

Rep. Linda Bebko-Jones  
National Foundation for Women Legislators  
Nov., 18, 2004

(APPROPRIATE GREETING)

LET ME BEGIN BY SAYING THANK YOU FOR THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS WONDERFUL GROUP.  
THIS HAS BEEN AN EXCITING YEAR FOR ME AND MY  
COLLEAGUES IN THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE LEGISLATURE  
WITH TWENTY EIGHT WOMEN SERVING IN THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY AND EIGHT WOMEN IN THE STATE SENATE,  
WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS.  
THIS YEAR, WE PASSED LEGISLATION AUTHORED BY MY  
COLLEAGUE PHYLLIS MUNDY THAT WOULD ESTABLISH A  
STATE "OUNCE OF PREVENTION" GRANT PROGRAM.  
THIS PROGRAM WOULD FUND COMMUNITY BASED  
EFFORTS TO PROVIDE INTENSIVE HOME VISITS FOR AT-  
RISK FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN.

WITH REGARDS TO MENTAL ILLNESS, LEANNA WASHINGTON DILIGENTLY PURSUED MENTAL COURT DIVISIONS IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA. HER BILL WOULD FOSTER INCREASED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM. CASES WOULD BE PROCESSED FASTER; IT WOULD IMPROVE ACCESS TO MUCH NEEDED SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR THE MENTALLY ILL. IT WOULD REDUCE REPEAT OFFENSES.

I KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS BILL BECAUSE MY OWN DISTRICT HAS SEPARATE COURTS.

STATE SENATOR ALLYSON SCHWARTZ WAS NAMED TO GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY AND WOMEN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, A KEY COMPONENT TO REFORM THE MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESS INITIATIVE AND CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR

CERTIFIED MINORITY AND WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS TO  
DO BUSINESS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH.

FINALLY, THIS YEAR I WAS APPOINTED TO THE ALCOHOL  
AND DRUG TREATMENT CAUCUS IN THE PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. I AM ALSO CHAIR OF OUR  
DRUG AND ALCOHOL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HEALTH  
AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE.

SINCE I AM A RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC OF TWENTY SEVEN  
YEARS, I KNOW FIRSHAND WHAT PROGRAMS WORK AND  
WHAT CARE MUST BE PROVIDED TO PERSONS  
STRUGGLING WITH THIS AND OTHER ADDICTIONS. I AM  
OVERJOYED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK ON THE  
FRONT LIENS TO HELP OTHERS WITH THIS DISEASE  
I COULD SPEAK ALL DAY ABOUT THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
WE HAVE MADE AS WOMEN, ABOUT OUR PROPENSITY TO  
NOURISH, OUR DESIRE TO HEAL AND THE CONSTANT  
RESERVE THAT WE MUST EXHIBIT EACH AND EVERY DAY.

SOMEDAY I WOULD LIKE THE COMFORT OF KNOWING  
THAT THERE ARE COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF WOMEN IN  
POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY...

NUMEROUS WOMEN SITTING AT THE BOARDROOM TABLE  
OR SERVING IN GOVERNMENT. I WOULD LIKE FOR MORE  
OF US TO BE AT THE HELM, SO THAT IT WOULD BE  
DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH ONE SHINING STAR FROM  
NEXT.

ON THAT DAY, LITTLE GIRLS WOULD KNOW THAT THEIR  
HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS WERE WITHIN REACH. THEY  
WOULD NOT GIVE A SECOND THOUGHT TO THE ISSUES OF  
GENDER, AND THE ISSUES OF PAY EQUITY, SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT AND DOUBLE STANDARDS WOULD BE  
REDUCED TO REFERENCE POINTS ON THE TIMELINE  
LEADING TO WOMEN'S ENLIGHTEN.

WOMEN HAVE MADE REMARKABLE STRIDES DURING THIS  
CENTURY AND AS WE WORK TOGETHER, A NEW TREND  
WILL EMERGE.

THIS IS OUR TIME. THIS IS OUR CHALLENGE.

LET US WORK TOGETHER TO USHER IN A NEW DAY OF  
PEACE AND PERFECTION

THANK YOU.