



THE Gavel

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PLBC

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus

State Representative Ronald G. Waters, *Chairman*

FALL 2011

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus (PLBC), I would like to thank you for taking the time to view our latest edition of The Gavel, Fall 2011. I consider it a privilege and an honor to keep you informed by providing this newsletter to update you on the work we have accomplished and the progress we are making to ensure minorities have an equal opportunity to succeed in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Inside this edition, you will find articles on The Capitol Hunger Garden, our meeting with the Inquirer Editorial Board, and much more. To keep track of these issues and others or to become a friend of the caucus, please visit our website at www.pahouse.com/plbc and join our mailing list.

If you would like to share any comments or concerns with the caucus, please contact our office at 717-772-6955, or email David Love, executive director, at dlove@pahouse.net.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Kindest Regards,



PLBC members meet with Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial Board

On March 10, 2011, Chairman Ron Waters and members of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus met with the editorial board of the Philadelphia Inquirer. The meeting, which took place at the request of Inquirer editorial page editor Harold Jackson, was held at the paper's offices at 400 N. Broad St. in Philadelphia. PLBC members addressed a variety of issues, including health disparities in the black community, the need for cultural competency for health care professionals, illegal weapons, education, the criminal justice system, economic development and the newly renovated Pennsylvania Convention Center. Members also shared with the board recent legislation sponsored by the caucus.

The meeting marked the first time that the Inquirer invited the PLBC for a sit-down discussion.

Events

Re-entry Summit

Sept. 13, 1 p.m.
Widener University Law & Government
Institute, Harrisburg Campus

Art for Justice: Incarcerated Artists' Creation from Within Exhibit

Sept. 15, 7 p.m.
Widener University, Chester, PA

Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity's Summit, "Mass Incarceration: The New Jim Crow?"

Sept. 19, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Palmer Theological Seminary
6 E. Lancaster Ave., Wynnewood, PA

The PLBC and the Philadelphia Delegation present, A Taste of Pennsylvania

The reception will be held during the CBC Annual Legislative Conference
Sept. 23 and 24, 8:30 p.m.
Grand Hyatt Washington, Washington, D.C.

PLBC "Education Over Incarceration" Youth Town Hall Meetings

Throughout Philadelphia
Dates and times yet to be determined.
Please visit www.pahouse.com/PLBC for more developments.

PLBC Annual Black History Program and Luncheon

Feb. 7, 2012, Noon
Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg, PA



Hearing on 'flash mobs' positive step to stopping youth violence

Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus Chairman Ron Waters, D-Delaware/Phila., joined House Children and Youth Democratic Chairwoman Louise Williams Bishop, D-Phila., and fellow PLBC and Philadelphia Delegation members at an August hearing on the ongoing youth "flash mobs" happening all over the city.

Waters said roving gangs of youths have been terrorizing city residents, organizing over social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and assaulting law-abiding citizens.

"The hearing was to help us gather the facts and understand the reasons why these young people are committing violent acts on the street," Waters said. "It is sad that a few bad apples are

disturbing citizens and communities, when so many others are doing such good across the city.

"We have to ensure that we get to the main cause of the issue, and hearing from youth experts is a positive first step to solving this problem," Waters said. "All of the testifiers offered insightful and actionable solutions to the issue, and I want to thank them for their contribution."

Among the speakers testifying at the hearing included Everett Gillison, Philadelphia deputy mayor for public safety; Dr. Joan Duvall-Flynn and Dr. Betty Lee Davis from the Pennsylvania NAACP Education Committee; Shelly Yanoff, executive director, Public Citizens for

Children and Youth; Dr. Lee Kirksey, assistant professor of surgery, Division of Vascular Surgery, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; and Tone Elliott and Adio Wilkins, members, Youth United for Change.



Reps. Vanessa Lowery Brown, Cherelle Parker, Louise Williams Bishop, Ron Waters and Mark Cohen listen to testimony about flash mob violence in Philadelphia.

Evans, Myers break ground for second season of Hunger Garden

State Rep. Dwight Evans, D-Phila., joined state Rep. John Myers, D-Phila., and state Sen. Mike Brubaker, R-Lancaster, in the official second season ground-breaking for the Capitol Hunger Garden outside the Main Capitol Building on May 3, 2011.

"Pennsylvania continues to lead the way," Evans said. "When I suggested to the Legislative Hunger Caucus last spring that planting a garden is a great way to bring attention to the issue, as well as help feed others, I was pleased they ran with the idea."

In 2010, the Hunger Garden yielded hundreds of pounds of produce, including tomatoes, onions and green peppers. The crop was distributed to central Pennsylvania soup kitchens and food banks.

The Legislative Hunger Caucus is co-chaired by Brubaker and Myers. It established and maintains the garden on the Capitol grounds.

"Anyone who has been to a supermarket in the past couple of months has seen why it is even more important this year that people plant home and neighborhood vegetable gardens. The prices are shooting up faster than weeds," said Myers, Democratic chairman of the House Health Committee. "It's a lot less costly and more healthy to invest some time and a little sweat in growing your own vegetables, like greens, tomatoes, radishes, peppers and cucumbers. If there's no land around your home or a community garden available, many vegetables can be grown in containers."

"Hunger makes it harder for children to learn in school and slows physical development and worsens health issues for senior citizens," Evans said. "Hunger costs Pennsylvania."

Evans was invited to appear before the Hunger Caucus in 2010 because of his national reputation as an advocate for projects that provide fresh fruits and vegetables to underserved rural and urban communities. He is the architect of the Fresh Food Financing Initiative, a public-private partnership to renovate or build grocery stores around the Commonwealth. The program's success was such that it has served as a model for a national program unveiled a year ago by the Obama administration. In April 2011, Evans participated in a ground-breaking ceremony for a new Shop 'n

Save grocery store in the Hill District of Pittsburgh.



Reps. Michelle Brownlee, Babette Josephs, John Myers, Martin Causer and Dwight Evans help to plant tomatoes at the ground-breaking of the 2nd Capitol Hunger Garden.

Senator Washington sponsors the 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. In southeastern Pennsylvania, almost 27,000 people received services for abuse prevention in the five-county area

— one quarter of those statewide who received services. In these five counties, there were 43 deaths related to domestic violence last fiscal year.

Victims of domestic abuse are everywhere — from every walk of life and every race. Sen. Washington knows because

she was a victim of domestic violence and is a survivor and an advocate for those still trapped in the web of domestic violence.

Sen. Washington is sponsoring the **“Fourth Annual Walk to End Domestic Violence” on Oct. 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. 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.

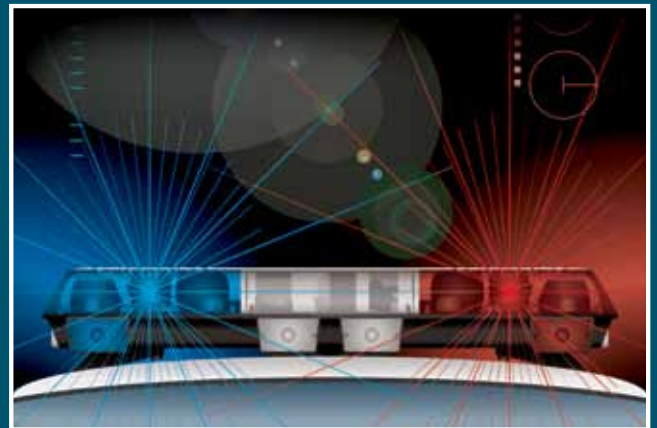
Employment Opportunities Available

Pennsylvania State Trooper — Learn about the salary, benefits and career as a Pennsylvania State Police trooper. For more information about being a trooper, please visit www.PATrooper.com or call toll free: 1-877-PACADET.

State Police Cadet — Prior to becoming a Pennsylvania State Police trooper, all recruits enter the PSP Academy under the rank of cadet. A state police cadet is a person who has been appointed to complete the basic training necessary to become a Pennsylvania State Police trooper. Both cadets and troopers must meet the state police's eligibility requirements and pass the cadet selection procedures. Apply online at www.pspcadet.state.pa.us.

Liquor Enforcement Officers/Trainee — Learn about the salary, benefits and career as a liquor enforcement officer. Liquor enforcement officers are responsible for conducting investigations performed through undercover operations and open inspections of licensed or unlicensed liquor establishments. They have the power and duty to arrest for violations of the Pennsylvania Liquor Code and specific Crimes Code-related offenses. Prior to becoming a liquor enforcement officer, all trainees enter a 13-15 week training period. The training is purposely designed to eliminate any applicant who does not possess the necessary intelligence, emotional stability or physical stamina to meet the requirements. Both liquor enforcement officer trainees and liquor enforcement officers must meet eligibility requirements and pass the selection procedures. Apply online at www.pspleet.state.pa.us.

The application period for both state police cadets and liquor enforcement officer trainee runs through Friday, Dec. 2.





PLBC information

For more information scan this QR Code with your smart phone to link to the PLBC website. Remember, the work we do is with you in mind, so your feedback is valuable.

PLBC MAILING LIST



If you would like to be placed on our mailing list, please fill out the form and mail it back to the address below or online at www.pahouse.com/plbc.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____



House Democratic Leadership forms Diversity Council

At the urging of Chairman Waters and the PLBC, House Democratic Leader Frank Dermody has authorized the formation of a Democratic Caucus Diversity Council. The council will serve as an advisory body for leadership on policy matters regarding diversity, inclusion and cultural competency. The initiative is the first effort of its kind undertaken by a state legislature in the United States.

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