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**House of Representatives**  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

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ON REAL PROPERTY  
MEMBER, JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION  
ON STROKE PREVENTION

**Budget Press Conference**  
**Aug. 4, 2009**

Thank you for being here this morning. I would like to recognize my colleagues who have joined me today to address the issue of Pennsylvania's budget impasse.

I stand here today not only as a state representative, but as a concerned resident of Pennsylvania.

My first concern and call for action deals with the nearly 33,000 state employees who did not receive pay this past Friday. I urge my colleagues in the House to, without delay or obstruction, consider SB 850 as a stopgap measure to ensure that these workers not be forced to face more payless paydays

I am also calling for immediate movement on providing Philadelphia and other counties with the enabling authority

needed to address critical financial obligations. HB 1828 and its companion bill in the Senate, SB 1058 are essential to allowing Philadelphia to continue providing vital services to its citizens. I would also encourage House leadership to consider allowing amendments to the House bill to allow other counties which desire similar relief to be able to do so.

Without action from the state, Philadelphia will not be able to continue its vital operations and pay city vendors. This would result in wide scale layoffs in both the public and private sectors. We are in economic turmoil; our unemployment rate has reached upwards of 10 percent in some parts of the state, while underemployment has also run rampant and has now become a critical issue throughout the Commonwealth. The people of Pennsylvania need and deserve relief.

My final concern deals with the current economic and fiscal condition of the Commonwealth. The first step in addressing our current situation is for the General Assembly to act swiftly on passing a responsible and compassionate budget.

I urge our legislative leaders that are currently debating House Bill 1416 in conference committee to come to a practical agreement on our state's spending plan. The conferees should be working around the clock to ensure that a fiscally and morally responsible budget is passed.

I urge the conference committee to act swiftly so that schools around the state have the necessary resources to nurture and educate our children and so that municipalities can continue the business of serving their residents.

The current standstill in the budget negotiations indicates a difference in ideas for the future direction of this Commonwealth. As Democrats we believe that we cannot retreat on the commitments that we have made on education, healthcare and other vital human services. As Democrats, we believe that we cannot retreat on commitments to find remedies for the systemic unemployment that is plaguing our state. And finally as Democrats, we believe that during this economic climate, when our residents need us the most that we must be there to provide the safety net that Pennsylvanians need and deserve. This means that we must hold the line on vital programs that affect

the well being of Pennsylvania residents and we must be prepared to make the difficult decisions necessary to sustain those programs.

I ask my colleagues to take a stand and join me in speaking out on behalf of Pennsylvanians about their needs.

I agree with what the governor recently said – we are all to blame for the budget impasse. While I applaud the Governor for taking the initiative at this time, there are many things we can do to end the impasse and provide relief for Pennsylvania's residents . . . and the time to act is now.

Thank you.