

STATEMENT OF REP. CHRIS CARNEY

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

“Member’s Day”

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

Chairman Spratt, Ranking Member Ryan and Members of the Committee: Good afternoon.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

Since I last appeared before the committee, I’ve met with countless Pennsylvanians from across the 10th district and identified a number of issues that are paramount to families, businesses and communities in northeast and central Pennsylvania.

I respectfully request you to take into consideration the following budget priorities: the Clean Water State Revolving Fund; salaries and expenses and buildings and facilities for the Federal Bureau of Prisons; cancer research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH); and the Department of Energy’s Office of Science.

I urge you to increase funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund so that municipalities in northeastern and central Pennsylvania have the resources to make necessary sewage upgrades.

The administration has proposed \$3.9 billion for FY2010, but every year, there is a gap of up to \$11.1 billion between wastewater infrastructure need and actual spending.

I continually hear from municipalities, townships, boroughs and villages across northeast and central Pennsylvania that they are facing a tremendous burden to upgrade their wastewater infrastructure. While they want to make the repairs as efficiently and economically as possible, they must also do so in a way that does not harm or pollute the natural beauty of one of our nation’s great rivers, the Susquehanna, which ultimately feeds the Chesapeake.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) provides grants to all 50 states to be distributed as low- or zero-interest loans for high-priority water quality activities—with an emphasis on sewage treatment plant upgrades. These are the precise needs that so many Pennsylvania communities are facing. In fact, SRF loans are the primary source of capital for sewage treatment plant upgrades throughout the nation.

I encourage you to provide more funding for the federal Bureau of Prisons.

Of the 18 high-security U.S. penitentiaries nationwide, three are in Pennsylvania’s 10th district: Lewisburg, Allenwood, and New Canaan. The district is also home to medium

low security facilities co-located at the Allenwood complex. Additionally, there are a number of BoP guards from FCI Schuylkill and FCI Otisville who I have the pleasure of representing.

The administration request for BoP is \$6 billion, which is less than what BoP ultimately was appropriated for FY09 by almost \$200 million.

I've been to all three pens in the 10th and I can assure you that there's an urgent need for significantly more dollars than the federal prison system receives. The system is shockingly overpopulated and woefully understaffed—all at a time when our other federal law enforcement efforts are more effective than ever at investigating, prosecuting and locking up criminals.

Violent attacks on guards across the country are now considered “isolated incidents,” but happen fairly regularly. Staffing is typically at 85 percent compared to when these attacks were so isolated that they actually drew attention.

I hope we don't lose another guard this year like we did last year at USP Atwater. We must ensure that the BoP has adequate funding to hire additional guards instead of just building electric fences in their place.

As a cancer survivor, I am heartened by the Administration's promise to double the amount of funding for cancer research over the next few years. The president has proposed funding \$6 billion dollars for cancer research at the National Institutes of Health for FY10.

Cancer touches all Americans.

In 2008, the American Cancer Society estimates that over 1.4 million people were diagnosed with cancer and that over 560,000 people lost their lives fighting some form of the disease. These victims and survivors are our children, brothers, sisters, parents, and grandparents.

We owe it to them to do everything we can to defeat this terrible disease.

Unfortunately, from 2004 to 2009, funding for cancer research at the NIH remained virtually flat.

While I was pleased to see that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and this year's omnibus bill increased funding for cancer research, we must sustain and expand on this effort.

If we are going to win the battle against cancer, our scientists and researchers must have the tools they need to improve cancer prevention, treatments and, ultimately, to find a cure.

I strongly encourage the Budget Committee to meet the President's request regarding cancer research funding.

Finally, the United States must become a leader in renewable energy. Our continued dependence on foreign sources of oil threatens our economic, environmental, and national security.

In 2007, the Congress passed the America COMPETES Act—bipartisan legislation that authorized the doubling of funding for the Department of Energy's Office of Science by 2016.

The Office of Science provides more than 40 percent of total funding for basic research in physical science. It manages and supports research in basic energy sciences, biological and environmental sciences, computational science, climate change, geophysics, genomics, and life sciences, all of which can truly bring our energy options into the 21st century.

That is why I am calling on the Budget Committee to increase funding for the Office of Science. Not only will increased funding help fuel our nation's economic recovery by supporting high-tech, high-paying jobs, but it will help lead to the development of viable alternative sources of energy and help our nation become the global supplier of energy, instead of the global consumer.

As the budget process moves forward, I look forward to working with you to ensure that Congress adopts a budget that makes necessary investments in the areas I've discussed.

Thank you for your consideration.