



State Senator **LeAnna Washington**

Report to the People

Serving the 4th Senatorial District

Summer 2011

Working to Complete a State Budget that Serves Pennsylvania Citizens

Budget negotiations have begun on the two spending proposals before the legislature. Both **\$27.3 billion** budget proposals would make very sharp cuts to education and economic development initiatives, and cut general government operations and human services.

Gov. Tom Corbett proposed a 50 percent cut to proven job creating investments in education, training and research and completely cuts **\$23.5 million** in funding for the Human Service Development Fund (HSDF). Philadelphia will lose **\$6.6 million** in funding – more than a fourth of that.

House Republicans have proposed an alternative budget that would restore some education programs by making extensive, unacceptable cuts to the Department of Public Welfare.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I in the Philadelphia Delegation requested that funding be restored to HSDF to help stem the growing rate of domestic violence cases in Philadelphia and throughout the commonwealth. HSDF provides critically needed support for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable populations, including victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is growing to epidemic proportions in Pennsylvania, where demand for domestic violence services has escalated, and domestic homicides increased 50% in 2009.

Sufficient funding is needed for effective interventions or domestic violence homicides will continue to mount.

Along with critical domestic violence support, Philadelphia currently receives **\$5.83 million** in HSDF support for the following critical interventions:

- *Department of Human Services for domestic violence legal services: \$250,000*
- *Office of Supportive Housing for in-take and emergency relocation for approximately 15,000 people per year: \$2.4 million*
- *Aids Services: \$1 million*
- *Lead Abatement: \$115,000*
- *Disease Control: \$70,000*
- *Translation Services for City Health Center Clients: \$350,000*
- *Anti-violence Summer Recreation Programming for children and youth: \$696,000*
- *Senior Citizen Outreach: \$105,000*

I recognize the dire need to fund critical services that our citizens depend on, whether it is hospitals, arts and schools, job creation programs or safety net programs. This is why I have come up with a plan to restore critical dollars to these programs and relieve some of the pain that the governor's and House Republicans' budgets would cause.

Pushing \$20 Million Amendment to Protect Social Services

I have introduced an amendment that would restore \$20 million to crucial Health and Human Services programs. This amendment would provide some relief to health and human service programs that otherwise would have been forced to close their services. By providing this funding, much-needed programs like those provided by the Human Services Development Fund would be able to continue.

Amid today's challenging economic climate, support like HSDF is more critical than ever for families seeking to escape from their current situations.

Without the funding proposed in this amendment, we may have to do without quality long-term care, medical assistance, and childcare assistance and services. This would shut out our most vulnerable citizens – our children, seniors and disabled from the services that are truly essential to their lives.

The spending plans which have been set before us in this budget season are, simply stated, bad for Pennsylvania. They are riddled with painful cuts, especially to the most in need. They are full of missteps and bad decisions.

Unfortunately, the Governor refuses to use the expected \$600 million plus revenue surplus to prevent some of the more painful budget cuts. Although a large majority of Pennsylvanians support a tax on the Marcellus Shale drilling, which would generate more revenue to prevent the drastic cuts, the Governor opposes it. We have other options – and reasonable solutions.

We cannot stand by and watch as our most vulnerable citizens suffer due to painful, outrageous, and unnecessary cuts proposed by the governor and House Republicans. We can be fair and reasonable. We can do better.

We must have a smart spending plan that includes adequate funding for education, hospitals, and critical human services. We must have a state spending plan that includes opportunities for economic growth and boosts job creation.

◆ Protecting the Welfare of Foster Children

As the Democratic Chair of the Senate Aging and Youth Committee. It is my goal to remain a strong advocate for children in the foster care system and the families that welcome them into their homes. To that end, I have sponsored several bills that would look out for the welfare of children in the foster care system.

SB 170 – In an effort to address concerns about the lack of support and resources children in foster care face when they age out of the foster care system, this legislation would require every child to be screened for Title II benefits and SSI when they enter state custody and within six months of aging out of state custody. Children would be able to receive SSI benefits if they are blind or disabled. To be eligible, the child must have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that very seriously limits his or her activities and the condition must be expected to last at least one year, or result in death.

SB 171 – This legislation would voluntarily extend eligibility for foster care services up to age 21 rather than the previous limit of age 18. According to many studies, most foster youth are kicked out of the program and left on their own at the age of 18. Therefore, studies have shown that many of these children end up arrested or jailed. A need exists based on the facts that more than half of foster youth will be employed and more than 25 percent will be homeless by the age of 18.

May I Help?

STATE APPLICATIONS

*Driver's License • Notary Public
Vehicle Registration/Renewal
Birth and Death Certificates*

VOTER SERVICES

*Registration • Election Calendars
Applications for absentee ballots*

◆ Getting Illegal Guns off the Streets of Our Community

I am working on a number of initiatives to end gun violence in communities across Pennsylvania. These initiatives include limiting handgun purchases to no more than one handgun within a 30 day period and limiting access to firearms by mentally ill persons who have been ordered to undergo involuntary mental health treatment on an outpatient basis.



SB 175 – This legislation would limit handgun purchases. This bill stipulates that no individual would be able to purchase more than one handgun within a 30 day period. If enacted, this would help mitigate the threat of handguns getting into the hands of criminals, children, or terrorist organizations.

SB 176 – This legislation would limit the purchase of handguns in Philadelphia by stipulating that no individual can purchase more than one handgun within a 30 day period. This bill would help limit the ability for criminals and terrorists to have access to firearms.

SB 185 – This legislation would limit access to firearms by mentally ill persons who have been ordered to undergo involuntary mental health treatment on an outpatient basis. This would curb the ability of some mentally ill people to cause harm to others, and also limit their ability to cause serious bodily harm to themselves.

These initiatives would help to mitigate the threat of handguns getting into the hands of criminals, children, or terrorist organizations with intention to harm.

◆ Cracking Down on Bullying

I have introduced anti-bullying legislation that would strengthen the standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating and responding to incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying that occur at school and off school premises. The bill is now in the Senate Education Committee.

Co-sponsoring the legislation is state Sen. Pat Browne (R-16). This is truly a bipartisan effort to bring strong anti-bullying legislation to Pennsylvania.

The legislation is modeled on the New Jersey “Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act” and would be more comprehensive and effective than Pennsylvania’s current law.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice and National Association of School Psychologists’ Bullying Prevention Institute, bullying is keeping as many as 160,000 children away from school each day.

Bullying has lasting emotional effects on its victims and ultimately hinders learning and a positive school experience for thousands of children.

Bullying and low-level violence affects approximately 20 to 30 percent of our students on a daily basis.

At a time when our children should be learning, enjoying new experiences, making new friends and forging new paths, they have too often been intimidated and consumed by this epidemic of bullying.

Research reveals that several consequences associated with bullying include depression, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse and an increased tendency to commit crime. The study also proclaims that students who partake in bullying without intervention are three times more likely to have at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24.

In recognition of the state’s financial problems, my legislation would use existing financial resources to combat bullying. Pennsylvania’s significant budget shortfall, especially in the area of education, makes it necessary to use existing resources smarter to make our schools safer for students.

◆ Senator Washington Continues Fight for Victims of Domestic Violence

The issue of domestic violence has been a top priority to me for many years. I will always be a strong advocate for victims of domestic violence and abuse. This year, I plan to introduce several legislative initiatives aimed at combating domestic violence, including:

SB 187 – This legislation would increase the fine for individuals convicted of domestic violence crimes from \$10 to \$15. All funds would go toward financing services for victims of domestic violence and rape.

SB 188 – This legislation would use parts of marriage and divorce fees to fund programs that help domestic violence victims. This bill would assist domestic violence victims who are struggling financially and trying to better their situation.

SB 189 – This bill would require that law

enforcement officers be notified of protection from abuse court orders within 24 hours. This legislation would help reduce delays in enforcing such orders.

Also, a Domestic Violence package of legislation:

Limited Self-Defense Justification – This legislation would create a limited self-defense justification for domestic violence victims who use force to protect themselves.

Bail Restrictions – This legislation would bar those charged with violating domestic violence-related restraining orders from having the option to post 10 percent of their bail to gain their release.

Lease Protections – This bill would extend protections for domestic abuse victims who have had to break leases. It would also prevent a landlord from refusing to lease to or breaking a lease of a tenant

who has had to terminate a previous rental agreement based on their or a household member's status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.

Prevent Unfair Evictions – This measure would prohibit unfair evictions – allowing a victim to stay in their home if issued an eviction notice based primarily on the acts of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children, and housing discrimination only increases the numbers.

Seizure of Deadly Weapons – This legislation would protect victims of domestic violence, their families and our communities from potential gun-related danger. The bill would allow law enforcement officers to obtain a warrant to seize firearms or deadly weapons that remain inside a house after a domestic violence or mental health incident.

◆ 2011 Walk Against Domestic Violence

One in four women in the United States has been a victim of domestic violence and yet, domestic violence remains a seemingly invisible crime that goes unnoticed by society. Yet, just because we do not see it before our eyes every day doesn't mean that domestic abuse does not exist.

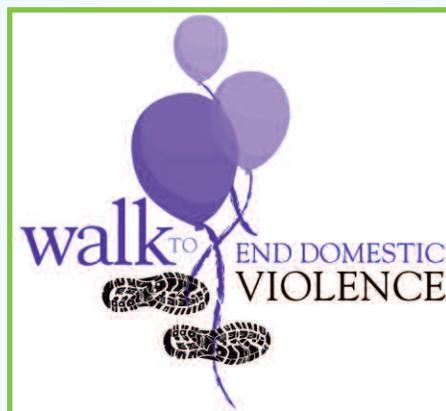
Here in southeastern Pennsylvania, almost 27,000 people received services for abuse prevention in the five county area. That is one quarter of the number of individuals statewide who received services. In these five counties, there were a total of 43 deaths related to domestic violence last fiscal year.

This is a sad cycle that has to end. Who will stand up for those that have been beaten down for so long? Who will defend the defenseless and the voiceless who face the daily threat of humiliation, injury and death?

Victims of domestic abuse are everywhere – from every walk of life and every race. I know because I was also a victim of domestic violence. I am a

survivor and an advocate for those still trapped in the web of domestic violence.

That is why I am sponsoring the **"Fourth Annual Walk to End Domestic Violence" on October 22**. Registration begins at 9 a.m. at West River Drive,



Philadelphia. The walk will kick-off shortly thereafter at 10:30 a.m.

This walk will not only recognize survivors of domestic violence and their families, but will also honor those who were lost to this senseless crime. It is

time to come together in unity against violence. As a community we have the responsibility to work together to end this blight on our neighborhoods.

This walk will also aim to address the woeful lack of funding for domestic violence programs that are often a lifeline for victims of domestic violence. Many programs are in precarious financial circumstances and funding shortfalls have added more strain to these desperately needed programs.

The proceeds raised from this event will benefit the city's toll-free domestic violence hotline (866-SAFE-014), and Women Against Abuse, Women in Transition, Lutheran Settlement House and Congreso.

I remain committed to shining a spotlight on domestic violence and doing whatever I can to ensure that victims of abuse have a safe haven.

These nameless, faceless victims deserve a voice. Come out and support the Fourth Annual Walk to End Domestic Violence. Lend your voice to the fight against domestic violence.

Around The 4th District

Summer 2011



Senator Washington, Lt. Governor Cawley and Students from Saint Raymond's school visited the state capitol on Monday, June 6.



Senator Washington visited with students, faculty, and administrators at Arcadia University on Wednesday, June 22.



On June 8, Senator Washington participated in "One Child, Many Hands," a multidisciplinary Conference on Child Welfare at the University of Pennsylvania. Senator Washington is a member of the Board of Directors of the Field Center of the University of Pennsylvania.

Senator Washington on the floor of the Senate with her female Senate colleagues.



◆ Washington Appointed to Intra-Governmental Council on Long Term Care

have been appointed to serve on the Intra-Governmental Council on Long Term Care for the 2011-2012 Legislative Session.

As a long time advocate for the elderly, I am very pleased to be asked to serve on this very important council. With Pennsylvania's elderly population growing, it is imperative that their long term care needs be addressed. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the council on the varied issues regarding long term care in Pennsylvania.

The Intra-Governmental Council on Long-Term Care studies our state's long-term care system from a funding, operational and consumer perspective and makes recommendations to the governor on ways to streamline the system and develop a full spectrum of options for consumers and their families.

The council is comprised of three members of the governor's cabinet, four members of the general assembly and representatives of long-term care service sectors and consumers appointed by the governor.



Legislative Initiatives

◆ **Senate Bill 173** – This legislation would make it a finable offense to display on or in a motor vehicle pornographic movies or material that depicts obscene or sexual conduct that is viewable to other drivers. Violators would be subjected to a fine of at least \$100.

◆ **Senate Bill 174** – This legislation would support the continuation of the Schools of Excellence program. The Schools of Excellence are residential summer programs on college campuses serving high school students with abilities and interests in the agricultural sciences, the creative and performing arts, global entrepreneurship, health care, information technology, international studies, the sciences and teaching. This program has proven vital to the overall educational development of many of Pennsylvania's highest achieving students.

◆ **Senate Bill 177** – This bill would provide assistance to business owners who have been deprived of the opportunity to develop and maintain a competitive position in the economy because of social disadvantages. It enables small businesses to build capacity and to competitively bid on state and other public contracts. It would also establish a mentor-protégé program to assist, support and enable small businesses to successfully compete for prime and subcontract awards by partnering with large companies that serve as a mentor in state contracts.

◆ **Senate Bill 178** – This legislation would create greater uniformity and consistency in the commonwealth certification process. Under this legislation any local city, county or municipal government, school district, governmental, or public entity including colleges and universities, receiving state funds would be required to implement a minority-owned, women-owned, disadvantaged-owned business enterprise diversity program.

◆ **Senate Bill 179** – This bill would establish a Small Business Reserve in the Procurement Code. This reserve would increase economic opportunities for small businesses and give small businesses, included disadvantaged businesses, the opportunity to bid on state government contracts without competing with larger businesses.

◆ **Senate Bill 180** – This bill would establish the Department of Minority and Women Business Development to assist in supporting the business endeavors of minorities and women.

◆ **Senate Bill 181** – This legislation would help school officials recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The measure would ensure that an abuse identification training program is established to provide training in abuse identification for persons employed by or under contract with a school entity.

◆ **Senate Bill 182** – This legislation would require long-term care nursing facilities to maintain certain staffing levels to protect the health and safety of residents and employees. This bill would protect the state's large and growing population of senior and disabled persons who require nursing facility care.

◆ **Senate Bill 183** – This legislation would assist in the expansion of early childhood education by expanding the definition of eligible provider in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program. The new definition would include registered family day care home. Enacting this bill would open the doors of opportunity for every child to do well in school, in the workforce, and throughout their lifetime.

◆ **Senate Bill 184** – This legislation would designate the North Office Building as the Secretary C. Dolores Tucker Office Building. She served as the first female African American Secretary of the State of Pennsylvania – and in the nation. Ms. Tucker was the founder and chair of the

National Political Congress of Black Women and was an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement as part of the Selma-to-Montgomery March in 1965. Additionally, she served as a delegate to the historic White House conference. Changing the name of the North Office Building is a wonderful way of commemorating her years of service.

◆ **Senate Bill 186** – This legislation would help fund programs that help prevent child abuse and neglect. The Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund is dedicated to funding innovative and creative community-based child abuse and neglect prevention programs. Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund has been investing in prevention efforts since 1990, and through 2008. A total of \$29.8 million has been awarded to 234 programs.

◆ **Senate Bill 190** – This legislation would limit the amount of re-stocking fees that retail stores may charge on returned items. Some retailers are now charging their customers a 10 or 15 percent re-stocking fee when merchandise is returned in an opened box. This bill would limit the amount stores can charge for re-stocking fees to 5 percent, up to a \$50 maximum.



On May 3, Pastor J. Louis Felton of the Mount Airy Church of God in Christ served as Guest Chaplain for the Senate of Pennsylvania, hosted by Senator LeAnna M. Washington.



STATE SENATOR
LeAnna M. Washington

Senate Box 203004
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3004

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◆ Washington Legislation Would Establish a MESA Initiative

I have introduced legislation (SB 172) that would establish a Math, Science Engineering Achievement (MESA) Initiative.

The initiative would enable educationally disadvantaged students to prepare for and graduate from college with a math-based degree in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Demand for STEM professionals is growing. Between 1993 and 2004, employment in STEM fields grew by 17 percent. To continue leading the world, the U.S. must lead in science, math & engineering. Pennsylvania cannot get left behind.

Through MESA, students develop academic and leadership skills,

increase educational performance and gain confidence in their ability to compete professionally. MESA has particular interest in and focus on students from those groups who historically have had the lowest levels of attainment to four-year and graduate level programs.

We need greater coordination and we need to strengthen partnerships between the education and business communities. We are competing against other states for these funds and jobs. We need to have better use of resources, and monitoring of results to ensure innovative ideas that work will be funded.

A National Science Foundation (NSF) report estimated that the average annual

growth rate for science and engineering workforce is 6.2 percent, compared to 1.6 percent for the overall U.S. workforce.

The military's need for technology and science skills was shown in the takedown of Osama bin Laden. Stealth helicopters, satellites, drones and President Barack Obama having a video feed thousands of miles away are just a few examples of STEM skills enhancing our national security.

There is \$3 billion in federal funding available to fund the initiative and \$500 million from private sector commitments.

In the first 2-3 years, Philadelphia STEM expects grants from industry, National Science Foundation (NSF) and the military to cover it. For example, the Office of Naval Research is funding a big part of MESA at the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

OFFICES TO SERVE YOU

DISTRICT OFFICES

1555-A Wadsworth Avenue • Philadelphia, PA 19150 • (215) 242-0472 • Fax: (215) 753-4538
1168 Easton Road • Roslyn, PA 19001 • (215) 517-1434 • Fax: (215) 517-1439

HARRISBURG OFFICE

Senate Box 203004 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-3004 • (717) 787-1427 • (717) 783-2175 • Fax: (717) 772-0572

E-MAIL: senatorwashington@pasenate.com

WEBSITE: www.senatorwashington.com