



Press Release

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State House Candidate BROWN Commends Rep. TURZAI for Vote in Favor of On-Time Budget

Wexford, Pa. – State House candidate **Dr. Sharon Brown** today commended the state legislature's passage of an on-time state budget for the first time in nearly eight years.

Despite her approval for the timeliness of the budget, **Dr. Brown** said that she cannot agree with her opponent's description of the budget passage as a "victory for fiscal responsibility," since it does not address the fiscal responsibilities that the state will be required to cover should the \$850M in federal aid for the Medicaid program not be approved. Also of concern is the \$800M that the state has to pay back to the MCARE fund, in addition to no plan to address the nearly \$5B state pension payments that will become due next year.

The newly passed budget has a number of glaring omissions and cuts. Two popular revenue sources omitted were "no doubt the result of significant lobbying by the tobacco and oil and gas industries," said **Brown**. **"We are the only state in the nation that feels compelled to give tax breaks to smokeless tobacco; and, one of only two that exempts cigars. Even North Carolina, the largest tobacco growing and manufacturing state in the nation does not reward cancer-causing tobacco products with tax breaks."** Nearly two-thirds of Pennsylvanians support ending these breaks, but my opponent would rather cut funding for health care than toll the products that drive up everyone's insurance costs."

Also of concern to **Brown** is the omission of a severance on the Marcellus shale gas drilling sites, which have been leased and/or already drilled throughout the state. This potential legislation has been delayed until the Fall for deliberation on the tax rate, amount of funding expectations, and the determination of where funding will be spent. However, **Brown** is concerned that this delay to within a few weeks of the upcoming election paints a picture of omission from future consideration.

Dr. Brown stated that significant, across the board cuts to libraries, labor & workforce programs, environmental protection and agricultural programs have been proposed to result in around 1000 state employee layoffs. These could have been avoided if **Rep. Turzai** and the rest of the Republican leadership had not sided with Big Oil and Big Tobacco against reasonable and common-sense sources of revenue.

"Voters in my district can trust that I will fight for families and represent them, while my opponent will continue to support polluters and cancer causers."