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REPORT

to the 96th

Working Hard for Lancaster

August 2011

Dear Neighbor,

As summer comes to a close, I hope you found time to relax and enjoy some of the great events our city has to offer.

As you may know, this year's state budget was signed into law about 15 minutes before the midnight deadline on June 30. I urge you to read page two closely to learn about the details of this Republican budget. I voted against it because it is bad for Pennsylvania in so many ways. On page five, you can see pictures from a Policy Committee hearing I held at McCaskey about the education cuts.

The rest of the newsletter includes community pictures, Marcellus Shale information, a list of local grant recipients, and important volunteer information that you can find on the right of this page.

As always, please contact my office at 717-295-3157 for assistance with any state-related issue.

Sincerely,

Mike Sturla

Mike Sturla

Rep. Sturla seeks volunteers for Lancaster community events on Sept. 10

Rep. Sturla is inviting city residents, and their families and friends to participate in the 20th Annual United Way of Lancaster's Day of Caring events on Sept. 10.

This year, Rep. Sturla is sponsoring two events: 1) a cleanup of the Conestoga River targeting the portion of the river designated as part of the Greenway Project; and 2) painting a portion of an iron fence at St. Mary's Cemetery in order to preserve the historic landmark.

Both events are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Sept. 10, and will be followed by a picnic at McCaskey High School from noon to 2 p.m. Volunteers can sign up by calling Rep. Sturla's office at 717-295-3157.

HERE ARE MORE DETAILS ABOUT EACH PROJECT:

- **Conestoga River cleanup:** Volunteers should wear weather appropriate clothing, long pants are recommended. Gloves will be provided. Volunteers will meet on S. Conestoga Drive, behind Conestoga View on E. King Street.
- **Cemetery Fence Painting:** Volunteers should wear weather appropriate, old clothing. Painting supplies will be provided. Volunteers will meet at the cemetery. Call Rep. Sturla's office for directions.



The crew of volunteers from Rep. Sturla's last Conestoga Cleanup in May.

2011-2012 State Budget Details: Bad for Pennsylvania

There are countless inequities in the budget approved by Republicans in the legislature and the governor on June 30. It includes unprecedented and unfair cuts to education; it leaves our most vulnerable residents including seniors, the disabled and children struggling for services; and favors big business over Pennsylvania's small homegrown business owners.

All negotiations were held in secret and not one Democrat was invited to the table to voice the concerns of the millions of Pennsylvanians they represent. This is not the open, transparent and responsive government the Commonwealth was promised.

The cuts inflicted by the GOP budget impact the lives of Lancaster residents and residents across the state in several ways.

EDUCATION

Education sustained a historic reduction and it could not come at a worse time. In the past eight years, as a result of targeted investments in our students including pre-kindergarten and tutoring, Pennsylvania students' academic achievement improved at rates ahead of any other state.



Despite those gains and the constitutional obligation for the state to provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education, Republicans approved a \$1 billion cut to education. Districts across the state including Lancaster have furloughed teachers and staff,

eliminated academic and sports programs and raised taxes to make up for the reduction.

Most disturbing is that the cuts targeted low income districts. Some districts with the highest poverty levels suffered cuts of over \$33,000 per classroom versus wealthy districts, some of which were cut by less than \$1,000 per classroom.

HIGHER EDUCATION

State colleges were cut by nearly 20 percent in the budget. While Republicans claim this was a restoration, it is unmistakably a tremendous cut. Already this cut has



resulted in a 7.5 percent tuition increase at state system schools like Millersville.

These colleges cannot endure these deep cuts without having

an effect on the quality of education. There have already been layoffs and the potential for the elimination of courses, academic majors and activities for students. These results, along with tuition hikes, make the schools less accessible and less appealing to students, which is detrimental to local economies surrounding the schools.

The state-related schools: Temple, University of Pittsburgh, Lincoln and Penn State all have increased tuition for this academic year by between 4.5 percent and 10 percent. Pennsylvania is now home to the two most expensive public schools in the country.

HUMAN SERVICES

This budget leaves hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians underserved and without access to programs ranging from critical health care screenings to valuable job training courses. Further, the cuts place more pressure on county and local governments to provide mandated services to residents, especially at a time when demand on such services has increased.

According to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, the \$45 million cut for child welfare



programs will present several obstacles for counties to overcome. County children and youth services must be provided where the need exists, regardless of available funding.

The budget package also provides unprecedented power to the Public Welfare secretary to decide which programs should be cut without oversight

or prior approval from the legislature. During budget hearings in response to the original budget proposal, the DPW secretary admitted he was not certain he could find

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Rep. Sturla In The Community



Sturla Helps Raise Money for SDOL

On April 29, Rep. Sturla was among the “local celebrities” to compete in “Are You Smarter than an SDOL 5th Grader” at McCaskey East. Sponsored by LFEE, the event raised money to support teaching excellence and student success at SDOL. Sturla made it the furthest before missing the last question in the final round.

Sturla Urges Youth to Exercise



This summer, dozens of Lancaster students participated in *Sturla’s Striders* as part of Lighten Up Lancaster County, a program aimed at combating childhood obesity and boosting physical fitness among city youth and their families. Rep. Sturla partnered with Lancaster General Hospital and the Lancaster Recreation Center on the program.

Race Against Racism Students Visit Capitol



Rep. Sturla hosted a group of students who participated in Lancaster’s Race Against Racism for a day in Harrisburg. The students received a tour of the state Capitol and were introduced on the House floor.

Sturla Celebrates Turkish Cultural Day



Rep. Sturla is among a bipartisan group of legislators who meet with officials from Turkey when they visit the state Capitol during the annual Turkish Cultural Day, which includes an exchange of food, art and culture. Sturla is pictured here giving a House citation recognizing the day.

State Budget Details (continued from page 2)

the amount of fraud, waste and abuse that Republican lawmakers and the governor claim exists.

LEFT ON THE TABLE

There are several means in which Pennsylvanians could have avoided these drastic cuts if the Republicans had chosen to embrace them. Instead of putting Pennsylvanians first, they decided to put their corporate friends first:

1 Republicans chose to keep the state's \$780 million surplus and cut programs unnecessarily. This is money collected from the taxpayers in the past year that is supposed to be used for services to the taxpayers, and not used to benefit big business tax breaks.

2 In a year when Pennsylvanians are being asked to sacrifice more and pay higher taxes, Republicans chose to continue a planned phase out of the state's Capital Stock and Franchise tax.

3 While the governor was eliminating health care for over 41,000 Pennsylvanians, he set aside \$200 million for his friends in big business. Bonus depreciation promises no revenue generation or any job creation for the state. Republican lawmakers have even more state tax dollars in reserve for this cause, while implementing policies that led to property tax increases.

4 The Delaware Loophole, which allows big corporations to pay nothing or very little in Pennsylvania taxes, continues to be in existence. Meanwhile, small businesses remain at a competitive disadvantage and our state misses out on \$500 million in additional revenue.

The driving force behind the 2011-2012 budget was a pledge that Gov. Corbett and several Republican lawmakers took authored by Grover Norquist, a Washington, DC lobbyist, who has nothing invested in our state's future. As a result, Republicans passed a budget that hoarded what taxpayers had already paid and implemented cuts that force increased local taxes.

Visit Rep. Sturla's New Local Office

In May, Rep. Sturla's Lancaster office moved to 150 East King Street, Suite B to improve accessibility and convenience for constituents. Office hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and the numbers remain the same: phone (717) 295-3157; fax (717) 295-7816.

Constituents can visit the office for help on a variety of state services, including PACE/PACENET applications, Property Tax/Rent Rebate forms, getting a new birth certificate and scheduling a Capitol tour.



Latest Grants for the 96th District

Recently, the **City of Lancaster** was awarded a **\$100,000** state grant for a technology upgrade as part of the city's Early Intervention project.

To celebrate and invest in Lancaster's valuable arts tradition, the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts** has awarded the following grants to local arts groups:

- **Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania: \$5,000**
- **Demuth Foundation: \$5,043**
- **Fulton Opera House: \$3,619**
- **Imani Edu-Tainers African Dance Company: \$3,131**
- **Keystone Art and Culture Center: \$2,381**
- **Lancaster Museum of Art: \$5,371**
- **Lancaster Symphony Orchestra: \$21,187**
- **Long's Park Amphitheater Foundation: \$9,205**
- **Theater of the Seventh Sister: \$4,508**

Did You Know?

Lancaster had the 22nd busiest Amtrak station in the U.S. with a ridership of nearly 515,000 passengers in 2010. Philadelphia's 30th Street Station was third, with nearly 3.8 million passengers, and Harrisburg was 20th with over 547,000 passengers in 2010. Amtrak has projected a new ridership record of over 30 million passengers.

Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission Releases Report

Rep. Sturla supports responsible natural gas extraction that protects Pennsylvania's environment. On July 22, the Governor's Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission released its final report that includes 96 policy recommendations. As Chairman of the House Democratic Policy Committee, Rep. Sturla has been holding public hearings on the report.

Despite 70 percent of Pennsylvanians supporting an extraction tax on natural gas drilling that would produce hundreds of millions of dollars, the report made no such recommendation. Beyond not collecting a fee from the out-of-state drillers collecting billions of dollars in profits, the drilling companies are causing disrepair to our transportation infrastructure, straining emergency responders in rural communities and harming the Commonwealth's environment and drinking water. Meanwhile, Pennsylvania remains the only gas-producing state without an extraction tax.

For a historical reminder, Pennsylvania left coal mining unregulated until the 1970s. Now it is projected to cost \$16 billion to clean up the environmental damages caused by acid mine drainage.



Policy Committee Hearing at McCaskey

SDOL Superintendent Pedro Rivera (pictured below) testified at a House Democratic Policy Committee on state budget education cuts on July 12 at McCaskey High School. Dr. James McCollum, executive deputy to the president and chief of staff for Millersville University also testified.



Rep. Sturla has been conducting hearings throughout Pennsylvania to measure the impact of the budget cuts as the committee evaluates what the funding needs will be for next year's budget. To read testimony from any committee hearing, go to www.pahouse.com/PolicyCommittee.



Community Events

Go to www.pahouse.com/Sturla and click on "Lancaster Community Events" for useful links to upcoming community events. To receive emails about various issues from Rep. Sturla, click on "Contact Me" under his picture and sign up.

State Representative

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Scan this code with your
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Local Minister Gives Opening Prayer in House



On May 25, Rep. Sturla invited Rev. Randy Riggs to perform the opening prayer before the official start of session in the state House. Pictured here (left to right) are House Speaker Sam Smith, Rev. Riggs, his granddaughter, and Rep. Sturla.

Local Graduate Gets Scholarship

Congratulations to McCaskey graduate **Diana Hernandez**, who is attending Duquesne University for nursing, and was selected to receive a Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus scholarship worth **\$1,000**. Diana was one of eight students chosen from 113 applicants who must be active in their schools and communities, have a grade point average of at least 3.0, and attend college in Pennsylvania.



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