

January 23, 2012

Dear President Obama:

Thank you for inviting me and other local and state elected officials across the country to join you and your staff for a conference call in preparation for your State of the Union Address. As the time ran out, you requested that those of us, who did not have an opportunity to speak in person during the call, email our input to you.

As per your request, I am honored to bring you regards and to share some insights from the citizens of the historic Borough of West Chester, PA.

West Chester is located about 30 miles west of the city of Philadelphia. We are the County Seat of Chester County, and nationally recognized for our historic preservation, our small town charm, our premier state university, and our excellent hospital. We serve as a regional urban hub for services such as financial, government, higher education, health care, culture, entertainment and the arts.

In spite of our vibrant downtown and our lovely neighborhoods, and enjoying the nickname, “the perfect town”, West Chester faces critical challenges similar to core communities across the state and the country. Reeling under the effects of the recent recession, saddled with archaic state laws and facing ever-dwindling federal, state and county monies, West Chester’s financial future is in jeopardy. Our severely aging infrastructure is crumbling, and our “rainy day” fund disappearing quickly, as the effects of the recession linger and become the “new normal”.

The citizens of West Chester are smart, entrepreneurial and practical, and work hard together with our elected officials to do what needs to be done. However, the crisis is so severe that we can no longer survive alone. It will take all of us working together, local, state and national elected officials, pooling our talent, tightening our collective belts and working smarter together, to serve and protect our people!!

The needs and requests of West Chester align directly with those articulated by the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities and the National League of Cities:

- **Stop** the political gamesmanship in Washington...
- And take **action** to
  - **Create jobs**
  - **Grow the economy and**
  - **Invest in the country’s infrastructure.**

Permit me to include one last request. This request reflects West Chester’s top priority for the future, as identified by our citizens at a 2006 town meeting: Environmental Issues. The articulation of this priority has driven the greening of Borough energy choices, ordinances, transportation and land development for the last 5 years. Please keep environmental issues as one of your top national priorities. In addition, for your children

and for ours, please be sure to always include the examination of the health effects of environmental degradation on our citizens, especially our most vulnerable citizens, our children.

Thank you for your leadership of our great country, Mr. President. Please let us know how the citizens of West Chester can work together with you to help our communities flourish into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

Sincerely,  
Carolyn T. Comitta  
Mayor of West Chester, PA