

**For Immediate Release**

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[www.pwcf.com](http://www.pwcf.com)

**PWCF-Endorsed Legislative Candidates Will Face First Test During Pennsylvania's Historic Primary Next Month.**

Harrisburg, --- The Pennsylvania Women's Campaign Fund has endorsed seventeen women running for office in the General Assembly. Among the candidates running primary campaigns who received endorsement are incumbents Jennifer Mann, of Lehigh county, Babbette Josephs, Cherelle Parker, Barbara McIlvane-Smith, Kathy Manderino, and Rosita Youngblood from the Delaware Valley, and Phyllis Mundy of Luzerne county. They are joined by an array of talented challengers from across the state to make up a bi-partisan slate for the April 22 primary. A full list of endorsed candidates and more information is posted online at [www.pwcf.com](http://www.pwcf.com).

The PA Women's Campaign Fund (PWCF) is the only bipartisan Political Action Committee (PAC) in Pennsylvania that supports progressive women candidates from either party who are seeking election or re-election to the General Assembly. PWCF provides financial contributions, campaign training and technical assistance. Ranking 43rd among 50 states in representation of women in state legislatures, Pennsylvania needs all the help it can get to increase the participation of women in the state legislature.

Through coordinated efforts by PWCF, contributors across the state are able to use the fund to streamline resources to deserving women candidates, without having to research candidates on their own. In addition, the Fund leverages resources to first time office seekers who are at the beginning of their political careers, as well as seasoned veterans whose seats may be contested.

"Sometimes just a few hundred or thousand dollars makes the difference in whether a very viable candidate will decide to go for it, or not," says Martha Lester Harris, President of the PWCF. "Once they have our seed-money, candidates can generate further investment from other donors." she continued. "These resources help women communicate with voters and gain a competitive edge over their opponents. Funding provided by PWCF helps level the playing field and empowers women candidates to run and win." claims Harris.

PWCF is the only organization of its kind in Pennsylvania. In a year where gender is an issue of national political interest, the women running for office in PA may fair better than usual due to the heightened awareness of women's legislative and political capabilities. "This is a great year to be inspired by women running for office," claims Jann Chirdon, a PWCF Board member who helps women candidates with their campaigns. "I expect their will be a great deal of enthusiasm from potential donors and voters who will be happy to support these women," she suggests.

In addition to fundraising, the Fund co-sponsors The Winning Edge campaign school with the PA Center for Women, Politics and Public Policy at Chatham University to empower would-be candidates with the skills necessary to organize and manage campaigns, fundraise, develop policy positions and communicate their message to the voters. The Fund's campaign school has led to success for some recent candidates including Lisa Bennington in 2006 and previous school graduates, like Jennifer Mann. In addition to helping candidates win campaigns, the Fund aims to motivate and support an increase in the number of progressive women who run for office. This year, the Fund can report that 10% of the women running for seats in the General Assembly are graduates of The Winning Edge campaign school.

PWCF has been gaining momentum in recent years and will grant its largest financial investment in primary election campaigns to date. In deed the Fund began with the early support of contemporary political leaders like Majority Leader, City Councilmember Marian Tasco of Philadelphia and former National Republican Committeewoman Elsie Hillman of Pittsburgh, who were honored this past fall when the organization celebrated a quarter century of progress in electing women to the state legislature. When the Pennsylvania Women's Campaign Fund was founded in 1982, women comprised just 4% of the membership of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Today, women comprise 14% of the General Assembly – a significant gain, but there is much more to do.

The Fund plans to continue raising record-level contributions throughout the summer through fundraising events and awareness-raising efforts. Events are scheduled for March 27 in Philadelphia, May 6 in Harrisburg, and others to be announced shortly for Lancaster and Pittsburgh. "These events give candidates an opportunity to meet voters and potential campaign donors, and we are pleased to provide a venue for this important networking," says Harris.

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The Pennsylvania Women's Campaign Fund is the only organization in the state devoted solely to supporting progressive women candidates for election to the General Assembly.