

# SEMMELE



Dear Friends:

The 1997 session of the General Assembly got underway Jan. 7 and no time was wasted in getting to the people's business.

I am serving on four committees this session — Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Appropriations, Business and Economic Development, and Consumer Affairs where I am chairman of the subcommittee on Telecommunications. I am also on the Majority Policy Committee and chairman of the East Central Majority Caucus.

In this report you will find information about recently enacted legislation, what is on the agenda and some important items of local interest.

In July, I will be taking my district office to several communities. You will have an opportunity *to set up an appointment* to talk with me personally about matters concerning state government.

Included with this mailing is a card updating Pennsylvania's senior citizen programs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions about legislation or need help solving a problem with state government.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Sincerely,

Rep. Paul Semmel

## *LOCAL TAX REFORM WILL BE ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT*

When you go to the polls this fall, you will have an opportunity to do something that has not been done in years — change the way local property taxes are levied in Pennsylvania.

That is because on the ballot in every polling place across the Commonwealth on Nov. 4 will be a question asking voters if they support a local tax reform homestead exemption for property owners. What is the homestead exemption? Simply put, this exemption will allow local taxing authorities, schools and municipalities to substantially reduce property taxes on a homeowner's primary residence, something that is prohibited by law right now.

The purpose of the exemption is to pave the way for comprehensive local tax reform that will allow communities to reduce unfair property taxes in favor of taxes that are based on the ability to pay.

While the legislation was passed by the General Assembly already, it must be approved by a majority of voters in a statewide referendum to take effect. When you vote this fall be sure to express your views on local tax reform.

## *DRUNK DRIVING LOOPHOLE ELIMINATED*

A new law eliminates a loophole in the state's drunk driving law to ensure that drivers who drink and get behind the wheel of a car will not be able to get away with their crime.

The act restores essential language to the drunk driving law allowing police to conduct blood alcohol tests on suspected drunk drivers for up to three hours after they were stopped. Similar language previously contained in the law had been struck down by the Supreme Court, creating a loophole that could have allowed suspected drunk drivers to escape punishment.

If the loophole had remained open, it would have had a significant negative impact on efforts to get drunk drivers off the highways. It would have made it more complicated and expensive to prosecute drunk drivers and put additional pressure on police, who have a tough enough job as it is.

Under Pennsylvania law, drivers with a 0.10 percent blood alcohol content level or higher will be considered driving under the influence. Drivers under the legal drinking age of 21 will be violating the law if they have a 0.02 percent level.



# Keystone Grants Help District

There's good news for those who enjoy the outdoors. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has approved four Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund grants in the 187<sup>th</sup> Legislative District.

Grant	Total Cost	Description
\$90,000	\$180,000	<b>Berks County:</b> Rehabilitation and Development of the 49-acre Hunsicker's Grove Park in Longswamp Township in Berks County. Work will include pedestrian and vehicular access parking, rehabilitation of park structures, signs and other needed improvements.
225,000	450,000	<b>Kutztown Borough:</b> Renovation of the swimming pool complex in Kutztown. Work will include replacement of pool filtration recirculation and drain systems; installation of disability access, decking landscaping, signs and other related site improvements.
225,000	836,100	<b>Lehigh County:</b> Development of Lemur/Lookout Outdoor Café. Work will include construction of primate exhibit and viewing deck, installation of pond liner, site furniture, landscaping, signs and other needed improvements.
100,000	280,000	<b>North Whitehall Township:</b> Acquisition of the 34.6 acre Minnich Tract along Fells Creek and Neffs-Laurys Road near Egypt Road for park and recreation, and open space.

The Keystone Community Grants are the primary source of financial assistance to local governments for planning, acquiring and developing park, recreation and conservation areas.



*Kutztown fourth graders tour Capitol—On June 3, Rep. Semmel visited with 86 fourth graders from the Kutztown Elementary School during their tour of the Capitol. Call my district office if you or your group would like to arrange a tour of the Capitol, the State Museum or the Governor's Home.*



# Guides to Start Small Businesses Available

If you are planning to start your own small business this year, the state Department of Community and Economic Development has a guide that can help you. The "Entrepreneurs Guide — Starting and Growing a Business in Pennsylvania" provides step-by-step instructions and advice on:

- Writing a business plan
- Obtaining financing
- Forming a legal business structure
- Registering a business name
- Applying for an employer identification
- Meeting licensing and permit requirements

— Securing state contracts

For a free copy of the guide, call the department toll-free at 1-800-280-3801.



*A Rose between two ... — Christianne Burger Knauer, Pennsylvania's Junior Miss for 1997, accepts a House Citation from House Speaker Matthew J. Ryan and Rep. Semmel. Miss Knauer attends Kutztown High School.*

## Government Feels "IMPACCT" of PRIME Council

The General Assembly is "primed" to consider several recommendations found in the 1996 report entitled *Making Government Make Sense*, issued by the Improve Management Performance and Cost Control Task Force (IMPACCT). The report outlined 400 recommendations to make government smaller, more efficient and more user friendly.

Several measures, with the potential to save \$500 million, were recently unveiled by The PRIME Council, the group appointed by the governor to implement the IMPACCT's recommendations. PRIME stands for "Privatize, Retain, Innovate, Modify, Eliminate."

Among the PRIME Council cost-saving proposals now being considered by the General Assembly are:

◆ House Bill 14, establishing state licensure of check cashing businesses and saving an estimated \$2 million over a five-year period. The House passed this bill on March 18 and it is awaiting committee action in the Senate.

◆ Senate Bill 5, significantly altering the way the state buys goods and services by consolidating procurement laws, producing five-year savings of as much as \$450 million.

◆ HB 439, revising Treasury Department investment authority to

permit adoption of the prudent investor policy, reaping an extra \$50 million over five years.

◆ HB 440, transferring inspection of fuel tanks and pumps from the State Police to the Department of Labor and Industry, saving approximately \$2 million over five years. The bill has been approved by the House Labor Relations Committee and sent to the full House.

◆ HB 441, improving efficiency of the Pennsylvania National Guard by imposing penalties on any guard member who goes absent without leave, saving \$1 million over five years.

◆ HB 442, changing how frequently the State Police must recalibrate speed timing devices from every six weeks to every six months, saving \$2 million over five years.

◆ SB 323 would set up a comprehensive performance evaluation system.

◆ SB 324 would require executive agencies to implement strategic and performance plans and follow through with performance reports.

◆ SR 14 directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study civil service reform. The resolution was passed unanimously on April 2.

The PRIME Council has implemented a number of administra-

tive changes that have already resulted in cost savings. For example, the Lottery installed a 900 telephone line in place of its toll-free 800 service. By having users pay for the service, the line will produce income of about \$200,000 to benefit older Pennsylvanians instead of incurring a \$200,000 a year cost to taxpayers.

PennDOT's pilot program allowing some local school district driver education teachers to administer road tests, eliminates the need to travel to PennDOT facilities. The department has also instituted on-line messenger services at 30 pilot locations to electronically transact various driver and vehicle registrations. Now, transactions that used to take weeks take minutes.

The Department of Aging has reduced the number of contracts from 371 to 52 for an estimated savings of \$217,000. The Department of Revenue's worldwide web site allows Pennsylvanians to download tax returns on the Internet

More efficient use of tax dollars to run government means more money to help people. The goal of streamlining government is one that the General Assembly, IMPACCT and PRIME all share.

# Frugal Budget and Tax Cut Legislation Approved

The General Assembly passed and the Governor signed a budget package for 1997-98 a near-record 55 days before the July 1 constitutional deadline.



The key component of the package was legislation (ACT 7 of 1997) that implemented a number of important changes to the Commonwealth's tax laws.

As originally introduced, the measure (House Bill 134) established a personal income tax refund checkoff for breast and cervical cancer research. As amended in the legislative process, it also provides targeted tax reductions for individuals and small businesses. Here are some details on important provisions in the bill.

## Tax Cuts for Individuals

Lower income households with children are a primary benefi-

ciary of the tax package. As a result of the changes, for tax year 1997, a husband, wife and two children with income of \$20,600 or less will not owe any state income tax. The special tax forgiveness credit has been modified to increase the eligibility income allowance for each dependent from \$3,000 to \$4,000.

The bill makes it easier to determine the eligibility of a married couple. Under the new provisions a married couple with eligibility income of \$12,600 or less would be eligible for the credit without determining whether each spouse qualifies for the credit separately. An eligible claimant is someone who meets the income guidelines and who cannot be claimed as a dependent on another taxpayer's federal income tax return.

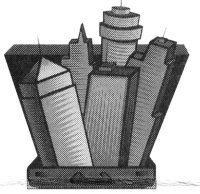
Act 7 also contains tax relief for individuals who participate in a "cafeteria" benefits plan at work. Under this act, non-cash fringe benefits will not be subject to the personal income tax merely because the individual has the option to receive some of the benefits in the form of cash or other taxable benefit. Only the portion of a fringe benefits package for which the individual chooses to re-



ceive taxable benefits will be subject to tax. This is effective for tax years beginning in 1997 and thereafter.

## Tax Cuts for Small Businesses

The deduction from the capital stock and franchise tax fixed formula is increased by this legislation from \$100,000 to \$125,000, effective for tax years beginning in 1997 and thereafter. This provision will particularly aid small to midsize businesses.



The sales and use tax on computer services has been repealed for services rendered on or after July 1, 1997. This tax was first added in 1991 and repeal has been debated for some time. The repeal will benefit both consumers and businesses.

Computer program services, computer integrated systems design services, computer processing and data preparation and processing services, information retrieval services, computer facilities management services and other computer services will be exempt from the tax. These tax reductions are designed to keep Pennsylvania more competitive in the global economy.

## Staying in Touch with Rep. Paul Semmel

### Schnecksville

4525 Spring Hill Dr.

P.O. Box 235

Schnecksville, PA 18078

(610) 799-0187

Macungie - (610) 966-0187

### Harrisburg

Room 147B, East Wing

House Box 202020

Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

(717) 787-3017

Kutztown - (610) 683-9199

Upper Macungie - (610) 395-8180

## Circuit Rider Program:

Tuesday, July 15, 1997

10 to 11 a.m. — **Longswamp** Township Building, 1112 State Street in Mertztown

11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. — **Topton** Borough Hall, 44 West Market Street in Topton

12:45 to 1:45 p.m. — **Fleetwood**, State Rep. Leh's District office in the Patriot Savings Bank Building on Main and Richmond streets in Fleetwood.





# Rep. Paul W. Semmel

## Reports On:

# Pennsylvania Women And Families

Winter 1997/98

### Dear Friend,

The House Majority Caucus has developed a comprehensive agenda, of which one of the major planks is strengthening Pennsylvania families. High priority initiatives include:

- \* creation of a one-time state tax credit for adoptive parents and a revamping of adoption law;
- \* support of working parents through a state tax credit for child care;
- \* protecting women after breast cancer surgery through enactment of mandatory minimum insurance coverage provisions;
- \* ensuring the safety of child day care centers through an improved inspection system.

The 1997-98 state budget contains a \$25 million tax cut for low-income working families. A family of four with taxable income less than \$18,300 will pay zero state income tax next year.

The spending plan also increases funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) by 6.1 percent.

Funding for day care is increased to nearly \$300 million. Funding also increased for homeless assistance, early intervention services for children with special needs, community mental health and mental retardation services.

If you have any questions about this report or any other state-related matter, please call any of my district offices listed on the back page.

Sincerely,

*Paul Semmel*

Rep. Paul W. Semmel

### by gov. to head women's panel

Leads 17-member board; assumes new post Oct. 14

by Tom Backwater  
New Era Staff Writer

Gov. Tom Ridge has tapped a Lancaster Township woman to head his revived Pennsylvania Commission for Women.

Loida Esbri, the School District of Lancaster's spokeswoman since 1982, will take over as executive director of the state commission on Oct. 14, a Ridge spokesman confirmed today.

In her new post, which pays \$55,000, Esbri will be the full-time administrator for a 17-member panel now being formed by Ridge and legislative leaders.

The commission, which Ridge dismantled last year and re-created in his first year in office,



Loida Esbri  
Leaves city schools  
the director of the new post

### State program helps pregnant women get the care they need

Many state social programs seem to fall through the cracks. They are promoted via television and claim to be designed to help Pennsylvanians in need.

One such program however, only in its fourth year, has actually lived up to its billing as a program designed for Pennsylvanians.

This program, designed to encourage pregnant women and mothers with small children to seek prenatal and early childhood health-care has helped lower Pennsylvania's infant death rate, a state Health Department official said yesterday.

The numbers are not dramatic, but under the four-year-old "Love 'em with a Checkup" program 84 percent of those who called the toll-free line inquiring about prenatal care actually received care; 81 percent seeking medical assistance got it; and 53 percent of those seeking pediatric care. A phone call by our staff supported attention to care. A phone call by our staff Counties were given help by

### Connector champions



### Four women lawmakers get job done

By Brad Barsted  
Harrisburg Bureau

When progress on the proposed Interstate 76/Pennsylvania Turnpike connector road in Cranberry grounds to a halt, four women lawmakers rallied up their sleeves.

Carone, R-Bucks County, picked up the pace, said Rep. Carone, R-Bucks County.

Their effort culminated with an announcement Wednesday that PennDOT was giving a green light to a scaled-down version of the project, which will ease congestion and spur economic development in the region.

Carone was referring to herself and three other women in the Legislature who represent people working or living in the Cranberry area and the surrounding region.

Sen. Melissa Hart, R-McDaniels; Sen. Mary Jo White, R-Butler

County, and Rep. Jane Orie, R-McDaniels.

The fact that one region on the Allegheny-Butler border has an all-female delegation — four women representing it in Harrisburg — is a historic first.

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### Pa. House backs keeping firearms from abusers

Those having protection orders against them also could lose right to possess weapons under bill. Now they must give them up, but can buy new ones.

By MARIO F. CATTABIANI  
The Associated Press

### Ridge signs breast cancer bill

Victory's personal for the first lady

By Heidi Russell  
The Associated Press

December, Pennsylvania's first lady, Michele Ridge, received a jolt when doctors discovered a breast lump during her annual mammogram.

Although surgery the next month revealed the lump was benign, Ridge opened her heart to the thousands of women diagnosed with breast cancer each year. So it was with some relief that she watched



### Inside This Special Report ...

- ✓ Legislation designed to help women and families
- ✓ Recognizing women's achievements and contributions
- ✓ Information you and your family can use

# Breast Cancer Protection

## Expanded Health Insurance Coverage

Breast cancer affects the entire family. The emotional impact is tremendous enough, let alone having the additional worry as to whether medical bills will be covered by the family's health insurance.

To lessen that worry, legislation was signed into law last month that expands health insurance coverage.

First, it prevents insurance companies from requiring

mastectomy patients to undergo *outpatient* care after surgery. Now, insurers must provide *inpatient* care for a length of time necessary to ensure patient safety.

Second, every policy that covers mastectomy procedures must also cover breast reconstructive surgery and breast prosthetic devices. The coverage mandated provides a 6-year window from the date of the mastectomy for reconstructive surgery and includes coverage for reestablishing breast symmetry.

I was proud to be a part of this important, timely and compassionate effort to reach out to those affected by breast cancer.

Breast cancer is the leading cause of death for women in Pennsylvania between the ages of 25 and 54. It's important that all of us become more aware of how breast

cancer affects women and families so we can join together to find a cure.

### Tax Check-off

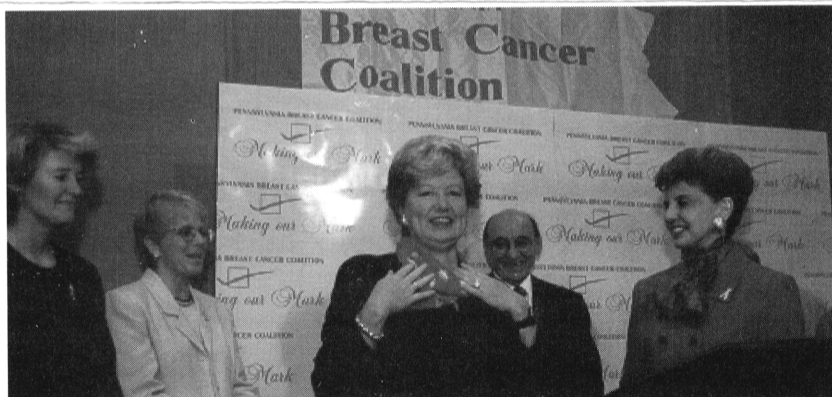
The Breast and Cervical Cancer Research Act is now law. Under the new act, the Department of Revenue will provide a check-off on state income tax returns so that Pennsylvanians can designate a contribution of any amount of their anticipated tax refund for breast and cervical cancer research.

In addition to the monetary benefit, the check-off box has a symbolic effect in that it will remind every taxpayer in the Commonwealth how vital this issue is.

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***Breast cancer is the leading cause of death for Pennsylvania***

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First Lady Michele Ridge announces the sale of a new scarf to benefit the PA Breast Cancer Coalition. Pictured, l-r, are: Kathy Schweiker, wife of Lt. Gov. Schweiker; Rep. Katie True (R-37); First Lady Michele Ridge; and Frank and Sylvia Pasquerilla of Crown American Corporation.

## Children's Health Program (CHIP) Expanded

The 1997-98 state budget includes a 6.1 percent increase in funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The program also will receive at least \$60 million this year in federal money.

Created in 1992, CHIP provides free or low-cost health insurance to children from low-income working families who don't qualify for medical assistance but cannot afford private insurance.

The program currently covers 53,800 children, an increase of 11,300 since 1993. I will continue to support efforts to expand the program. To learn more about CHIP, call 1-800-KIDS-101.

## Revamping the 911 System

The House recently passed a measure designed to reform the state's 911 emergency telephone systems.

The legislation was prompted by a fatal incident that occurred in Philadelphia three years ago.

Now before the Senate, the proposal would authorize the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) to establish minimum training and certification for 911 dispatchers.

If enacted, this legislation would go a long way toward giving families the quality response they deserve when calling for emergency assistance.

## Health Insurance Portability Act

Enacted into law earlier this year, the Health Care Insurance Portability Act guarantees that Pennsylvania workers will be able to carry their health insurance with them when they change jobs.

Equally important, employees sustaining injuries or suffering a long-term illness cannot be denied benefits because of their illness when they switch employers.

The new law brings Pennsylvania into compliance with federal requirements of the Kassabaum/Kennedy Act.

## Diabetic Supplies To Be Covered

Continuing its commitment to families and family health-care issues, the House unanimously approved a bill that would require private insurers to cover the costs of diabetes-related medical supplies.

Under the measure, which I supported, items covered would include blood-sugar monitors, testing strips, insulin and syringes.

An estimated 1.1 million Pennsylvanians have diabetes. It is the third-leading

cause of death by disease. Nationwide, diabetes afflicts 16 million Americans, costing about \$92 billion to treat.

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***Nationwide, diabetes afflicts 16 million Americans, costing about \$92 billion to treat.***

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Costs for the medically-necessary supplies needed by those afflicted can run as high as \$200 a month, according to testimony presented during hearings on this issue.

Families need help with these costs. If enacted, this legislation (now before the Senate) would give them the assistance they need.

# Women In Politics

Women won the right to vote in 1920. Since then, women not only have been making their voices heard at the polls, they also have been bringing their much-needed perspective into the political arena.

Although room for improvement still exists, women have made some significant strides in the last 20 to 25 years, according to the National Women's Political Caucus. In 1977, 18 women, or 4.1 percent, held seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Today, their ranks have increased to 11.7 percent, with 51 women holding congressional seats.

In Pennsylvania, 31 women represent those back home in their respective legislative districts.

Last year also was noteworthy in that: 1) women nationwide gained 10 more state legislative seats and added a governor; 2) added 11 to their collective voice in the U.S. House of Representatives and two in the U.S. Senate; and 3) Madeleine Albright became the first female Secretary of State.

Because of women's involvement in government and politics, family values are no longer viewed as a feminist issue only, but rather an issue of importance to everyone.

## Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania

Every year since 1949, the governor recognizes outstanding Pennsylvania women by naming them Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania. Potential candidates are nominated on the basis of their accomplishments and the quality of their achievements.

Prominent women to receive the award include: Pearl Buck, author - 1950; Mamie Eisenhower - 1955; The Honorable Genevieve Blatt, state appellate court judge - 1956; Sophie Masloff, former mayor of Pittsburgh - 1990; Marilyn Horne, soprano - 1991; Teresa Heinz, widow of the late Senator Heinz - 1993.

## Women Help Build PA Economy

Women-owned businesses are an integral part of Pennsylvania's economy as shown by the following statistics from the National Foundation for Women Business Owners:

- As of 1996, there were nearly 300,000 women-owned businesses in Pennsylvania, employing nearly 862,000 people and generating nearly \$104 billion in sales.

- Converting those 1996 figures into percentages, women-owned firms accounted for 33.3 percent of

all firms in Pennsylvania, provided employment for 25 percent of Pennsylvania workers and generated 14 percent of the state's business sales.

- In 1996, Pennsylvania ranked 7th in the nation in the number of women-owned businesses, 6th in employment and 7th in sales.

- Between 1987-1996, the number of women-owned firms in Pennsylvania is estimated to have increased by 65 percent, employment by 177 percent and sales by 217 percent.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

**HOUSE RESOLUTION**  
No. 293 Session of 1997

INTRODUCED BY WASHINGTON, JAMES, ROEBUCK, MYERS, JOSEPHS, KIRKLAND, PRESTON, YOUNGBLOOD, HORSEY, THOMAS, ROBINSON, CARN, MANDERINO, A. H. WILLIAMS, OLIVER, LEDERER, EVANS, BUXTON, ORIE, C. WILLIAMS, RAMOS, M. COHEN, LAUGHLIN, BISHOP, DEWESE, YBON AND LESCOVITZ, OCTOBER 28, 1997

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, OCTOBER 28, 1997

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the historic Million Woman March in Philadelphia  
2 and honoring the organizers of the event as well as all of  
3 its participants.

4 WHEREAS, More than 1.5 million African-American women  
5 gathered in Philadelphia on Saturday, October 25, 1997, to:

- 6 (1) Peacefu
- 7 (2) Affirm
- 8 African-American
- 9 (3) Bond, s
- 10 another address
- 11 employment in th
- 12 (4) Celebra
- 13 strong values th

14 and

15 WHEREAS, The org

16 largely a grass-roc

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

**HOUSE RESOLUTION**  
No. 288 Session of 1997

INTRODUCED BY CLYMER, HERSHEY, ADOLPH, ARGALL, ARMSTRONG, BAKER, BARD, BARRAR, BEBKO-JONES, BELARDI, BISHOP, BROWN, BROWNE, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPABIANCA, CARN, CHADWICK, CLARK, L. I. COHEN, COPORA, COWELL, COY, CHERRY, DALEY, DALLY, DEMPSEY, DENT, DEWESE, DIKIKOLAMO, DRUCE, FAIRCHILD, FICHTER, FLAGLE, FLICK, GRIST, GEORGE, GIGLIOTTI, GORDNER, HALUSKA, HARHART, HENNESSEY, HERMAN, ITKIN, JADLOWIEC, JOSEPHS, KENNEY, KIRKLAND, LAUGHLIN, LEDERER, LEH, LESCOVITZ, LEVDANSKY, LUCYK, MATTIAND, MANDERINO, MARSICO, MASLAND, MCCALL, MANARICHON, MELLO, MICHOVIC, MILLER, MURPHY, MAILOR, ORIE, PESCI, PHILLIPS, PLATTS, RAMOS, RAYMOND, READSHAW, ROBERTS, ROBINSON, ROONEY, ROSS, RUBLEY, SAINATO, SANTONI, SATHER, SCHRODOR, SCHULER, SEYFERT, SHANER, B. SMITH, D. W. SNYDER, STARBACK, STYRLIA, E. Z. TAYLOR, THOMAS, TIGGE, TRELLO, TRUE, WALKO, WAUGH, C. WILLIAMS, WOGAN, M. N. WRIGHT, YOUNGBLOOD AND ZDC, OCTOBER 23, 1997

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, OCTOBER 23, 1997

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the week of November 4 through 11, 1997, as  
2 "National Women Veterans Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Nearly 1.8 million women have served in the defense  
4 of our Nation; and

5 WHEREAS, Women saw service in the American Revolution, the  
6 World Wars, Operation Desert Storm and other conflicts and today  
7 serve in many occupational specialties, including aircraft  
8 pilot; and

9 WHEREAS, Women have been killed in the line of duty, taken  
10 prisoner and have engaged in heroic acts during wartime; and

**The House adopts two resolutions honoring women. HR 293 commemorates the historic Million Women March held Oct. 25th in Philadelphia. HR 288 proclaimed Nov. 4 - 11th as "National Women Veterans Week" in Pennsylvania in honor of nearly 2 million female veterans.**

## Saluting Our Female Veterans

On Oct. 18 of this year, a national memorial was dedicated in honor of an estimated 2 million female veterans. Women Veterans' Memorial, located at the entrance of Arlington National Cemetery, is a tribute to all the women who have served in all major conflicts, from the American Revolution to present day.

One of the oldest women known to serve died in Pittsburgh two years ago at the age of 109. Chief Nurse Mary (Robinson) Godfrey led the first team of women assigned to a troop carrier. She was a veteran of World War I, having served our country before she even had the right to vote.

We in the state House of Representatives also honored female veterans by adopting a resolution commemorating the week of Nov. 4-11, 1997, as "National Women Veterans Week" in Pennsylvania. I was proud to support this resolution.

# Thinking of Starting A Business, But Unsure Where To Get Help?

## Here's where to find it

Is it time to turn that photography hobby into a portrait business?

If you are going into business and don't know where to turn for advice, try the Women's Business Advocate Office in the state Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The office encourages creation, expansion and retention of women-owned businesses.

More specifically, the office helps

women business owners resolve issues with state agencies, explore marketing options, identify financing strategies, obtain technical assistance and network with other entrepreneurs.

The advocate's office publishes a directory and supports activities that address women's business needs.

If this is the kind of help you need, contact: **Women's Business Advocate Office, Entrepreneurial Assistance Office, DCED, Room 354 Forum Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Or call (717) 787-3339.**

## Childhood Immunization, Easier and Less Expensive

Act 35, the Childhood Immunization Insurance Act of 1992, provides that all childhood immunization vaccinations and immunization booster shots, with very limited exceptions, must be covered by health insurance policies.

Since 1983, state law has required that all children K-12th grade must be immunized against six diseases before they can attend schools in Pennsylvania: measles, mumps, Rubella, polio, diphtheria and tetanus.

Effective this year, but still under a grace period, children also must be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

Act 35 makes it easier and less expensive to immunize. Immunizations are available at State Health Centers throughout the Commonwealth.

For more information, call the **toll-free state Health Department hotline at 1-800-692-7254.**

## Internet Health Resources

Information on women's health needs can be easily accessed on the Internet. Here are a few resources listed online:

- National Women's Resource Center - [www.nwrc.org](http://www.nwrc.org)
- American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) - [www.amwa-doc.org](http://www.amwa-doc.org)
- National Association of Women's

Health Professionals - [www.nawhp.org](http://www.nawhp.org)  
• National Women's Health Resource Center - [www.healthywomen.org](http://www.healthywomen.org)

You can also reach the state Department of Health online as well as other state departments and bureaus through our online website at: [www.state.pa.us/](http://www.state.pa.us/)

## Making PA and Its Families Strong, Healthy

The following are only some of the legislative goals achieved this session to help make PA and its families stronger and healthier.

- ✓ Approving the 1997-98 **budget** in record time.
  - \$252 million in new money for schools
  - \$280 million in job-creation programs
  - \$177 million in tax cuts and changes
- ✓ Approved a Homestead Exemption bill, an important first step in **local tax reform**.
- ✓ Protecting seniors in nursing homes from **elder abuse**.
- ✓ Permitting the **death penalty** for a murderer subject to a Protection From Abuse order.
- ✓ Banning the sale of **look-alike drugs** and expanding the **Drug-Free School Zones**.
- ✓ Giving **parents authority** to commit a child under the age of 18 for drug and alcohol treatment.
- ✓ Establishing a select subcommittee to investigate the adequacy of **Child Protective Services**.
- ✓ Regulating the sale of dogs with the **Puppy Lemon Law**.
- ✓ Allowing communities to establish **Charter Schools**.

**District Offices:**

**Schnecksville: 799-0187**

**Macungie: 966-0187**

**Upper Macungie: 395-8180**

**Kutztown: 683-9199**

**Rep. Paul W. Semmel**

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*Have A Great New Year!*