

SCHOOL FUNDING AND **POWER**

For the past two and a half years Philadelphians Organized to Witness Empower and Rebuild (POWER), an interfaith network of churches, synagogues, mosques and people of conscience in eastern Pennsylvania, has been working to bring justice to the state's educational system. POWER worked with education advocacy groups across the state to make funding for public education the most important issue in the governor's race. Its members testified before the state's Basic Education Funding Commission, and called attention to the systematic way current methods of distributing funding discriminate against school districts with higher percentages of students of color. POWER helped the Governor's budget team and the Funding Commission develop a funding formula that eliminated those racial disparities.

Governor Wolf and the Republican-dominated legislature are now deadlocked in budget negotiations about the amount of funding this year's budget will provide for education and the source of the money.. The Governor has proposed a \$410 million increase in basic education funding, while the legislature has proposed \$100 million.

POWER accepts the Campaign for Fair Education's findings that **\$3.6 billion** in additional funding for basic education is needed before all school children have access to quality public education across the state. However, as a positive first step in this process, we support the Governor's proposal of an additional \$410 million for this fiscal year. We call upon Governor Wolf and his team to hold firm to their position and upon house and senate negotiators to yield to the clear will of the citizenry and begin to restore the education funding cuts made under the previous administration.

Providing for the children of this state is not primarily a financial or a political issue. Rather it is a human and moral issue. If the businesses who operate in this state expect to have a properly educated, highly trained workforce in the coming years, they too will get behind the proposed educational funding increases. Simply focusing on minimizing taxes is both misguided and short-sighted.

Thus we urge all citizens to contact their legislators to urge them to resolve the current budget impasse, support the Governor's proposed \$410 million increase, and work diligently and faithfully to provide an excellent education for every child of this state, regardless of race, location or economic level.

Hon. Cherelle L. Parker
1536 E. Wadsworth Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19150
(215) 242-7300

Senator Art Haywood
1168 Easton Road
Roslyn, PA 19001
(215) 517-1434

Governor Tom Wolf
200 S. Broad St
Philadelphia PA 19102
215-560-2640