

Legislation Would Restore Program to Halt Mortgage Foreclosures



State Sen. LeAnna Washington said she will fight to reinstate funding for the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP).

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Pennsylvania's share of the settlement is **\$225 million** and just **\$10-\$11 million** would restore this vital program.

"My proposal gives families the chance to stay in their homes and prevent mortgage foreclosures. I have personal experience with the program. HEMAP helped me, too, because I wasn't always a state senator."

Although HEMAP is not currently available, homeowners facing foreclosure still have options. It is important to communicate with your lenders to discuss what is available to you. Homeowners who work with lenders have a greater chance of delaying foreclosure, staying in their home and working out a plan to get their payments back on track.

◆ Washington Honored by the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

It was a great honor to attend a recent ceremony at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP), held in gratitude for my continuing support and assistance with the expansion of the seminary's Brossman Center.

The ceremony marked the unveiling and dedication of my portrait in the public area of the Brossman Learning Center. The main hall of the center was also named in my honor.

As a longtime supporter of the seminary, I've assisted with the seminary's development by securing state grants to build several facilities in Northwest Philadelphia, including the Brossman Center.

Most recently, I secured a \$250,000 state grant to aid in constructing a connector between the

Brossman Center and the century-old Krauth Memorial Library. This provides handicap access to help disabled, elderly and injured individuals have easy access between the library and Brossman Center.

While integral to the academic work of the seminary, both the library and Brossman Center are open to

the public. The Brossman Center hosts a variety of community events and activities, including a recent domestic violence event I hosted.

In June 2009, I was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from LTSP and I look forward to a continued partnership with this vital asset to our community.



Around the 4th District



▲ Senator Washington meets with students on a recent visit to Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Philadelphia.



▲ Senator Washington participates in a ceremony celebrating Judge Johnny Butler's retirement from the Commonwealth Court.



◀ Residents of the 4th senatorial district discuss legislation on behalf of Humane Society of the United States.



▲ Senator Washington attends a dedication ceremony at Lutheran Seminary of Philadelphia with (left) Dr. Philip D. W. Krey and (center) President Rev. Dr. John Richter, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

▶ Senator Washington presents a citation to the Jenkintown Chorale, who performed at the State Capitol.



Washington Calls for Thorough Child Abuse Investigation

Like many, I was appalled and horrified by the allegations of child sex abuse by former Penn State assistant coach and founder of Second Mile, Jerry Sandusky, as well as the subsequent failure of Penn State administrators to respond appropriately.

I have called for a culture change at Penn State University because we need a greater emphasis on protecting children. This change should be a priority for the entire commonwealth.

The allegations are abhorrent. The failure of adults, time-after-time,

I am proud to have introduced legislation (SB 1363) to create an Office of Children's Ombudsman for Pennsylvania.

to step forward is astounding. I have requested that a thorough investigation of the entire situation at Penn State be completed so that we can learn where policies can be changed to better protect children. I will also make sure that no state funds are used to cover future civil and criminal actions against the University or to provide a defense for administrators.

We need to do more to protect

children. I am proud to have introduced legislation (SB 1363) to create an Office of Children's Ombudsman for Pennsylvania. This will give victims an independent source outside the child welfare bureaucracy. My plan will also empower a state-based advocate to work on behalf of victims.

I am also a sponsor of the resolution (SR 250) that created a bipartisan commission that will do a top-to-bottom review of laws related to protecting children. The commission's goal is to identify and recommend improvements in child protection laws.

◆ 4th Annual Walk to End Domestic Violence Draws Record Participation, Raises Thousands to Fund Hotline

The Eastwick Commandoes tapped a beat in leading a record attendance of almost 700 men, women and children in marching at my Fourth Annual Walk to End Domestic Violence.

The goals of this 5k walk on West River Drive are to raise money for Philadelphia's only 24-hour domestic violence hotline (**1-866-SAFE-014**), increase awareness of relationship abuse, encourage others to raise their voices against this violence and remember those lost.

Our sponsors and community partners did an incredible job inspiring people to take a stand against domestic violence. I appreciate the support of Bill George of Health Partners, Clear Channel and Clear Channel Outdoors, Keystone Mercy, Arcadia University, Comcast,

Community Outreach 200 Inc., Tom Pell of Sam's Meat Market, Nu Millennium, and Verizon Wireless.

Showing tremendous dedication in raising awareness of this important cause were our partners Women against Abuse, Women in Transition, Lutheran Settlement House, Congreso, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

As a survivor of domestic violence, I began the walk to help make certain that no one experiences what I went through. The toll-free hotline assists between 9,000 and 10,000 callers each year. We want to ensure that these victims continue receiving the support they so desperately need.

The walk raised thousands of dollars for the hotline at a time when everyone's budgets are a little tighter.

As a result, support will be offered to thousands of Philadelphia domestic abuse victims who would otherwise have no place to turn.

This year we kicked off with a lively performance of "We are Family" by Sister Sledge's lead singer Kathy Sledge. Survivors and supporters shared inspirational and heart-wrenching stories, and dozens of purple and white balloons were released skyward in remembrance and empowerment. Members of the Eastwick Commandoes then led the walk with an upbeat routine.

Plans are underway for next year. Come join us this fall in taking a step for the safety of all our city's residents.

**Join us
October 20, 2012**

4th Annual Walk to End Domestic Violence



Do you have unclaimed property? My office can help you find out!

The Department of Treasury is seeking the owners of more than \$1.5 billion in unclaimed property in Pennsylvania.

Treasury estimates that approximately one in ten Pennsylvanians is entitled to claim property.

The items include old bank accounts, uncashed checks, stocks and life insurance policies.

Many Pennsylvanians are entitled to unclaimed property, but are not aware that the online database exists, or are unable to access it. My district office staff and I can help constituents who don't have computer access to search the state Treasury's Unclaimed Property Database.

The searchable database can be found at www.patreasury.gov.

Staff members in both my Wadsworth Avenue (215-242-0472) and Roslyn (215-517-1434) district offices will be available on an ongoing basis to help constituents search the system to see if they are eligible to make a claim.

◆ Department of Public Welfare Walks Back Asset Requirements for Food Stamp Eligibility

Yielding to pressure from Senate and House Democrats and interest groups, Governor Corbett's Department of Public Welfare eased its plan to impose harsh asset tests on Pennsylvanians seeking food stamp benefits.

The new DPW proposal will limit individuals under the age of 60 to \$5,500 in savings and other assets in order to be eligible for food stamps. Folks 60 years of age and older will be limited to \$9,000 in assets. Retirement benefits are excluded from the proposal.

DPW will allow each household to have one car that will not be counted against their total assets. A second or subsequent car valued over \$4,650 would be included in the total asset figure.

Asset tests go into effect on May 1, 2012.

It was a positive development for Pennsylvania when we forced the DPW to back down from the harsh policy change that it had proposed. Even with the change in policy, I still believe the tests are too expensive and unnecessary. It will cost the state more to verify these assets than it does to administer the program. Given that 30 percent of eligible Pennsylvanians do not take advantage of this federally-run program, there is

already a savings from under-utilization.

It's tragically ironic that DPW – the agency charged with caring for this vulnerable population – continues to put children and seniors at risk through these policies.

As Democratic chair of the Senate Aging and Youth Committee I know that there are far better ways to root out fraud, waste and abuse. Pennsylvania has one of the lowest food-stamp fraud rates in America. Plus, Pennsylvania recently won a federal award for the efficient handling of its food stamp plan. Targeting this program is ridiculous and counterproductive.

No one should go hungry. The most recent USDA study on hunger and food security revealed that 10 percent of Pennsylvania households are at risk for food insecurity and hunger. Locally, over 400,000 Philadelphians – including 130,000 children – suffer from hunger every day.



Seniors and working families with children are struggling to put food on their table. While we have made great strides to help ease some of the asset test's restrictions, the governor should rescind this callous and ill-formed policy altogether.

WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU

If I can ever be of help to you, your family, or your friends, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

STATE APPLICATIONS

Driver's License • Vehicle Registration/Renewal • Notary Public
State Income Tax • Birth and/or Death Certificate

SENIOR CITIZENS' ASSISTANCE

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Form • PACE • Social Security Benefit Info
Senior Programs pamphlet • Reduced Auto Registration

HELP FOR FAMILIES

CHIP Information • PHEAA Applications • State Job Flyers
Fuel Assistance Information • Crime Prevention Handbook • And Others!!



CONGRATULATIONS to All PHEAA Grant Recipients

PHEAA recently awarded grants to 5,200 deserving students in my district. These funds will help put a college education within reach.

The Pennsylvania State Grant Program assists eligible Pennsylvanians who demonstrate financial need in pursuing higher education.

Once again, congratulations!



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◆ Senator Washington Brings Senate Aging and Youth Committee to Philadelphia for Hearing on Foster Care



Sen. Washington discusses foster care policy with Debra Schilling Wolfe, executive director of The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research.

On November 11, 2011, I hosted members of the Senate Aging and Youth Committee at a public hearing in Philadelphia.

In coordination with the University of Pennsylvania's Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice and Research, the hearing addressed obstacles that youth in foster care face when they reach 18 years of age and no longer have the support of the foster care system.

The panel also discussed options for Pennsylvania, including available programs, federal assistance and extending foster care to the age of 21 to help these individuals make a successful transition into adult life.

Those testifying included: Debra Schilling Wolfe, executive director of the Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research; Dr. Cindy Christian, professor of pediatrics at the Perelman School of Medicine and faculty director of the Field Center; Dr. Cassie Bevan, lecturer from Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice and Field Center fellow.

MAY I HELP?

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