

# Clay, Youngblood seeking additional revenue for struggling schools

## Lawmakers' looking into additional fees on gambling winnings to help school districts

With the fate of Philadelphia's schools hanging in limbo, and the difficulty of schools across the Commonwealth to meet the financial demands of public education, Philadelphia state Reps. James Clay and Rosita C. Youngblood are looking into a plan that could generate hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenue to help provide quality education for Pennsylvania's students across the state.

Clay said the proposal is still being researched and developed, but the concept would allow Pennsylvania to levy a fee on winnings, over a certain amount, earned by residents from the state lottery and other forms of gambling. After learning that Pennsylvania is one of only three states that conducts a state lottery but does not require winnings to be taxed at the state level, Clay said he wondered how much the state was losing in revenue, and if that money could be used to help fund education. The proposal has already received positive feedback from Philadelphia City Controller Alan Butkowitz, and Clay said he is hoping to have a bill ready to go in the very near future.

"Under current law, a Pennsylvania resident who wins the lottery does not pay a dime in Personal Income Tax, or any other fee, to the state," Clay said. "All but three states who conduct lotteries levy a small percentage fee on lottery winnings, generating millions of dollars in revenue. Pennsylvania is definitely missing out on an opportunity to raise significant money that could go a long way in helping our struggling school districts."

Youngblood, who is the Democratic chairwoman of the House Gaming Oversight Committee, said she agrees that Pennsylvania should look into joining the majority of states and potentially require lottery winners to pay a minimal fee on their winnings. But she also said she believes that the state should explore issuing a higher fee on all gambling winnings over a specific threshold. Currently, casino and racetrack winnings are only subject to the state's Personal Income Tax, which is 3.07 percent.

"If we could assess an additional fee on all gambling winnings, and couple that with finally allowing the state to receive a small portion of lottery winnings, we could generate tens of millions of dollars for the Philadelphia School District," Youngblood said. "It's something that we should explore as a potential revenue source that would help not only our schools, but possibly provide hundreds of millions of dollars for financially strapped school districts all across the state."

City Controller Butkowitz said he agrees with the plan offered by Clay and Youngblood, and supports the lawmakers' efforts to find a source of revenue that would not place undue burdens on the residents of Pennsylvania.

"School districts across the state are in dire need of a dependable source of revenue beyond the Basic Educa-

tion Funding appropriation," Butkowitz said. "This proposal is extremely well-conceived in that it will generate that revenue without harming businesses or small stakes lottery players or gamblers."

On the Senate side, Senator Shirley Kitchen, D-Phila., stated she is also interested in looking into the idea of levying a minimal fee on certain gambling winnings. She said the issue warrants additional discussion and research.

"This is an interesting concept that deserves our attention," she said. "We are always looking for ways to generate the revenue needed to help our schools without imposing an additional burden on taxpayers, and this could be a way to accomplish that. I am eager to see what we can find out about this plan."

Earlier this month, a retailer in Philadelphia sold a winning Powerball ticket worth \$1 million. Although the federal government will see a share of that money, Clay said this is a perfect example of how Pennsylvania will not get a dime of revenue from the winnings. He said the Commonwealth is missing out on a source of funding that is utilized by nearly every other state in the country that operates a lottery.

"We are always looking for new revenue, and this particular source would not be a burden to consumers, the poor, small businesses, corporations, working families, or anyone relying on fixed incomes. It would have no impact on the day-to-day lives of Pennsylvania's residents, yet it could raise a lot of money," he added. "It's a no-brainer."

# Backpack book donation drive

With only a few weeks left in the summer, the beginning of the school year is just around the corner and many of our ACHIEVEability supporters are getting ready for their children to return to school. New clothes, new book bags, school supplies and maybe even new computers; these are chores to be managed into your busy weeks. At the same time, many of the parents in the ACHIEVEability Family Self-Sufficiency Program and in our local West Philadelphia community see these same activities as dreams as they face the budgetary hardship of purchasing even the most basic required school supplies for their children.

At ACHIEVEability our focus is education. We know how important it is for children to start of the school year with the appropriate supplies to ensure that they are afforded the opportunities to be successful with their schoolwork. This is why each year we work diligently to get all of the children in our program a newly donated backpack filled with school supplies.



Please help ACHIEVEability to support our more than 250 school-age youth and community residents by donating to our Backpack and Book Donation Drive. Your donation of a backpack filled with the essential school supplies and/or new or gently used books yields a tremendous impact on our families and neighbors.

If donating a backpack please consider including the following school supplies: spiral bound notebooks, loose leaf paper, composition books, pens, pencils, markers, highlighters, calculators, pencil sharpeners, glue, etc. If donating a new or gently used book, please ensure that it is appropriate reading material for school age children (K-12).

For more information about making a donation please contact ACHIEVEability Events Manager Brian Hoskins at brian.hoskins@achieveability.org or 215-748-8814. For more information about ACHIEVEability, please visit our website. To make a contribution please click here.

# AmeriHealth Caritas Partnership, Keystone First Team Up To Fight Asthma at Healthy Hoops® 2013

In an effort to improve asthma management and reduce childhood obesity, AmeriHealth Caritas Partnership, in collaboration with Keystone First, a Blue Cross Medical Assistance (Medicaid) product and the largest Medical Assistance product in Southeastern Pennsylvania, is once again bringing its award-winning Healthy Hoops® program to the Philadelphia area. This year's event will be held at The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Center, 4200 Wissahickon Avenue in Philadelphia, on **Saturday, August 17**, from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and is open to children with asthma ages 3 to 16 by advance registration.

According to a study published in the Journal of Asthma in 2012, more than 26 percent of

Philadelphia children were found to have asthma, nearly three times the national average. Healthy Hoops aims to help children and their families learn how to better control their asthma and otherwise adopt healthy lifestyles. It includes hands on asthma education, health screenings and basketball clinics led by Philadelphia basketball legends Sonny Hill and Speedy Morris, along with plenty of other fun activities. Free transportation will be provided for Keystone First members from points throughout Philadelphia and Chester.

"I have participated in Healthy Hoops for many years, and each year I take great satisfaction in joining the AmeriHealth Caritas Partnership and Keystone First in this effort to help keep our com-

munities healthy," said Hill. "I look forward to another fun day working with local children."

Healthy Hoops was launched in Philadelphia in 2003 and has been expanded to other parts of the country, including South Carolina, Kentucky and Georgia. More than 10,000 children and their families have participated, all of them undergoing full physicals and pre-and post-program health screenings.

Quality Community Health Care, Inc., Crozer Keystone Health System, the American Lung Association, Impact Services and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority also are sponsoring this year's edition of Healthy Hoops in Philadelphia.

"Healthy Hoops is one of our most popular events

each year. By teaching better health management strategies in an engaging fashion, we reduce the likelihood of costly emergency room visits and inpatient hospitalizations," said Maria Pajil Battle, president of AmeriHealth South Carolina, Kentucky and Georgia. "We look forward to once again hosting the children and their families for a fun yet very informative day."

Said Russell Gianforcaro, executive director of Keystone First: "Healthy Hoops connects an important health message with Philadelphia's great basketball tradition. We are pleased to once again support this program that helps us build both healthy and happy communities across the region."

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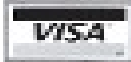
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Dedicated to the Community People

Volume 53 - Number 31

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Published every Friday by R.E. Driver Jr. Associates with a Controlled Circulation of over 90,000 readership. Copies are distributed each Friday in Philadelphia, PA and suburbs, Chester, PA, Camden, NJ and Wilmington, Delaware to people and customers in Shopping Malls, Beauty Shops, Restaurants, Night Clubs, Hotels, Theatres, Office Buildings and many other business establishments where there is a high volume of people of all ages. Mail Subscription: \$35.00 per year. Unsolicited manuscripts and photos are welcomed but will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. SCOOP U.S.A. is a city-wide, community newspaper with a broad range of news and information. Display Advertising Deadline is 5:00 p.m. Monday. Call office for rates and information. The Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement or unsolicited manuscripts.

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