



## *Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 8, 2009

## **EVENT MARKS 100<sup>TH</sup> DAY WITHOUT PA STATE BUDGET**

*Nonprofits call on lawmakers to reform budget process*

HARRISBURG, PA (October 8, 2009) – As Pennsylvania’s budget stalemate reaches Day 100, nonprofit and community providers, unpaid for more than three months, are being forced to lay off staff, cut services or close their doors. The fallout is impacting the lives of tens of thousands of Pennsylvania children, families, seniors and people living with disabilities.

Several organizations and individuals hurt by the budget impasse gathered in the Pennsylvania Capitol today to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> day in Pennsylvania without a state budget by highlighting the pain suffered by Pennsylvanians and community agencies throughout the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania remains the only state in the nation without a state budget. While legislators inched closer toward resolution this week, the damage for many nonprofit community providers is already done, noted David A. Ross, JD, Public Policy Office for the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO). “Nonprofits have been devastated by this budget impasse,” Ross said. “The passage of the budget may be imminent, but our work continues.”

Douglas E. Hill, Executive Director of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, said: “As the budget impasse drags on, only fractional amounts of cash from the July ‘bridge budget’ have been flowing from the state. This has forced layoffs and furloughs, program shut downs, and many reductions in services as counties try to stretch scant local reserves and borrowed dollars to meet state obligations and the needs of local residents.”

The Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP) represents several agencies across the Commonwealth that provide state-funded services and have been negatively impacted by the budget impasse. Joe Ostrander, the CAAP’s Communications Director, said the real tragedy of the stalemate is “the irreversible effects it is having on real people.”

“The mother who loses her job and her house due to the economy turns to Community Action to help her provide shelter and food for her children, but the agency had cut those services due to the budget impasse,” Ostrander said.

Tony Ross, Executive Director of the United Way of Pennsylvania, called the budget impasse a “man-made Katrina” that “demonstrates why nonprofits and social service organizations are wise

investments. The stalemate highlights the vital role of these groups in caring for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens, including, children, the elderly and those with physical challenges."

Rev. Bonnie Camarda, Director of Partnerships for the Salvation Army of Greater Philadelphia, said that the situation has put many nonprofit service providers in an unsustainable position, forced to borrow money and stretch every dollar to keep their doors open. She noted that the Salvation Army's regional offices have been forced to cover payroll and bills for a number of their community locations that cannot pay their staff and keep their programs operating during the impasse.

"With squeezed and limited resources at the regional level, this is not sustainable," she said. "Many of our nonprofit colleagues are taking out lines of credit to try to survive, operating out of the good faith hope that the state will come through with continued funding and not leave them scrambling to find replacement funding for programs whose state funding might now be reduced or even eliminated."

David Ross emphasized that while lawmakers appear to be close to enacting a state budget, the impact of the impasse will live on and must be addressed to avoid a repeat in the future. "We cannot let nonprofits become collateral damage of future budgets negotiations."

"This must never happen again," said Andrea Morató-Lara of the Pennsylvania Association of Latino Organizations. "We are calling on the Legislature, immediately upon enactment of the budget, to work with us through the Pennsylvania Charitable Nonprofit Caucus to identify solutions to ensure that those in need of human and social services are never put at risk by a budget process that holds the providers of those services hostage."

Today's event was organized by PANO, with help from several other groups who have worked tirelessly for months to end the budget impasse. Speakers included Tony Ross of the United Way of Pennsylvania; Douglas E. Hill of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania; Joe Ostrander of the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania; Rev. Bonnie Camarda of the Salvation Army of Greater Philadelphia; Pete Biasucci of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg; Andrea Morató-Lara of the Pennsylvania Association of Latino Organizations; Barry Kauffman of Common Cause Pennsylvania; and David A. Ross of the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO).

A coalition of service providers in Southeastern Pennsylvania also held an event Thursday marking the 100<sup>th</sup> day without a state budget. More information about the event is available at: <http://pabudgetnow.wordpress.com/>

*PANO is the statewide membership organization serving and advancing the charitable nonprofit sector through leadership, advocacy, education and other services in order to improve the overall quality of life in Pennsylvania. Learn more at our web site: <http://www.pano.org/>.*

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### **Capitol Event Marks 100th Day Without a State Budget**

#### **Welcome:**

David A. Ross, J.D., Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations

#### **Presenters Include:**

- Tony Ross, United Way of Pennsylvania
- Doug Hill, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
- Joe Ostrander, MCC, Community Action Association of Pennsylvania
- Rev. Bonnie Camarda, Salvation Army of Greater Philadelphia
- Pete Biasucci, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg
- Andrea Morató-Lara, M.A., Pennsylvania Association of Latino Organizations
- Barry Kauffman, Common Cause of Pennsylvania

#### **Conclusion:**

David A. Ross, J.D., Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations

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