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PENNSYLVANIA 132<sup>ND</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

**For Immediate Release**

August 22, 2008

**Contact Number**

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**Republican Candidate Decries Mann's Lack of Action on Crime in Allentown**

Good afternoon and thank you for coming. I chose this location to spotlight the need for greater policing in Allentown and to address Jennifer Mann's failed leadership in improving the situation.

The Nineteenth St Card & Gift Shop was for many years one of the delightful small businesses in Allentown's West End. It provided members of the community the opportunity to purchase a card or small gift for someone special and as a post office annex it served many of the postal needs of the community. Upon arrival you could expect to see a neighbor or engage in a friendly conversation with the owners. Unfortunately, this has all changed.

This shop was burglarized on two occasions in 2007. After the first burglary in April 2007, despite sustaining a significant loss the owners were able to remain open. After an additional burglary in August, things changed dramatically. The burglars not only stole merchandise but were capable of removing the postal safe and dragging it over 4 blocks unimpeded in the 19<sup>th</sup> St corridor one of the premier business districts in the city. This forced the owners to limit their hours of availability, sustain great financial loss and has made them all too fearful as no suspect or suspects are in custody. This has become all too common in Allentown. In fact, according to Pennsylvania State Police, Allentown's solved crimes commonly known as "clearance rates" have dropped from 76% in 2000 to an appalling 33% in 2007.

<http://ucr.psp.state.pa.us/UCR/Reporting/Monthly/Summary/MonthlySumOffenseUl.asp?rbSet=4>

As a long time resident of Allentown and now Republican candidate for State Representative in the 132<sup>nd</sup> district, I believe that incidents like this are occurring with greater frequency. I have attended many neighborhood watch meetings and have heard numerous complaints of incidents of graffiti, theft and vandalism. Many of these complaints reference frustration that the police do not adequately respond or are not called due to a perception that the police are overworked, over stretched and compelled to handle more serious crime in downtown Allentown.

I must ask the question though; did it have to be this way? Many, if not most of you, are now familiar with the Allentown police pension agreement realized during the Afflerbach administration. While we could argue extensively about the settlement, I believe we would be better served to examine what we could have done differently following the

event and how best to move forward. Let's examine a recent use of state monies in the Lehigh Valley. In 2004, Jennifer Mann along with local leaders worked together to bring baseball to our area. In October 2004, Governor Rendell requested an effort on their part to match an initial state grant of \$12,000,000. (<http://www.wfmz.com/rendell-stadium-letter.asp>) Working together they achieved that goal but I believe that Representative Mann should have moved to abruptly halt the initiative in 2005 and instead request emergency funding to replace the 53 officers who retired under generous pension terms. ([http://www.fop.net/servlet/display/news\\_article?id=304&XSL=xsl\\_pages%2Fpublic\\_news\\_individual.xsl&nocache=2106331](http://www.fop.net/servlet/display/news_article?id=304&XSL=xsl_pages%2Fpublic_news_individual.xsl&nocache=2106331)) As a representative whose district encompasses nearly all of West Allentown and downtown Allentown, I believe this would have been appropriate and demonstrated her leadership in ensuring a safe Allentown but also an Allentown with a sustainable economic future based upon the assured safety of our residents. Even half of this \$12,000,000 grant would have been significant in addressing the emergency need of our community.

Now Jennifer Mann is active in pursuing another sports venue, a hockey arena in the Lehigh Valley rather than searching for ways to increase the police presence in Allentown. ([http://www.mcall.com/news/local/all-a1\\_5brooksbox.6520739jul26,0,23090.story?track=rss](http://www.mcall.com/news/local/all-a1_5brooksbox.6520739jul26,0,23090.story?track=rss)) I was surprised to learn that as of this date she is not a co-sponsor of HB1189 which has the potential to bring nearly \$6 million to Lehigh County for additional policing. While at this time it is difficult to determine the exact number of officers Allentown will receive under this bill, (<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?year=2007&sind=0&body=H&type=B&BN=1189>) I believe this legislation offers an opportunity for this district to pursue state resources to address its policing concerns and I believe that this should be the priority rather than the pursuit of another sports venue.

Perhaps the reason Jennifer Mann has not adequately addressed our district's policing need rests in three failed efforts to achieve higher political office. An unsuccessful bid for Auditor General in 2004, an unsuccessful bid for State Senator in 2005 and this year an unsuccessful bid for State Treasurer. It is clear Jennifer Mann no longer desires to serve as our State Representative.

As the next State Representative for the 132<sup>nd</sup> district, I will work to make sure Allentown's police department reaches 300 officers. This would represent a 30% increase. It would also more accurately reflect the number of officer's 2006 FBI statistics show that communities our size should possess in the Northeast and Middle Atlantic United States.

([http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/data/table\\_71.html](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/data/table_71.html))

I will work with local and county leaders to make the achievement of this goal a priority. I will not place economic development initiatives ahead of personal safety. I believe that increased crime is not a perception in Allentown but a reality. I believe that many crimes go unreported and I believe that there can be no significant economic development in Allentown without first addressing this goal.

Thank you.

***Paid For By***  
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