



PENNSYLVANIA AFL-CIO UPDATE

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February 9, 2007

Vol. 13, Issue 05

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IMPORTANT!
**MAKE COPIES AND DISTRIBUTE THE PENNSYLVANIA
AFL-CIO UPDATE TO ALL UNION ACTIVISTS**

Governor Rendell Unveils 2007-08 Budget to Legislature *Calls for Additional Investments to Provide Affordable Health Care to Small Business and Uninsured Workers*

Governor Rendell unveiled his budget proposal for fiscal year 2007/2008 before a joint session of the State Legislature last week calling for increased investments to provide for affordable health care for 800,000 uninsured workers, accelerated property tax cuts for homeowners, additional state investments in health and human services to offset federal budget cuts, and additional investments in public education including the expansion of pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten to thousands of children.

In his budget address the Governor also asked legislative leaders to review a plan and to work with him on developing a long-term solution to rising pension obligations to state employees and school district employees by this fall. The Governor also unveiled his transportation funding proposals that "uses the value of the Pennsylvania Turnpike" to generate revenue for bridge and highway construction and maintenance. Leasing the Turnpike to a private firm could generate revenues ranging from \$10 billion to as high as \$16 billion based upon responses from private firms to PENNDOT, the Governor said. He called on the legislature to work with his administration on taking the next step of defining a specific set of terms and conditions for future management of the Turnpike. The list of terms and conditions include: guarding against spiraling toll increases while also ensuring acceptable maintenance and repair standards, worker protections, and other important policy goals. Governor Rendell also proposed a funding solution for mass transit: taxing oil company profits realized in Pennsylvania to generate \$767 million per year for mass transit systems across Pennsylvania. The Attorney General would be responsible for ensuring that oil companies do not pass on the tax increase to consumers by raising the price of fuel.

Legislative Committees will be holding public hearings on the Governor's Budget proposals in February and March. The budget deadline is July 1st the beginning of the new fiscal year.

Governor Rendell's budget proposals include the following:

- **Property Tax Relief** - \$900 million in 2007-08 property tax relief for homeowners, one full year ahead of schedule and above and beyond the expected \$1 billion per year expected to be generated by gaming revenue.
- **Energy Independence Initiative** - \$850 million that will bring new clean energy companies and investment to Pennsylvania saving \$10 billion in energy costs over the next 10 years.

- **New Transportation Investments** - \$965 million of new investment to ensure smoother and safer roads and safer bridges. Also, \$760 million to stabilize our public transit system.
- **Environment – Preserving the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Program** – New fees on the disposal of municipal solid waste to provide sufficient revenue of \$37.7 billion in 2007-08 and \$50.2 million annually thereafter.
- **Business and Job Development** - \$22.5 million for multi-year grants, a \$7.5 million increase, for new infrastructure and facility improvement projects.
- **Education:** PreK-12 - \$9.3 billion, a 6 percent increase. Basic Education Funding - \$4.95 billion, a 3.5 percent increase. Special Education Funding - \$1 billion in total, a 3 percent increase.
- **Caring for All Pennsylvanians: Prescription for Pennsylvania** - \$255.3 million in state and federal funds to increase access to affordable health care coverage, control costs and improve quality.
- **Cover All Pennsylvanians** – Critical component of Prescription for Pennsylvania providing affordable basic health insurance plan for small businesses and uninsured workers.
- **Key Budget Facts:**

The 2007-08 General Fund Budget is \$27.3 billion, an increase of \$948 million, or 3.6 percent, over 2006-07.

\$544 million or more than half of the \$948 million increase in General Fund expenditures are for Education.

Since 2002-03, the federal government has cut \$2 billion in funding for Pennsylvania, forcing the Commonwealth to use state funds to replace lost federal funds. In 2007-08, federal cutbacks will cost the Commonwealth nearly \$720 million.

A complete copy of the Governor's Budget, Budget in Brief and more budget information can be found on this web-site: <http://www.budget.state.pa.us>

Consumer Alert From the Communications Workers of America

We reported earlier that approximately 160 workers who collect blood for the American Red Cross based in Johnstown went back to work on January 31st after being forced into a three day strike by Red Cross Management. The workers, members of Communications Workers of America went back to work to ensure that the communities and residents who rely on their assistance and support are fully served.

But Red Cross management refuses to bargain a fair contract by attacking workers' health care: demanding huge increases in costs and big cuts in benefits. Under some plans the Red Cross has proposed workers would have to pay 15 percent of hospital costs on top of paying a high deductible and 20 percent of premium costs. CWA believes that the American Red Cross did not bargain in good faith for a successor contract by refusing to provide information related to health care. You are encouraged to help Red Cross Workers, members of CWA, in their struggle to gain a fair contract that is consistent with the founding principles of the American Red Cross of providing affordable quality health care benefits and should be a model for the community. Please call, e-mail or send a letter to CEO Jim Starr. If you have donated to the Red Cross in the past by giving blood or monetary contributions mention it. Anyone that contributes to the United Way helps support the Red Cross. You may contact the CEO Jim Starr with your concerns at 1-814-262-2500. The address is 250 Jeri Drive, Johnstown, PA 15904 or by emailing redcrosslife.org. Also please send a copy of your letter to: Marge Krueger, Communications Workers of America, 11 Parkway Center, Suite 230, Pittsburgh, PA 15220 or Fax 412-928-9733.

Unions Show their Support for Locked Out Harley-Davidson Workers

As the lock-out of 2,700 Harley-Davidson workers, members of Machinists Union Lodge 175 continues, support for the workers continues to pour in from around the nation, as well as from many area unions. When Hershey Foods Workers were on strike in April 2002, Harley Davidson workers, as well as many area unions joined their picket lines in support of their struggle. This past week members of Hershey Workers Local 464 joined Harley-Davidson workers on their picket lines and also donated hand warmers, foot warmers and monetary gifts. The Hershey workers will be back again this weekend joining the works on the picket line. York County Children and Youth Services workers, members of SEIU L. 668 PSSU, provided hot dogs and coffee to the workers and more are on the way. A Teamsters local union provided pizza and scores of individual union members and friends have donated hot coffee and donuts. Area merchants and businesses including Lone Star Steakhouse have provided hot food including spare ribs to picket lines. Hundreds of e-mails in support of the workers and their fight for good jobs, decent wages and protecting health care are pouring in every day to the union's web-site from all around the country. The Harley-Davidson Local Union web-site has posted a request for portable heaters. They can be brought to the Command Trailer at Kelly's or you could call the IAM District 98 Office at (717) 600-1198. For news, information and/or to send an e-mail message of support, log onto the IAM Tyson Lodge Local 175 web site at: <http://www.iamlocal-175.org>

Employee Free Choice Act Introduced in U.S. House

Thanks to You, All Democratic Members of PA's House Delegation Are Co-Sponsors, As Well As Senator Bob Casey, Jr.

On Tuesday, Feb. 6th AFL-CIO President John Sweeney joined Congressional leaders, civil rights activists and workers to announce the introduction of the Employee Free Choice Act, a key bill to restore the freedom to organize unions to bargain for better wages and working conditions. The bill was introduced by George Miller (D-CA) in the U.S. House of Representatives.

There are currently 231 co-sponsors in the House including all 11 Democratic members of Pennsylvania's House Delegation including newly elected Democrats Altmire, Carney, Murphy, and Sestak. Senator Bob Casey, Jr. is an original co-sponsor of the companion bill in the U.S. Senate. The Pennsylvania labor movement is also working to get moderate Republicans in Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation to become co-sponsors.

During the week of February 19th the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, Area Labor Federations, and Central Labor Councils are organizing "thank you" events across Pennsylvania with all current co-sponsors.

Workers from a broad cross-section of the Pa labor movement, including: AFSCME, AFT, CWA, IBEW, SEIU, UFCW, USW, UMWA and many others are already lined up for events that are planned for Philadelphia and surrounding regions, Wilkes-Barre, Harrisburg, Johnstown, and Pittsburgh.

"The legislation is needed to level the playing field for working people by fixing a badly broken system in which workers are routinely denied their freedom to form or join unions to improve their lives," Sweeney and Congressional leaders said.

The bill would strengthen protections for workers' freedom to organize and bargain for wages and benefits by requiring employers to recognize the unions after a majority of workers sign cards authorizing union representation. It also would provide mediation and arbitration of first contract disputes and authorize stronger penalties for violation of the law when workers seek to form a union.

AFSCME International President Gerald McEntee,

To Address PA AFL-CIO Biennial Legislative Conference Feb., 26 – 27, 2007 Hershey Lodge and Convention Center

Gerald McEntee, International President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union, Newly Elected Democratic Congressman Joseph Sestak and Democratic State Representative Robert Belfanti, Jr. are among the list of confirmed speakers who will address the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO's Biennial Legislative Conference at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. Approximately 200 union activists and leaders have registered and as many as 250 are expected to attend.

For More Details and to Register Today Contact: Secretary-Treasurer Richard Bloomingdale at (717) 231-2851.

You will have the opportunity to present your union's issues at the Legislative Conference and to have them included in the Legislative Agenda for the 2007-08 Session. You will also have the opportunity to meet and discuss specific issues and concerns affecting your union with State Legislators during the reception on Monday evening from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The conference also includes both national and state labor and elected officials who will be addressing the conference and the opportunity to finalize a pro-active legislative agenda for the working people of Pennsylvania. Register today to assure your accommodations and facilitate us in planning a successful conference.

SOLIDARITY CONCERT

Starring
ANNE FEENEY
Legendary Folksinger, activist

7:00 PM Saturday, March 10, 2007

Steelworkers' Hall
200 Gibson Street, Steelton, PA 17113

\$10 per ticket
(Proceeds to benefit United for Progress)

Ticket Information: Rick Smith (717) 448-1953 or email at
RickSmith@unitedforprogress.com

PENNSYLVANIA AFL-CIO LOBBYISTS' MEETING

Meetings are held Mondays at 10:30 a.m.

At the PA AFL-CIO Headquarters

Feb: 5, 12; Mar: 12, 19, 26; Apr: 16, 23, 30; May: 7, 21; June 4, 11, 18, 25

Session Days:

PA House

February 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14(NV)

March 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21

April 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 30(NV)

May 7, 8, 21, 22, 23

June 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

PA Senate

February 5, 6, 7, 12, 13

March 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28

April 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 30

May 1, 2, 7, 8, 21, 22

June 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

***The Legislative Session schedule is subject to change without notice.**

WORLD WIDE WEB

Visit the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO home page at: <http://www.paaficio.org>

Visit the PA Legislative Website at: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us>