

**CONCERN OVER MAKE-UP OF GOV. RENDELL'S STIMULUS OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE**

PITTSBURGH, PA, APRIL 22, 2009: Thank you Rep. Wagner and Rep. Wheatly for organizing this press conference today to bring together those of us who are concerned about the make-up of the Stimulus Oversight Committee.

I am Joanne Tosti-Vasey, President of Pennsylvania NOW, the state chapter of the National Organization for Women. On behalf of the over 13,000 contributing NOW members here in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania NOW is calling on Governor Edward G. Rendell to reconsider the appointments made by the Executive Order to the state's Stimulus Package Oversight Committee. He and the Committee need to add more women and people of color to this committee. Of the 14 people appointed, only one - Representative Jennifer Mann - is a woman and only one - Tony Ross - is a person of color.

The stimulus package was created to ensure that all men, women, and children in the United States are positively impacted by President Obama's stimulus program. We believe that without full representation on this oversight committee, women will be left out of the full program of projects here in Pennsylvania. We are concerned that an oversight committee that is made up of 93 percent men will focus mostly on "shovel-ready" jobs rather than looking at and approving programs for all men and women in PA.

Nationally, women make up less than 15 percent of the construction industry, and a lot of the positions filled by women are lower-paying administrative jobs -- not the work that pays serious money. Women's unemployment is almost as high as men's unemployment levels, and we know that 40 percent of women are the sole support of

themselves and/or their families. They should not be left out of these programs.

While we are rebuilding our infrastructure with the "shovel-ready" jobs, we also need to be rebuilding our "human infrastructure" with teachers, social workers, nurses, childcare workers, and the like. This means we need people on the oversight committee who think about how to put both men and women back to work by adopting such measures as:

- Investing in education and local community programs;
- Setting up programs and policies that ensure that women get their fair share of the "shovel-ready" jobs as well as the "human infrastructure" jobs;
- Investing in childcare;
- Suspending the 5-year time clock on TANF funding. You can't tell people to go get a job or else lose their TANF funds when there is high unemployment and no jobs available unless you want more homeless families in our communities; and
- Providing funds for more nursing and medical training so that we can expand health care across the state.

Yesterday evening (April 15) at 5 p.m., Greg Fajt, Governor Rendell's Chief of Staff called me in response to my April 5 fax to the Governor. He said that the Governor only had control over three of the fourteen seats. According to Mr. Fajt, the Governor appointed three men to these seats - Governor Rendell, Secretary of General Services James Creeden who is in charge of implementing the program for the state, and Ron Naples. He then said that all the other appointments were made by others. I told him that even so, this committee is not representative of the state and needs to become more diverse.

I then told Mr. Fajt that we still want the Governor to expand the

committee to create gender and racial balance. He said that this "is always a possibility."

So we reiterate one more time. Governor Rendell and/or the current members of the Stimulus Oversight Committee, create a committee to represent the entire diversity of the state. Add more women and people of color who are sensitive to these issues to ensure that all citizens are helped during these hard times. Please amend the Executive Order creating this committee NOW! Thank you.

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