

(As Prepared For Presentation)

Auditor General Eugene A. DePasquale Swearing-In Remarks

Tuesday, January 15, 2013, Noon in State Museum Auditorium

For starters, thank you to Tracey, Ben & Sarah for not only being the best blessing I could ever have but also for helping me keep everything in perspective these last two years. Time does fly and in these last two years a lot has changed: growth spurts, baseball championships, Sarah can now do a split for dance – she does not take after me on that one and for Tracey an optimism that makes her think Ben will do eight months of football workouts then decide not to play is probably the same optimism that enabled her to allow an unknown state legislator to not only run but also think it was possible. To each of you...Thank you!

I greatly appreciate Governor Corbett; Senator Casey; Justice Todd, Senator Teplitz, Leader Dermody, Controllers Green and Saidel; family that have travelled from all over, friends; and fellow Pennsylvanians:

Thank you for being a part of this swearing-in.

It is no secret that we are in challenging times at the state and federal level. However, while we are facing these challenges we should keep this in perspective: founding a nation, preserving a union, preserving democracy, the Civil Rights movement, landing on the Moon and taking out Osama bin Laden were even more daunting tasks. However, what is great about our state and our nation ... we always find a way.

The challenges we face today are clear. Preparing our children for the economy of the future; improving our infrastructure to attract businesses; making our government more efficient and effective; and ensuring our land and water are preserved for future generations. These problems challenge leaders not just in Pennsylvania, but across our nation.

Now, I realize at these type of events there are often quotes from famous, historical figures. That is, in most instances, fitting.

However, I prefer to quote John Wooden — perhaps the greatest coach of all time — as people wish me success:

**"Success comes from knowing that you did your best to become the best
that you are capable of becoming and that success is never final; failure is
never fatal. It's courage that counts."**

This must be the approach all elected officials take. Do your best, do not be afraid to fail and have the courage to make the tough choices that must be made to move our Commonwealth and our nation forward regardless of the politics.

These are challenging economic times for families in every corner of Pennsylvania. And, these are difficult times for government agencies from school boards charged with providing

quality education, to local municipalities charged with providing core government service, such as police and fire protection, with scarce resources.

Government services are not without cost, and without a doubt, there will always be a debate about appropriate tax rates and the amount of taxation.

But, what is not up for debate is that the taxes government collects must be used as effectively as possible.

That is why I pledge to you again today that I will be a tough, fair and independent Auditor General. This starts by making sure your tax dollars are invested wisely.

I'm going to start this effort with the Auditor General's office.

I will begin immediately to review how our audits are done to make sure we are as efficient as possible. We will also modernize the office to make the best use of technology to streamline our operations so we can work smarter for you.

My approach to audits will be to focus on making realistic recommendations and developing workable solutions to improve government operations.

For example, when we conduct an audit of one of our school districts, I don't want to just point out problems in that particular school district. I want to focus on making recommendations that could help a district improve its performance and make sure every dime possible that is meant for the classroom gets there.

An audit is not the only way we can make an impact. We will also look for systemic issues that crop up in multiple school districts and recommend programs and changes that will strengthen schools.

Ultimately, we want to help schools maximize resources to provide a quality education that prepares students for well-paying jobs right here in Pennsylvania.

I also want to do my part to make sure Pennsylvania state government is doing its part for job creation.

We must make certain that taxpayer money used for economic development actually creates jobs for Pennsylvanians and offers clear benefits for our communities.

I also know that those investments must be strategic, intelligent and accountable to taxpayers.

That is why my office will conduct a thorough audit of all the state's economic development programs to identify those that are succeeding and those that are not. Our recommendations will identify programs that need to be revised or eliminated to focus scarce resources where they can have the best job creation impact.

We also must rebuild our infrastructure to make it first-class, to put people back to work, and to attract more jobs.

Right now, we often hear about job growth in areas of Pennsylvania where drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation is taking place. That is certainly understandable. Growing up in Pittsburgh, the lesson was clear when the steel mills closed down, that no industry can be

certain to last forever. This is why we must ensure we have a workforce that is diverse and prepared to face an economy that will be forever changing.

At the same time, we need to focus just as much attention on the environmental impact of drilling. When the steel mills closed, it took an enormous effort, in some cases it took decades, to clean up a site to allow its reuse.

While natural gas drilling has brought new opportunities to small towns and rural communities throughout the state, that same drilling poses challenges to our environmental regulators, our local communities and our natural resources.

At the same time, we cannot forget mistakes made in the past.

Our Pennsylvania waterways are still suffering — despite billions of dollars in clean-up — from inadequate oversight of the coal industry in previous generations.

And, you don't have to be that old to remember the cost of doing nothing when our steel plants needed additional investments to become cleaner and more competitive. In an effort to save jobs while ignoring the environment, doing nothing ended up costing us jobs and creating an environmental problem that required expensive solutions.

Today it is clear, we must strive to grow our economy and protect our environment at the same time.

That is why, one of my first official duties as Auditor General will be to initiate a performance audit of the Department of Environmental Protection to make sure our constitutional right to pure water is not being compromised by natural gas drilling.

You may recall that Pennsylvania created a nationally recognized model for turning brownfields into prosperous businesses that create jobs.

My goal regarding drilling and environmental protection is to ensure that we are getting this issue right so that people can look to Pennsylvania and ask...how do you do it?!

And, if we are properly prepared, we can use that model to reclaim areas when drilling activity ends. Only this time, we don't have to wait decades for the turn-around as we did in the past when a mine shut down or a mill closed.

As I traveled across this great state, I saw first-hand that government can, and does, make a difference in our lives when it operates as intended.

Whether it is ensuring that our water is safe to drink and our children are receiving a quality education that prepares them for the future. Or, ensuring older Pennsylvanians receive the services they need and that our state has a healthy business climate, as your Auditor General I will do everything in my power to restore your faith and confidence in government by holding agencies accountable on how they spend your tax dollars.

President Teddy Roosevelt described the White House as a “bully pulpit.” Bully has a different meaning today, but to Roosevelt it meant something positive; an avenue to achieve significant change.

As Auditor General I will be a tough, fair and independent watchdog making use of the “bully pulpit” the way Roosevelt described: creating a forum for positive change and creative discourse with the ultimate goal of restoring faith and confidence in our government.

And, as Coach Wooden said; Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be.

And change we must...not just in the Auditor General's office but throughout our government...and not just today but we must be committed to evolving to meet demands of the times we are in.

And, as I begin, please know that I would not be here if it weren't for so many of you: family, friends, roommates, teammates, friends I coach with and supporters from across the state...today would not be possible without you.

Thank you for the part each of you played in enabling me to stand before you today and for providing me the opportunity to serve you.

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