

Pennsylvania Works! Newsletter

10/9/09 - Here is an update on the ***Pennsylvania Works!*** campaign:

Day 101 without a state budget, however, it appears the deadlock has been broken. It is possible the budget may be signed by the governor today. There is one very exciting development to discuss in this week's newsletter:

Housing Trust Fund

We have been working at the Federal level to get appropriations for the National Housing Trust Fund. Recently, members of the Housing Alliance of PA, the Pennsylvania Works Campaign, and others made 27 visits to 18 congressional offices (district and D.C), as well as Senators Casey and Specter. We were well received by the offices, with many expressing their support for the funding.

At the same time we urged them to consider a foreclosure prevention plan that would help unemployed Pennsylvanians from losing their homes. The current Federal foreclosure prevention programs reduces monthly mortgage payments to help borrowers who are facing foreclosure keep their homes, but you must be employed

However, the current programs are not equipped to deal with the changing nature of the housing crisis. The problem now is that homeowners who have lost their job cannot get approved for this program because of their unemployment status. Conversely, Pennsylvania's HEMAP program provides loans to the unemployed until they are able to get a new job.

We just received word that Rep. Barney Frank has reintroduced the TARP for Main Street bill (HR 3766) in the House of Representatives. This bill will help Pennsylvania in two ways:

- \$1 billion would capitalize the National Housing Trust Fund, making approximately \$35-40 million available to Pennsylvania. This money can be used by local communities and other non-profit organizations to build modern and efficient homes, emergency repairs, accessibility, and more. Monies from the fund could also be used for rental assistance, foreclosure prevention, and other housing needs.
- \$2 billion would be used to fund mortgage assistance programs, such as Pennsylvania's HEMAP program to help those homeowners facing foreclosure as a result of their unemployment. Pennsylvania could receive \$50-60 million, based on the HUD formula

So far, Reps. Paul Kanjorski and Chaka Fattah are the only two Pennsylvania Congressmen who have co-sponsored HR 3766. Our goal is to have every Pennsylvanian Congressmen to sign-on as co-sponsors to this bill.

On the state front, without a state trust fund in place, we are not guaranteed how or where the money will be spent here in the Commonwealth. We need to make sure Federal money coming to Pennsylvania is spent toward the housing needs of our residents Help us get a Housing Trust Fund passed in Harrisburg!

How can you help? There are two ways you can help.

First, call your Congressmen and ask them to be a co-sponsor of HR 3766. Tell them that the current mortgage modifications are not doing enough to help working families.

Second, consider working with the Housing Alliance of PA with district visits with state legislators and senators this **Thursday, October 15 and Friday October 16**. Can you help? If so, please send me an e-mail. We would be happy to have you assist us. In the meantime, contact your state Senator or Representative and urge them to pass the state Housing Trust Fund (SB 599 or House Bill 60). Working families need housing they can afford.

Friday Funny

Ok its Friday. Let's lighten up and have fun going into the three day weekend.

Below is a spoof article from the Angry Drunk Bureaucrat blog. Although purely fiction, for anyone paying attention to the budget process over the last few weeks, it's pretty darn close to the confusion of the process. Yep, I'm still scratchin' my head too. The headline/link will take you to the website.

[Senate leaders boycott Senate leaders' budget proposal](#)

(AP) Harrisburg - State Senate leaders today boycotted a conference committee meeting organized by state Senate leaders to discuss a state budget proposal and to introduce their own budget plan.

The Senate Republicans are fashioning a revised budget bill to compete with another revised budget bill that they released yesterday. The measure could be down voted in the Senate in favor of their other measure.

If the House were to agree with the disagreement, their bill or their other bill could be on the governor's desk by late this week, or not.

Details of the bill were unavailable at the time, but the other revised budget bill is believed to be \$100 million smaller than the other budget bill that was previously agreed to the day before.

House Democrats are proposing an alternative-alternative plan which is \$1 billion less than the amendment to the previous amendment that substituted an alternative amendment to a section which was previously amended.

Earlier, a legislative aide threw up his hands and said "I dunno, you tell me what's going on."

The budget should have been adopted by the start of the new fiscal year July 1st, although the start of the new fiscal year had been previously amended to start December 1st.

Other Good Info

Below are links to other items in the news that relate to the campaign. Enjoy!

Anti-Foreclosure Programs Not Enough – CNBC

<http://www.cnbc.com/id/33237050>

Opportunity Exists Now for Energy Related Jobs – Erie Times News

<http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091008/OPINION02/310089997/-1/OPINION>

House Sale Revives Great Idea – Pittsburgh Tribune

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/columns/seate/s_646936.html

Signs of Progress are signs of Life – Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

http://www.timesleader.com/opinion/Signs_of_progress_are_signs_of_life_10-08-2009.html

Eat-n-Park at the Vanguard of Eco-Responsibility – Pittsburgh Post Gazette

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09281/1003719-34.stm>

Keep Informed and Keep in Touch

Please check our website frequently, as we update it with news, press releases, and other updates on the issues that make up our campaign. Our website is www.pennsylvaniaworks.org. As always, if you have any questions or comments on the issues we are working on, please feel free to drop us a line.

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