

PARENT FAIR VIII

I. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to be here this morning. If only in an abbreviated manner.

A. My purpose is to welcome you to Parent Fair ^{Comm College -} VIII, one of most important events you'll ever have the good fortune to attend.

B. You have already have experienced some of very informative sessions this morning by the very capable staff of the various organizations with much more of the same slated for you after lunch.

C. Embrace and absorb this information with relish and enthusiasm because it has lifelong applications as you establish and perhaps reestablish your relationships with your children or grandchildren, regardless of their age.

II. When I attend these kinds of workshops I sometimes wish I could bring the entire General Assembly and the Governor and his staff with me.

A. Because I don't think, as a body, we truly know ~~how~~ what effect we can have on those of you trying to deal with all the difficulties in raising children.

1. It's not as if we weren't children ourselves or that we didn't have children of our own.
2. But it seems that when we cross the Susquehanna River our perspective is distorted collectively; our sense of what really is happening in the real world is somehow described in terms of personal responsibility and accountability.
3. Because only a distorted perspective could possibly have produced the so called welfare reforms that:
 - a. require a 20 hour a week job within in the first two years, which began in March or lose one's cash assistance
 - b. without any genuine help for day care or transportation
 - (1) Quality day care at affordable prices at times when it is needed.
 - (2) Or any means of public transportation to reach a job even if you can find quality day care.
 - c. Or if you haven't found a job in those two years were not only going to penalize you but also your children. This so called "Full Family Sanctions" hold innocent children

responsible for their parents whether intentionally or not they haven't gotten a job.

- d. Or because the State is so hung up on finding a job, any job, regardless of the pay or benefits, your educational needs are discarded –some people have had to leave weeks and days before graduation in some programs – so they wouldn't lose their benefits.

III. This kind of distorted; insensitive perspective is in direct conflict to what is happening here today.

A. The presenters of these various programs know the value of you and your needs and understand what human service and a positive approach means to individuals who ^{are} just looking for some guidance and help.

B. You will be exposed today to the best Westmoreland County has to offer, not only in terms of talent of these wonderfully knowledgeable and dedicated people, but also in terms of the important and concise content.

C. Think about it approximately 75 human service professionals who are here have no other goal or item on their agenda than to be of

service to you; to help make your lives and those of your children better.

D. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could transport that unadulterated selflessness to Harrisburg!

IV. Well, we ^{CAN} ~~call~~ all dreams. ^{- can't we?} Anyway, on behalf of all of these professional human service providers please let say welcome and thank you for taking the time to be here today.



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409 Coulter Avenue, Suite 2
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March 9, 1999

Representative Tom Tangretti
327 South Main St.
Greensburg, PA 15601

Dear Representative Tangretti:

We are pleased that you will be offering the opening remarks at Parent Fare IX on Saturday, April 10th. I am enclosing a copy of this year's class schedule, with time for your remarks marked at 10:50 a.m. in the amphitheater in Founders Hall at WCCC.

If you would like further information about the event or your participation, please do not hesitate to call me at 837-5410.

Yours truly,

Terri Katzman
Executive Director

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A United Way Participating Agency
Affiliated with Parents Anonymous

Wisdom • Insight • Support • Encouragement

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House of Representatives
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HARRISBURG

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COMMITTEES

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DEMOCRATIC CHAIR,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION
DEMOCRATIC POLICY

Date: April 6, 1999

REC'D APR 07 1999

TO: ALL DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS

FROM: Representative Phyllis Mundy *PM*

SUBJECT: Child Care

As you probably know, on March 1 the Ridge administration's new income limits and copayment levels took effect for the "Child Care Works" program, which helps low-income working parents pay for day care.

These changes, which the "Independent" Regulatory Review Commission approved in November on a party-line vote, are already devastating families. Thousands of parents have been cut off entirely because the income limits were lowered, and thousands more remain technically eligible but can't afford the higher copayment levels.

My personal suggestion has been that the Ridge administration should restore the cuts immediately or rename the program "Child Care Works - If You Can Afford It" (see attached op-ed piece).

One of the Ridge administration's claims has been that the problems are confined to northeastern Pennsylvania. I think that any of you who hold a town meeting or check around in your district will find that the new regulations are causing problems for your constituents too -- if you aren't already getting the calls now.

Here are four simple ideas some members are already putting into practice:

- **Sponsor a town meeting.**

House members from northeast Pennsylvania held two town meetings on this issue in March. More than 100 people attended in Scranton, and we had 350 in Wilkes-Barre. (See attached news articles.)

Auditor General Casey attended both, and I expect that he would be willing to attend similar meetings. He has been outspoken about this issue for months, and I believe his presence helped increase the media and public turnout at both meetings.

At the Wilkes-Barre meeting, we had petitions for people to sign urging the governor to restore the cuts.

- **Get community groups and other stakeholders involved.**

Those who attended the Wilkes-Barre meeting included members of the Junior League, the League of Women Voters, United Way, Greater Federation of Women's Clubs and the county Commission for Women.

As I outline in the attached op-ed piece, the changes to this program not only hurt parents and children – they also hurt their employers and the day-care providers. These changes are also bad for business, and they go directly against "tough on crime" policies.

- **Do a news release, letter to the editor or op-ed piece.**

In mid-March, I sent out an op-ed piece (attached), and it appeared several places, including both Wilkes-Barre newspapers, both York newspapers and the Standard-Journal Newspapers (the Milton Daily Standard and Lewisburg Daily Journal).

However, this leaves plenty of daily and weekly newspapers in most of your districts that might be interested in hearing from their local lawmakers on this important issue.

- **Co-sponsor H.B. 964.**

This bill would restore the previous regulations. If you are not one of the more than 60 House Democrats who already have co-sponsored H.B. 964, you are welcome to contact Louise Stepanic in my office (3-1614) to add your name.

I want to emphasize that all these actions have the end goal of restoring the cuts and helping these working parents who are struggling to make ends meet. I do not want this to become a partisan issue. A House Republican attended the Scranton town meeting, and eight Republican members have cosponsored my bill to restore the cuts.

It is my sincere hope that taking the case to the media and the public will help in convincing the Ridge administration to correct this serious mistake – the sooner, the better.

PM/bt

Attachments