

GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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University of Pittsburgh

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**SELECTED RESULTS FROM THE MUNICIPAL AND JUDICIAL GENERAL
ELECTION OF TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2007, MAY BE FOUND
AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER**

Musharraf Refuses to Lift Emergency Rule

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf this past weekend rejected pressure from U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte to lift the emergency rule he instituted recently to address civil unrest and opposition to his regime. The senior U.S. envoy reportedly delivered a “very strong message” urging Musharraf to end the state of emergency, resign as head of the military, and release thousands of political prisoners. Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has now taken oppositional stands to Musharraf.

In a related development, Musharraf announced he would hold parliamentary elections before February 15. His personally-appointed supreme court dismissed five of six challenges to the validity of Musharraf’s presidential election, paving the way for him to take the presidential oath of office and resign his position as head of the Pakistan military—possibly by the end of November.

U.N. Climate Report Calls for End to Emissions Growth

Top scientists at the United Nations have issued a warning that the world will have to end its growth of carbon emissions within seven years and become mostly free of carbon-emitting technologies in about 40 years to avoid killing as many as a quarter of the planet’s species from global warming. Doug Struck of *The Washington Post* reported that the U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) described the difficult challenges to avoid the consequences of the earth heated up by more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (two degrees Celsius) since 2000. Current emissions are already nearing the limit required in 2015 to limit the warming to two degrees Celsius, according to David Karoly, a member of the core team that wrote the report. The panel compiled the best thinking from more than 2,500 scientists and did not moralize about how much global warming is too much. U.N. Secretary Ban Ki-moon said: “The scientists now have done their work. I call on political leaders to do theirs.”

First Surge Troops Departing Iraq

One combat brigade of U.S. troops in Iraq—out of 20 brigades—is leaving that country and returning to Ft. Hood, Texas, as another brigade already operating in Iraq will take its place in Diyala province. The troops have been part of the 30,000 soldier surge force ordered by President Bush.

Israel and Palestine to Meet in Peace Talks

At the invitation of U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, top-level representatives of Israel and Palestine will meet in Annapolis next week to try to work out a peace agreement between the two nations. Details of the summit meeting have been scarce.

Federal Government Developments

Slow and Delayed Progress on FY2008 Appropriations Bills

Despite the fact that the federal fiscal year 2008 began on October 1, 2007, only one FY2008 appropriations bill has been signed into law (Defense, H.R. 3222; Pub.L. 110-116). Two other bills are fairly close to completion (Military Construction and VA, H.R. 2642 and S. 1645; and Transportation/HUD, H.R. 3074 and S. 1789) since the House passed the conference report, although the Senate has not taken action on the conference report. A third bill was passed after a successful House and Senate conference (Labor/Health and Human Services (HHS)/Education, H.R. 3043 and S. 1710), but was then vetoed by the President and the House failed to override the veto. The House finished work on all the FY2008 appropriations bills, but the Senate has passed only three of them.

There is increasing Congressional discussion about an omnibus bill that may contain all remaining FY2008 appropriations bills. President Bush is unhappy with the funding levels in several of the House bills and conference reports since they are higher than his budget proposals and he has threatened to veto the bills, as he did the Labor/HHS appropriations bill. It appears that the Democratic leadership will not be able to gather sufficient votes to override threatened vetoes.

Congressional publications have discussed the possibility of resolving the appropriations impasse by “splitting the difference” in the amounts in the conference reports and the President’s budget requests. The publication *Congress Daily* reported last week that new budget allocations reflecting the desire to reach agreement have been distributed to the appropriations subcommittees, with a reported two to three percent reduction from the original allocation. Although the White House is reportedly unwilling to accept the “split the difference” offer, a number of Republicans are urging the Administration to begin negotiating and be willing to move in the direction of the Democratic position.

A second continuing resolution (CR) was passed on November 8, continuing the funding and operation of the federal government through December 14, 2007.

Both houses are in recess until the first week of December: the House will reconvene on Tuesday, December 4, and the Senate meets again on Monday, December 3, although it is holding pro forma sessions during the Thanksgiving recess. Issues on the Congressional agenda include resolving the FY2008 appropriations impasse, energy legislation, the farm bill, the defense authorization bill, a war supplemental, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), a tax bill, the farm bill, and a trade agreement with Peru.

Defense

The FY2008 Defense Appropriations bill signed into law does contain an indirect cost cap of 35 percent of the total award on Department of Defense-funded basic research, which is thought to be an actual rate of 53 percent. The University of Pittsburgh indirect cost rate for FY2008 is 48.5 percent and for FY2009-2020 a rate of 51.5 percent. Overall, the defense spending bill has a price tag of \$471 billion. Basic research will receive an increase of 4.5 percent or \$1.63 billion, including earmarks. Non-earmarked basic research will rise about 2.3 percent.

Labor/HHS/Education

The House of Representatives on November 15 was two votes short of overriding the President's veto of the FY2008 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill. The vote was 277-141, with 226 Democrats and 51 Republicans voting to override and 15 members (seven Democrats and eight Republicans) not voting. The President vetoed the bill because it exceeded his budget request by \$9.8 billion. The bill would have provided \$30 billion, a \$1.1 billion increase over the level of FY2007, to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and an extra \$127 million to raise the maximum Pell Grant award to \$4,925.

The Members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation who voted to override the President's veto were: Representatives Altmire, Brady, Carney, Dent, English, Fattah, Gerlach, Holden, Kanjorski, Patrick Murphy, Tim Murphy, Murtha, Peterson, Platts, Schwartz, and Sestak. The Pennsylvania Members who voted to uphold the President's veto were Representatives Pitts and Shuster. Pittsburgh's Congressman Mike Doyle did not vote.

According to *Congress Daily*, the new post-veto allocation to the Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations Subcommittees would be almost \$147.2 billion, approximately \$3.5 billion below its current level and \$6.3 billion more than the President's request of \$140.9 billion.

House Education Committee Approves HEA Reauthorization

The House Education and Labor Committee on November 15 marked up the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007 (H.R. 4137), which reauthorizes the Higher Education Act (HEA). This reauthorization governs teacher training, accreditation, federal student financial aid, and international programs, among other issues. The committee vote was unanimous (45-0), after the members considered a manager's amendment and almost 50 other proposed changes to the bill before approving nearly 24 of them.

One of the approved amendments greatly concerns the higher education community. Offered by Congressman Rob Andrews (D-NJ), it eliminated the accreditation provision that affirmed that universities and colleges are responsible for defining the standards by which student achievement is measured—as opposed to the U.S. Department of Education setting the achievement standards. The stricken provision was basically the same language as in the Senate version of the bill, which the higher education community supports. Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA) agreed to work with Congressman Andrews on substitute language to be included in the bill when it goes to the House floor.

According to the Association of American Universities (AAU), the amendments described below were adopted by voice vote:

- Chairman Miller's manager's amendment. Among other issues, it addressed two provisions of particular concern to AAU. It clarified that the 90/10 rule does NOT apply to nonprofit institutions of higher education, and it removed the provision that would have required accrediting agencies to review the information that institutions must provide to current and prospective students.
- An amendment by Representative Tim Bishop (D-NY), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), and Yvette Clarke (D-NY), adopted by voice vote that added a dollar threshold and a three-year timeframe to the trigger mechanism for placement on the Higher Education Price Increase Watch List. Under the amendment, an institution's tuition could rise at an average of the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) plus \$500 per year over three years before being placed on the watch list. The original bill language would have placed institutions on the watch list if their tuition increases beyond the HEPI in any single year.
- An amendment by Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC), adopted by voice vote that would prohibit the Department of Education from creating a student unit-record system.
- An amendment by Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ), adopted by voice vote that would establish a new Assistant Secretary for International and Foreign Language Education at the Department of Education.

- An amendment by Representative Andrews that modified the bill's reporting requirement for charitable gifts. The amendment narrowed the provision to apply only to gifts from any foreign government or private sector corporation, foundation, or any other entity or individual in excess of \$1 million "intended for use directly or indirectly by" programs or centers receiving funds from Title VI international education programs. The original provision would have required institutions to reports gifts to the "INSTITUTION" in excess of \$1 million from those sources.

Among the rejected amendments were:

- An amendment by Representative Ric Keller (R-FL) that would have required institutions participating in the Direct Lending Program to make Federal Family Education Loans available to their students. The amendment failed 13-28.
- A Representative Keller amendment that would have penalized institutions that raised their tuition at a level commensurate with increases in the Federal Pell Grant maximum award. The amendment failed 17-24.
- An amendment by Representative Mark Souder (R-IN) that would have added a Sense of Congress resolution regarding an Academic Bill of Rights. The amendment failed 19-23.
- An amendment by Representative Peter Hoekstra (R-MI) that would have established a Title VI advisory board. The amendment failed on a voice vote.

Congressman Jason Altmire (D-PA, 4th District) offered a successful amendment that would provide grants to colleges that team up with local employers to align their programs with labor needs.

One little-noticed provision in the bill would require that universities participating in federal financial aid programs "shall" devise plans for "alternative" offerings to unlawful downloading, such as subscription-based services or "technology-based deterrents to prevent such illegal activity." Analysts are not agreeing, however, on what the penalty would be for failure to comply with the new rules.

A complete list of the amendments adopted by the Committee can be found at: <http://edlabor.house.gov/markups/fc20071114.shtml>.

A list of all the amendments offered by Republicans on the Committee can be found at: http://republicans.edlabor.house.gov/markup_details.aspx?NewsID=333.

The Committee's press release can be found at: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/edlabor_dem/re111507.html.

Due to a number of extensions, the current Higher Education Act is in effect until March 31, 2008, which gives Congress approximately four and a half months to complete the reauthorization.

House Passes Iraq Funding Bill with Withdrawal Timeline

The House of Representatives on November 14 voted 218-203 to provide \$50 billion in funding for the war in Iraq, but it also requires President Bush to begin bringing troops home in the coming weeks with a final deadline for ending combat of December 2008. Area legislators who voted for the largely symbolic measure—since it is not likely to pass the Senate and, if it does, the President will veto it—were Representatives Jason Altmire, Phil English, and John Murtha. Representatives Tim Murphy, John Peterson, and Bill Shuster voted against the bill. Congressman Mike Doyle did not vote.

Worthwhile Education Provisions in Tax Extender Bill

A group of 13 higher education associations recently wrote to all Members of the House endorsing three education provisions in the Temporary Tax Relief Act of 2007 (H.R. 3996) and urging Members to approve the bill. Two of the education provisions would extend the above-the-line deduction for qualified tuition and related expenses and extend the IRA charitable rollover, which allows certain Individual Retirement Account (IRA) owners to make charitable deductions from their IRA's directly to eligible charities. Both provisions otherwise would expire this year. The third provision would permit tax-exempt organizations, such as colleges and universities, to invest directly in domestic hedge funds without incurring the Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT). The letter is available on the Web site of the Association of American Universities at: http://www.aau.edu/issues/Ltr_Assn_House_HR3996t_11-06-07.pdf.

The House on November 9 approved the new tax package that would shield more than 23 million Americans from a tax increase this year under the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). The vote was 216-193, largely along party lines.

Other Federal Developments

--The House of Representatives voted for the first time to override a presidential veto of a \$23 billion water resources bill that includes a number of Congressional pet projects. The vote to override the veto was 361-54. The Senate also voted to override the veto, by a vote of 79-143, including 34 Republicans. Since the bill is an authorization bill and not an appropriations bill, it approves the projects but does not provide the money to fund them.

--A federal judge ordered the White House to preserve copies of all its e-mails, as part of two lawsuits that are trying to determine whether the White House has destroyed e-mails in violation of federal law. The lawsuits have been brought by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington and the National Security Archive.

--The space shuttle Discovery and its crew returned to earth on November 7, concluding a 15-day build-and-repair mission at the international space station that was among the most challenging—and heroic—in shuttle history. The shuttle safely crossed the continent in the first coast-to-coast reentry since the Columbia disaster five years ago.

--The federal deficit for October was \$55.6 billion, up significantly from last year even though government revenue was at an all-time high for the month. October revenue was \$172.8 billion, up 6.3 percent from the same period last year. Government spending, however, increased 7.7 percent to \$233.7 billion, a record for outlays for the month of October.

--The House of Representatives passed the first federal ban on job discrimination against gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals when it approved the Employment Non-Discrimination Act on November 7 by a vote of 235-184. The bill would make it illegal for employers to make decisions about hiring, firing, promoting or paying an employee based on sexual orientation. It would exempt churches and the military. Senator Edward M. “Ted” Kennedy will introduce a similar bill in the Senate where tough opposition is expected. President Bush is expected to veto the bill if it does pass the Senate.

--More than 15,000 people have appealed to the government since February of this year to have their names removed from the terrorist watch list that delayed their travel at U.S. airports and border crossings, according to the Department of Homeland Security. The complaints have caused such a backlog that Congress is calling for a more efficient appeal system.

--The national Republican Party plans to punish five states for scheduling early presidential nominating events. New Hampshire, Florida, South Carolina, Michigan, and Wyoming will lose half of their delegates to the national convention because they plan to hold their nominating contests earlier than February 5. Iowa, which has scheduled Republican caucuses for January, would not be punished because, technically, the caucuses are not binding on convention delegates.

--Starting this week, those eligible for Medicare can begin enrolling in the optional drug plan for 2008, but there may well be significant premium increases for the coverage. There are 63 Medicare drug plans in Pennsylvania, with the lowest monthly cost being \$15.40 and the highest premium at \$99.00.

--A group of House and Senate conservatives led by Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) and Representative Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) announced a new bicameral caucus aimed at returning fiscal restraint, ethics and national defense to the fore of the GOP philosophical and policy platforms. The new group will be named Reagan21.

--President Bush issued a proclamation that November is National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month.

People on the Move—or Not

--Retired federal judge Michael Mukasey won approval of his nomination to be U.S. Attorney General from a narrowly-divided Senate Judiciary Committee (11-8) and then from the full Senate (53-40) and was sworn in on November 9.

Local and Commonwealth Government Developments

The Home Stretch

After a break for the election, Pennsylvania lawmakers have returned to the state Capitol to begin their final session of the year. Senate Republican leaders say finishing work on Governor Ed Rendell's energy proposals will be high on the list of things to do before the end of the year. In addition, open records legislation and a smoking ban bill are other top priorities. House Democrats are also expected to tackle property tax relief, but Senate Republicans have said they probably will not take up any bills the House might send over until January.

I-80 Toll Plan Moves Forward

According to a plan awaiting approval by the Federal Highway Administration, tolls would be collected on Interstate 80 in Pennsylvania starting sometime in 2010. The toll would be calculated at eight cents per mile for cars and 30 cents per mile, on average, for tractor-trailers, though that would vary somewhat depending on the weight each was carrying, according to the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC). Tolls would increase three percent each year to keep up with inflation. For example, a \$2.50 toll in 2010 would become a \$2.58 toll sometime in 2011. Also, tolls on the existing turnpike, Interstate 76, would also rise 3 percent each year.

There will be a maximum of 10 toll plazas along the 300-plus miles of I-80. But exactly how many and where they will be has not been determined yet. Depending on their location, some trips could be taken toll-free. Unlike the existing turnpike and its Northeast Extension, drivers will not have to get a card and will not have to pay a toll upon exiting the highway. Like the Garden State Parkway in New Jersey, there would be a toll plaza roughly every 30 miles.

The Turnpike Commission (PTC) would take over maintenance and operation of I-80 — meaning its crews would do maintenance work, not Pennsylvania Department of Transportation employees. Emergency services, such as ambulance and towing, would be contracted on an annual basis. There are no plans for adding service plazas to I-80 if a toll system is put in place.

Act 44, which passed both houses of the legislature and was signed by Governor Ed Rendell in July, set up a 50-year lease between PTC and PennDOT. Under that lease, the Commission must pay PennDOT an annual fee, which starts at \$750 million in the first year, then increases to \$800 million and \$900 million in the next two years. Sixty percent

of that money is to come from toll hikes on the existing turnpikes, while 40 percent will come from I-80.

Two approvals are needed from the Federal Highway Administration. The first one is a preliminary approval, in which the Commission merely needs to spell out some general information — how much money is needed for road and bridge repairs and mass transit, how much tolling I-80 is expected to generate and the like. If preliminary approval is granted — and it appears likely to be — the commission will have to submit a far more specific application for a second approval. That application will have to spell out specifics as to how the money will be spent and the likely economic impact on individuals, municipalities and businesses.

Among the first things the Commission would do if it gained control of I-80 is to install truck climbing lanes — lanes for tractor-trailers to use when climbing hills at slow speeds. He acknowledged there is a need for them in many spots along I-80 — especially in the central part of the state.

Turnpike officials say their plan will generate about \$1.67 billion a year, all of which will be plowed back into road and bridge repairs in the state. They have pledged that none of the potential revenue from I-80 tolls will be used to subsidize public transportation in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. They maintain that their plan is the only way highways and bridges can be upgraded without increasing taxes or privatizing the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

House Staffers Ousted

A shake-up in the state House Democratic caucus has led to the departure of seven senior aides, including the majority leader's chief of staff. A House Democratic official said the seven include Mike Manzo, the longtime chief of staff to House Majority Leader Bill DeWeese (D-Greene). Also out of a job are Scott Brubaker, director of staffing and administration; Earl Mosley, director of personnel; Steve Keefer, director of Democratic information technologies; Eric Webb, director of member services; Lauren McClure, an administrative specialist; and Brett Cott, a top special assistant to Representative DeWeese.

According to the *Post-Gazette*, Representative DeWeese said the changes were part of his "commitment to reform and change in the House Democratic caucus" and that it would "enhance our ability to implement our agenda." A spokesman, Tom Andrews, said DeWeese had no plans to say anything more about the matter. DeWeese discussed the matter with other caucus leaders.

The shake-up comes in the wake of a grand jury investigation that has been convened by state Attorney General Tom Corbett to investigate millions of dollars in bonuses awarded to state legislative staffers. Some of the largest windfalls went to top aides who were the most politically active and took leaves of absence to campaign.

“Flood” of Revenue

State Representative Bob Freeman (D – Northampton) has proposed a bill that would redirect the annual funding that comes from the Johnstown flood tax -- an 18 percent levy on the sales of liquor and wine in the state, amassing \$240 million a year -- and use the money to partially compensate towns and cities for the revenue they lose on their tax-exempt property.

Representative Freeman set a threshold on the amount of tax-exempt land a town must have in order to be eligible -- at least 17 percent of its property must be tax-exempt. Under the proposal, no town could get more than 10 percent of the total revenue, or \$24 million a year, from the redirected flood tax revenue. That means Pittsburgh would get the maximum amount of \$24 million.

Representative Freeman acknowledged that this program would leave a \$240 million hole in the annual state budget of over \$27 billion. But, he noted, for the year ending June 30, the state amassed a half billion dollar budget surplus, and for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006, there was an \$800 million surplus. So, he said, if the economy stays strong -- always a big if -- the state could afford to give up the \$240 million from the flood tax.

Property Tax Bills Move In House

Two bills to cut property taxes cleared the House Finance Committee recently, and House Majority Leader Bill DeWeese, has promised they will be among the top priorities for the full House. Representative Dave Levdansky (D-Allegheny) authored a bill that cleared committee and would offer estimated property-tax cuts of 45 percent in many districts by raising the state sales tax and personal income tax and adding revenue from slots gaming. The sales tax would go from 6 to 6.5 percent in most counties while the income tax would go from 3.07 to 3.29 percent. Representative DeWeese has sponsored a less ambitious plan that also cleared committee, and would cut many property taxes by about half as much as Representative Levdansky's. It would only hike the sales tax to 6.5 percent.

It will be yet another attempt to solve the problem of how to fund the schools without putting too much burden on seniors and working families who own a home. Previous attempts have either unraveled in the Legislature or become law and been derided as ineffective. A major sticking point has always been deciding on other taxes and revenue sources for funding property-tax cuts.

Meanwhile, some conservatives are pushing a new plan that they claim can eliminate property taxes. Representative Sam Rohrer (R-Berks) sponsored the plan to raise the personal income tax to 3.92 percent while levying the 6-percent sales tax on many professional services that are not taxed now. Representative Dan Moul (R-Adams) said he is drafting a bill to slash property taxes with a higher income tax, higher sales tax and taxing clothing. He also wants to guarantee a certain amount of state money to each

district based on the cost of educating each student. Representative Moul said he wants to refine his plan and he could not predict when he will introduce it.

In the other chamber, Senator Mike O’Pake (D-Reading) introduced legislation that would abolish school taxes in Pennsylvania. The Reading Democrat’s three-bill package would replace the increasingly unpopular school property taxes with a graduated income tax on taxpayers with incomes higher than \$100,000. The new tax would raise \$4.3 billion, Senator O’Pake calculates. With \$1 billion from anticipated slot machine receipts, the combined revenues would replace the \$5.3 billion now raised by school taxes on property.

According to the Senator, the plan would benefit more than 90 percent of Pennsylvania workers. The additional tax burden on the remaining 10 percent would be partially offset by the elimination of the school property tax, he said. The O’Pake plan would increase the 3.07 percent state income tax to a maximum of 6.57 percent for incomes over \$400,000. Taxpayers with incomes higher than \$100,000 would be taxed an additional 0.5 percent for each \$50,000 increment up to \$400,000.

High Energy

Governor Ed Rendell has incorporated higher oil and gasoline prices and the looming end to caps on electricity rates into his ambitious energy plan. The \$850 million plan would expedite the state’s development of a renewable and alternative energy industry. The initial plan was rejected by state legislators during budget negotiations this summer. Several lawmakers took issue with the Governor’s plan to pay for his proposal, which calls for a "systems benefit charge" on monthly electric bills. Republicans likened the charge to a tax.

Governor Rendell’s plan, as well as several others, is back on the table through the current special legislative session on energy. Last week, the governor urged lawmakers to move the issue forward before the end of the year, adding that he is willing to compromise to make that happen. So far, Pennsylvania has been able to attract its share of alternative and renewable energy projects. That could change as more state governments offer subsidies.

State Senator Edwin Erickson (R-Chester/Delaware), vice chairman of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, said there is much to be considered before any legislation is passed. For example, legislation concerning the use of ethanol seemed straightforward, but environmental groups have expressed concerns about the corn-based fuel.

Two More Years!

Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl won easily over Republican challenger Mark DeSantis, beating the underdog 64 percent to 35 percent. Mayor Ravenstahl, 27, drew on the support of the city’s overwhelming Democratic voter registration edge, residual

goodwill from the early days of his administration after Mayor Bob O'Connor's death and the promise of putting a young face atop an aging city.

DeSantis, who surprised many with his well-financed campaign and the union and newspaper endorsements he garnered, still managed to do only about seven percentage points better than his predecessor, the little-known Joe Weinroth who was trounced by O'Connor in 2005. Mayor Ravenstahl will serve the remaining two years of Bob O'Connor's term.

Mayor Submits 2008 Budget

Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl outlined initial steps toward getting the city out from under state financial oversight. The Mayor's comments came after he presented his \$424 million proposed 2008 budget to City Council, touting its parking tax cut, increased demolition spending, lack of new borrowing and possible departmental moves. That budget already has been approved by the state Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority, or ICA, which along with the separate state Act 47 recovery team ensures that the city stays within its long-term spending blueprint.

The budget would cut the parking tax from 45 percent to 40 percent, as state law requires. It would split off \$60 million from the city's estimated \$99 million savings account to cover road, bridge, demolition and other infrastructure work, instead of the usual borrowing for capital needs. It would count on \$4.3 million in contributions from tax-exempt organizations.

In his budget address, Mayor Ravenstahl updated council on several changes he hopes to make. He said the administration continues to consider how to merge the city Planning Department, Bureau of Building Inspection and Urban Redevelopment Authority to create a one-stop shop for permits, zoning and aid. He is talking with council about shifting animal control workers from the Public Works Department to the Public Safety Department.

In an effort to reduce the city's half-billion-dollar pension shortfall, the Mayor plans to give new, nonunion employees the option of a defined-contribution retirement plan instead of a guaranteed pension. Mayor Ravenstahl said he is working with county Common Pleas President Judge Joseph James to move enforcement of city housing codes from a Downtown location to the neighborhood district judge offices. He said the district judges would be "more inclined to be harsher, stricter, and they'll know the repeat offenders." A new, full-time attorney "will focus solely on combating nuisance properties and their owners." Also, the West End police station will reopen in January.

Office of Governmental Relations, University of Pittsburgh

710 Alumni Hall, 4227 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 412-624-7755

Vice Chancellor for Community Initiatives and Chief of Staff, Office of the Chancellor

G. Reynolds (Renny) Clark 412-624-4200 clark@pitt.edu

Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations

Paul A. Supowitz, Esquire 412-624-2901 supowitz@gro.pitt.edu

Commonwealth, City/County Relations

Charles F. McLaughlin 412-624-7704 mclaughlin@gro.pitt.edu

James Williams, III 412-624-7705 williams@gro.pitt.edu

Community Relations

John M. Wilds, Ph.D. 412-624-7720 wilds@gro.pitt.edu

Federal Relations and *Government Highlights* Editor

Jeanne Stoner, Esquire 412-624-6011 stoner@gro.pitt.edu

Winners in the Judicial and Municipal General Election, Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Debra Todd (D)

Seamus McCaffery (D)

Pennsylvania Superior Court

Christine Donohue (D)

Ron Folino (D)

John Younge (D)

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas

Cathleen Bubash (D and R)

Jack McVay (D)

Michael E. McCarthy (D and R)

Kelly Eileen Bigley (D and R)

Allegheny County Chief Executive

Dan Onorato (D and R)

Allegheny County Controller

Mark Patrick Flaherty (D)

District Attorney

Stephen A. Zappala, Jr. (D)

Allegheny County Treasurer

John K. Weinstein (D)

Allegheny County Sheriff

Bill Mullen (D)

Allegheny County Council At-Large

John P. DeFazio (D)

Allegheny County Council, District 2

Jan Rea (R)

Allegheny County Council, District 5

Vince Gastgeb (R)

Allegheny County Council, District 6

Joan Cleary (D)

Allegheny County Council, District 7

Nick Futules (D)

Allegheny County Council, District 9

Bob Macey (D)

Allegheny County Council, District 10

Bill Robinson (D)

Allegheny County Council, District 11

Rich Fitzgerald (D)

Allegheny County Council, District 12

Jim Ellenbogen (D)

Allegheny County Council, District 13

Brenda L. Frazier (D)

Judicial Retention Ballots

Pennsylvania Supreme Court:

Thomas G. Saylor

Pennsylvania Superior Court:

Joan Orié Melvin

John L. Musmanno

Correale F. Stevens

Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania:

Bonnie B. Leadbetter

Bernard L. McGinley

Doris A. Smith-Ribner

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas:

Joseph M. James

Lester G. Nauhaus

Terry O'Brien