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House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Hon. Stan Saylor
Hon. Curt Sonne

DATE: January 31, 2011

SUBJECT: Cosponsorship – Keystone Works Legislation

In the near future, we will be introducing legislation of great importance to the Commonwealth given the current economic climate.

Our legislation, part of a multi-bill package, is modeled after a successfully implemented program in Georgia known as “Georgia Works.” Started in 2003, this program pairs interested unemployed persons with interested businesses seeking to hire for open positions. The person can work for 24 hours per week for eight weeks at no cost to the employer. Unemployment benefit checks serve as the workers’ salaries. At the end of the 8 weeks, the employer is required to hire the person, or follow-up their service with a constructive performance evaluation.

Georgia considers the program valuable on-the-job training. Furthermore, more than 3,000 Georgians have landed permanent jobs by participating in the program. The program also helps struggling companies get back on their feet and start hiring. The Georgia Works program has also been proven to lower the average amount of time it takes jobless workers to find new employment, thus reducing the draw on their unemployment trust fund by \$6 million. After factoring in program expenses, the net savings was \$3.7 million.

Our legislation will establish a “Keystone Works” program in Pennsylvania and is structured nearly identical to the Georgia Works program. The only difference is the length of the program is shortened from 8 weeks to 6 weeks. Two bills will comprise the package, the first structured

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for unemployed persons (Saylor) and the second structured for recipients of public assistance seeking to return to the workforce (Sonney).

When not working, unemployment recipients are expected to search for other jobs. While there are more than 15 million jobless workers nationwide, there are approximately 2.5 million job openings. This legislation will be instrumental in pairing jobless citizens with the jobs available in the Commonwealth.

If you are interested in cosponsoring this legislation, please contact Cheryl or Jeannie at 783-6426 or e-mail cwalker@pahousegop.com or jdougher@pahousegop.com.