is not here, so I'm using my friends for
5 communication. I hope that will be all right with
6 you.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Yes.

8 MR. OLSEN (speaking through a
9 Voicing Assistant): So he's not accessible with a
10 certified interpreter.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Tell him yes.

12 Tell him I apologize for not having an
13 interpreter, as we should have had an interpreter.
14 And he was correct by stating the fact that we
15 should---

16 MR. OLSEN (speaking through a
17 Voicing Assistant): I want you to understand, they
18 are not certified, so don't apply anything to them.
19 So don't kill the messenger.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Okay. I
21 apologize.

22 MR. OLSEN (speaking through a
23 Voicing Assistant): I appreciate this,
24 Chairman Evans and distinguished Members.

25 I almost tried to say good morning, but I'll

1 say good evening.

2 I would like to talk about the issue here.
3 I have heard testimony. I'm sure every grave
4 situation that we see -- I have divided them into
5 five categories, and I will summarize them and what I
6 have observed here.

7 Both professionals and advocates and
8 superintendents, by profession -- I'm sorry; let me
9 back up.

10 By profession, I am an advocate. I have
11 been a principal. I'm an advocate for schools, from
12 the South Dakota School for the Deaf and other
13 places. I'm working to help schools for the deaf
14 remain open.

15 I want to share something that I found
16 appalling. And today, the Governor is really putting
17 a price tag on children. It's like a cow from
18 Nebraska; you're putting a price on a child. I think
19 it's outrageous.

20 The United States Constitution tells
21 families that they are guaranteed a free and
22 appropriate education. I don't understand why they
23 are allowing a State school to be taken over, the
24 hostile takeover. I think that it's wrong.

25 This has been happening all along. The

1 things that have been taking place here in
2 Pennsylvania behind closed doors, they are really
3 backwards.

4 The school should be focused on learning.
5 To take that away and take away the buildings in the
6 name of property and other things, it's nothing to do
7 with the child. The only way to help a child become
8 successful in a community is to have a good
9 education.

10 Their plan has not been transparent. They
11 are hiding, and they're keeping secrets. The
12 community knows nothing; the parents know nothing.
13 People that work in the school itself know nothing.
14 Then all of a sudden, this is the plan. I think you
15 should do some investigating on that issue.

16 Another thing is that Senate Bill 850 has
17 passed in the Senate -- that has been proposed in the
18 Senate; I'm sorry -- there's no data that shows what
19 the justification is.

20 For example, the mother is worried about
21 kids riding the bus 5 and 6 hours, and a good
22 mathematician would easily figure that out. Oh,
23 look, a kid has school and goes to school at a
24 regular time every day, sits on the bus and goes home
25 after school at 3 o'clock. They are going to get

1 home at 9 o'clock if they ride the bus for 6 hours.

2 They'll come home on Friday and prepare all
3 day Saturday to go back on Sunday. Where is their
4 life? It's not normal. Normal kids don't do that,
5 unless you send them to an academy for a good reason.
6 This is not answered.

7 How many kids drop out? We don't know.
8 They have accused our school of bad performance.
9 They have really not shown any hard data.

10 There is no percentage of what the kids, you
11 know, what percentage of kids graduate. How many of
12 those kids are in the juvenile system; do they have
13 many? Why? They don't have any answers. Yet they
14 are making those kinds of decisions without
15 collecting sufficient information and not
16 disseminating it to the stakeholders that should be
17 involved. It makes you wonder if there is some kind
18 of decision without data.

19 Another issue that has been researched that
20 needs to be investigated, there have been threats
21 made to the staff members, threatening them that if
22 they continue to object to the close, they cannot
23 negotiate for other positions. So they are
24 threatening them. This is 2009. How can you do
25 that?

1 And they were given 5 days to select a job.
2 Any staff working somewhere shouldn't have that kind
3 of a treatment.

4 They would commit them to a psychiatric
5 ward. How can they communicate? They are telling
6 deaf people they are going to work in psychiatric
7 wards. You are going to hire an interpreter to work
8 in a psychiatric ward? This is another thing that
9 needs to be answered.

10 The second to the last thing, the integrity
11 is gone. It is just missing. How can they do this?

12 The question for you is, who is accountable
13 for this? The Pennsylvania Department of Education.
14 They are overseeing them. Who oversees them? There
15 needs to be something done about that.

16 The children, the families, they don't need
17 that havoc. The community doesn't need that havoc.
18 It's not a good way to do things, to carry over a
19 plan and carry through with a plan without any
20 involvement of the stakeholders.

21 I think it should be established some kind
22 of investigation, a report, a stakeholders' report
23 for this, and I commend you for this, for pulling
24 this out and talking about it out in the open. That
25 is how the Commonwealth should be working.

1 With that, I'll stop. I want to thank you
2 for your time.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Tell him that I
4 want to thank him also for his testimony as well as
5 his time and all of the parents and the students from
6 the school.

7 And Representative Murphy, who is still
8 here, has been a very strong advocate. I want to
9 make sure you know he has been relentless. He has
10 been relentless. He has been relentless.

11 DR. HARA: May I say something,
12 Mr. Chairman?

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: You may.

14 DR. HARA: For the people who are not from
15 Lackawanna County and Scranton, Pennsylvania,
16 Representative Kevin Murphy, who is not able to speak
17 because he is not officially on this committee today,
18 has been our guiding light through this whole ordeal,
19 and we cannot thank him enough.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

21 I want to, one, thank all of the citizens
22 for your testimony, all of the ones who -- the young
23 man, it is my understanding, who is 18 years old, he
24 is the youngest person to testify today. We thank
25 him and his family, who have come from Erie,

1 Pennsylvania.

2 I want to thank all of you, because this is
3 what it's really about. It's about you. It's not
4 about us. This is your government.

5 It troubles me whenever people talk about
6 the government as some entity over there. But the
7 reality of it is, those of us who are elected up here
8 couldn't get here without you. So we have to come
9 through you as citizens, and we clearly understand
10 that, and that is what this was all about.

11 I want to specifically thank all the
12 Members, but I want to thank some Members who are
13 still here.

14 Tim Mahoney who is here from Fayette County,
15 from southwest Pennsylvania. He's a very good --
16 Tim, go ahead.

17 REPRESENTATIVE MAHONEY: Mr. Chairman, we
18 have been here for 2 days -- well, it seems like
19 3 days, maybe 4 -- but I think that we heard real
20 stories from real people, and I just hope the other
21 side of the building, over in the Senate, can hear
22 what we heard today, especially from people like
23 Mary Anne there that is raising three boys on her
24 own, one with a handicap. And Esther from, I think,
25 the Johnstown area.

1 I mean, I think we really heard real people
2 telling real stories about real problems that we have
3 to deal with with real money. So thank you very
4 much.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

6 I also want to make note of Bill Kortz from
7 Allegheny County. Bill.

8 REPRESENTATIVE KORTZ: Thank you,
9 Mr. Chairman.

10 I want to thank everybody that has attended
11 the last couple of days. We really appreciate your
12 testimony.

13 If I could just take 30 seconds to sum up,
14 as everybody was testifying today, I was taking a lot
15 of notes, but I was looking for a key word in what
16 everybody was doing when they were talking about
17 Senate Bill 850.

18 I'm just going to go through a few of those:
19 devastating, drastic, brutal, punishing, tsunami,
20 insensitivity, potential dilemma, shameful cuts,
21 shortsighted, showed little mercy, wrong for PA,
22 draconian cuts, and outrageous.

23 Just a little summation of what I heard.

24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

1 And I also want to make note of another
2 member. He is brand new, but he has been here with
3 us all the way -- Matt Bradford.

4 Matt.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: Thank you,
6 Chairman Evans.

7 As the Chairman mentioned, I'm actually a
8 freshman to the Legislature, and this has been quite
9 an experience in the last couple of months and an
10 opportunity really to see in really challenging times
11 what the State Legislature needs to address and the
12 leadership that the Chairman has offered trying to
13 forge a bipartisan consensus on some really
14 challenging issues. I want to thank him for the
15 opportunity just to be a part of this.

16 I realize these are really challenging
17 issues, again. And I thank the witnesses for really
18 putting a human face and a perspective that, again,
19 as a freshman Member, is so helpful.

20 So thank you again, Chairman.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you.

22 And I would not let Kevin -- Kevin is a
23 Member of the House, even though he is not a Member
24 of the committee.

25 Kevin, do you want to say anything?

1 REPRESENTATIVE MURPHY: Thank you very much,
2 Mr. Chairman.

3 And I would also like to thank my colleagues
4 and the testifiers the last 2 days. And thank you
5 for, although this isn't my committee, for allowing
6 me to speak.

7 I want to commend our Chairman, our
8 Appropriations Chairman, Dwight Evans. Early on, as
9 Matt Bradford had stated -- he's a freshman and I'm
10 also a freshman and new to the General Assembly --
11 but I was very impressed with our Chairman. He
12 reached out to all of the freshmen.

13 He brought economic forums and
14 Appropriations hearings to our districts so we could
15 have these conversations with the people of our
16 districts, with the people of Pennsylvania, and I
17 think that is unprecedented.

18 In addition to that, after Senate Bill 850
19 was passed in the Senate, our Chairman felt an
20 obligation to the people of Pennsylvania to have open
21 hearings, to invite people of the Commonwealth to
22 come here to testify in Harrisburg.

23 And as is evidenced by the time of night,
24 this evening -- it's almost 9:30 -- he has been very
25 patient, listened to everyone that has been willing

1 to testify, and he has been appreciative of those
2 people.

3 And I want to commend him and the committee
4 and the Democratic Caucus for providing this
5 opportunity for the citizens of Pennsylvania to air
6 their concerns with regard to Senate Bill 850.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN EVANS: And there's one
9 last request I have.

10 You know, you kind of see the elected
11 officials in the front when they talk about us. But
12 really the people who put this together, I'm going to
13 ask my staff to stand, please. All of them stand up.

14 (Applause.)

15 These are the folks, these are the folks --
16 no, keep standing up. I have to say this.

17 These folks, you don't see them much. Stand
18 up. Wait a minute. Stand up; stand up.

19 No, seriously, these folks, I mean, all week
20 I was in Pittsburgh, on Tuesday and Wednesday with
21 something out there, Thursday and Friday. As
22 Representative Murphy said, we have had hearings. We
23 have had more hearings since November to this time
24 than ever before. We had over 50 public hearings.
25 We have had all kinds of discussions and we have

1 taken this message to all Pennsylvanians, and it's
2 really because of this staff. I mean, this staff
3 works like around the clock, day in and day out, in
4 terms for the people of this State. So I want to
5 give them a hand and publicly thank them for all that
6 they do.

7 (Applause.)

8 So as a result, this hearing is now
9 recessed. Thank you very much.

10

11 (The hearing concluded at 9:19 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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