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Senate of Pennsylvania

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Dear Friends,

Over the past several months, you have most likely seen or heard of accusations directed against me by the U.S. Attorney for Eastern Pennsylvania. I realize that this has probably created many questions and concerns in your mind, so I am writing to you now for several reasons.

First and foremost, I want to assure you that I am continuing to work energetically as your state Senator. My Philadelphia district offices, as well as my Harrisburg office, remain open and fully staffed, providing all of the same services as we have over the previous 29 years.

If you have a problem that concerns state government, we will work hard to solve it. If your question or problem deals with the city or federal government, or a personal situation, we will do our best to address it, or to advise you on the best way to obtain the assistance you require.

Do not hesitate to call, write, or visit our offices if you think we might be of service. My dedicated staff, which has long been regarded as one of the best in the state Senate, and I will help however we can, just as we have done in the past.

Second, I ask you to keep in mind that in this country, a person accused of a crime is innocent until proven guilty. This is not just a slogan or an empty phrase from social studies text books. It means that no citizen should be judged until both sides are presented in a court of law. An indictment is nothing more than printed paper that tells only one side of a story. In my case, the U.S. Attorney has gone out of his way to publicize these politically motivated and unproven allegations in the most sensationalized way possible. As I said on the floor of the Senate on February 5, the U.S. Attorney's indictment is based on falsities, half truths and baseless legal theories. The months and years leading up to the indictment were also marked by frequent leaks to the media of grand jury proceedings which, under federal law, are supposed to be secret. This was done to smear my reputation prior to the indictment being issued. If you have followed the news coming from Washington DC in recent months, you are aware that there is now a great deal of controversy regarding the pressure placed on U.S. Attorneys under the Bush Administration to pursue politically motivated prosecutions.

It pains me greatly that I cannot tell you my side of the story now, and that I will not have the opportunity to do so for some months yet. Unfortunately, I must wait to respond to the specific accusations against me in court. But I assure you, I will respond to them strongly. I have good answers and solid evidence to present to refute these charges, and I am confident that we will ultimately prevail.

In the interim I want to assure each and every one of you that I have never breached your trust. I never took a bribe, nor have I ever sold my office, nor have I ever cast a vote for any reason other than my belief that it was in the best interest of my district and my state, nor have I failed to carry out my duties as a Senator.

I am proud of what I have done in my career, and I am proud of the work I have accomplished in partnership with so many fine people from this part of the state. I have worked diligently during my Senate career for this district, for the city of Philadelphia and for southeastern Pennsylvania. By the calculations of the Senate Appropriations Committee staff in Harrisburg, my efforts have brought \$8 billion worth of benefits into this region, over and above the amount that the state otherwise would have spent here.

To the many, many people who have extended their good wishes toward me, and who have offered me their encouragement, their help, and their prayers, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Other than the impact on my family, the thing that saddens me the most about these events is that many residents of my senatorial district—who believed in me, trusted me, and voted for me—might feel now that I have let them down. I can only appeal to your basic fairness, and ask that you reserve judgment until all of the facts become public in a court of law. Until then, I remain on the job as your state Senator, as determined as I have always been to do everything in my power to improve our district, our city and our state.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vincent J. Fumo".

VINCENT J. FUMO
STATE SENATOR, FIRST DISTRICT



State Senator **VINCE FUMO**

UPDATE TO THE NEIGHBORS OF THE FIRST SENATORIAL DISTRICT

JUNE 2007

As he has for 29 years, state Sen. Vince Fumo continues working on behalf of his district, the City of Philadelphia, and the southeastern Pennsylvania region.

This spring in Harrisburg, he will focus his attention on several major budget proposals, including mass transit funding and Governor Ed Rendell's new energy independence proposals, as well as a number of issues that are before the state Senate.

◆ **Budget Negotiations Will Include Major New Program Proposals**

Although I have stepped aside temporarily as Democratic Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I am still the senior member of that committee. We have a big job ahead of us: the state is supposed to have a budget in place by July 1 for the 2007-08 fiscal year; and Governor Ed Rendell has proposed an ambitious agenda that he hopes will be approved in concert with the state's financial plan.

As we proceed through budget negotiations with our fellow Democrats in the House and Republicans in the House and Senate, I intend to use the experience I have gained during my 29 years in the Senate to fight for our city, and for things I believe are in the best interest of the entire state.

Here is a look at some of the most important issues that we will be dealing with:

◆ As always, education will be a top priority. Gov. Rendell has proposed an increase in basic education spending of \$525 million. If approved, it would bring the total funding increase for schools to \$2.3 billion so far during his administration. In addition to the basic subsidy support for schools, he wants to target money for early childhood assistance, science and technology, high school reform, special education, aid to non-public schools and charter schools, public libraries, and teacher professional development. While we must recognize that this will be a tight budget year, I will work to provide as much funding as we responsibly can for the education-improvement concepts that the Governor has recommended.

◆ Among my top budget priorities will be a long-term solution to the problem of mass

transit funding. Pennsylvania has been struggling for several years to find a permanent solution to the financial troubles facing SEPTA and other transit systems in the state. We also have an enormous and potentially dangerous maintenance backlog in highways and bridges. The Governor has proposed a variety of options with which to build a comprehensive funding plan for transportation. Fixing the problems will necessitate some new revenue sources. The legislature is going to have to examine those options carefully, but whether we choose one of the Governor's plans or propose one of our own, we must come up with an answer to keep SEPTA operating in an affordable manner for its one million daily riders.

◆ I also plan to be one of the leading advocates for Gov. Rendell's energy independence plan. This policy initiative would create an \$850 million fund that will increase the supply of clean energy while also reducing demand. The largest part of the fund will be used to boost Pennsylvania's usage of energy from clean supply sources—wind, solar, geothermal, biodiesel, ethanol, and clean coal. The fund would also help consumers replace older

appliances with energy-efficient ones, and help to pay for the installation of solar energy units. It would also provide money for research and development of alternative fuels and energy conservation technology.

◆ Another of Gov. Rendell's most significant proposals is one for comprehensive health care reform. Cover All Pennsylvanians would offer affordable health insurance plans for uninsured individuals and small businesses. The Governor wants to fund the plan from several different sources—matching federal dollars, money from the tobacco settlement, a “fair share” assessment of 3% on businesses that do not offer health insurance, and from the Community Health Reinvestment Agreement. The health reform proposal also includes initiatives to make health care more affordable, to increase overall wellness, improve the quality of health care, and increase access to health care for those currently underserved. A portion of the money would come from an increase in the cigarette tax and a new tax on other tobacco products. The Governor also proposes banning smoking in all workplaces, restaurants and bars.

In addition to these and several other new programs that the governor is hoping to advance, we also face a challenging year in balancing the General Fund budget—the state's basic overall financial operating plan. Mainly due to a combination of cuts in federal funds, and unavoidable cost increases in several budget areas, we will have to make some difficult decisions to ensure that revenue matches spending. We may not be able to enact all of the Governor's proposals by June, but if we don't, I will be back fighting for them again when we return after the summer recess.

Senator Gerald LaValle of Beaver County in Western Pennsylvania, the acting head of the Democratic Appropriations Committee, is a veteran Senator and long-time friend. As I did when I was chairman, he will seek input from all members of the Democratic caucus regarding the budget priorities in their cities and neighborhoods, which he will bring to the negotiating table.

So in the budget negotiation process, I will again do my best to make sure the interests of the first district and the city are well represented.



Senator Fumo, right, discusses a piece of legislation during the Senate Appropriations Committee meeting at the state Capitol on June 4. At left is acting Democratic Appropriations Chairman Sen. Gerald LaValle of Beaver County.



In April, Sergeant John Farrell of New Hope, PA, a 6-year veteran of the Marine Corps Reserve who had recently returned from a tour of duty in Iraq, visited the state Senate to present Sen. Fumo with a flag that had flown over the Mobile Combat Operations Center manned by Farrell's unit. "He's always been very supportive of everything I've done in the military," Farrell said of Sen. Fumo. "I've had a lot of correspondence from him, along with steadfast encouragement. That encouragement from home was very important to us." Fumo, who has spoken out frequently in favor of bringing American troops home from Iraq, thanked Farrell for the flag and welcomed the soldier back to Pennsylvania. Sergeant Farrell, left, is shown holding the flag that he presented to Sen. Fumo, center. With them on the Senate floor is Lt. Gov. Catherine Baker Knoll.

District Offices Always Ready to Serve You

1208 Tasker Street • Philadelphia, PA 19148 • (215) 468-3866 • Fax: (215) 952-1096

2637 East Clearfield Street • Philadelphia, PA 19134 • (215) 423-7670

Both of my district offices—on Tasker Street and on Clearfield Avenue—remain open, and staffed by experienced aides who are knowledgeable and resourceful in helping you find the help you need.

Following are some of the areas in which they frequently help our constituents, whether it is answering questions, providing applications or help filling out forms, gathering additional information, or just cutting through red tape:

STATE APPLICATIONS

- Birth and death certificates
- State income tax forms
- PACE/PACENET forms
- Medicare/Medicaid registration
- Notary services and registration
- Rent and property tax rebate applications
- PennDOT forms & assistance including vehicle registration, driver's license, car and vanity plates, handicapped placards
- Higher education financial assistance grant applications and information

SOLVING STATE PROBLEMS/LIAISON TO OTHER GOVERNMENT BRANCHES

- Share concerns, ask questions and gain information on state legislation, laws and regulations
- Help on senior citizen matters including PACE/PACENET, Medicare/Medicaid, rent and property rebates
- Job Banks
- Education questions, including PHEAA and public school issues
- State licensing bureaus
- Aid with state income taxes
- Worker and unemployment compensation problems
- City agencies on matters ranging from trash, real estate, buildings, animal control, pest infestations and others
- Utility matters, including LIHEAP
- Health, welfare and other social service matters
- Housing agencies & the state emergency mortgage assistance program
- Community & neighborhood organizations
- Economic development and business loans

CRIME PREVENTION AND QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

- Abandoned cars
- Nuisance bars
- Traffic and parking concerns
- Neighborhood lighting
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Street cleaning and much more!

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