

For immediate release



"PA Democratic Black Caucus Chair With Sam"

*PA Democratic Black Caucus Chair Endorses Sam
Bennett for Mayor of Allentown 2017*

at

The Freedom Memorial

Allentown, PA

410 Union Street Allentown PA 18012

At intersection of Union and Martin Luther King Boulevards

Thursday, December 15, 2016 10:00 am Allentown, Pa. - In front of Allentown's nationally unique Freedom Memorial, the only in the world commemorating both Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King, the PA Democratic Black Caucus Chair will be announcing endorsement of Sam Bennett for Mayor of Allentown 2017.

Caucus Chair Jacque Whambush emphasizes "Sam has not only done more for Civil Rights than most, she has advanced PA Democratic Party electoral results

like few others. As PA Democratic Black Caucus Chair I am honored to endorse Sam in her run for Mayor of Allentown 2017 and help her in anyway possible."

"Sam is a nationally recognized political figure. Allentown, the third largest city in PA and a key electoral swing region is pivotal to the advancement of the minority community in both PA and the nation at large. As Mayor of Allentown, Sam Bennett would advance the work of both Civil Rights and the Democratic Party - as such I am honored to be officially endorsing her candidacy for Mayor of Allentown 2017" continued Whambush.

With long time Allentown African-American elder statesman Harry Roberts, Sam co-founded and was the principal fundraiser for The Freedom Memorial, the only in the world commemorating both Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King. As a founding Board Member and Board Officer she assisted in the creation of a park around The Freedom Memorial and the donation of both to the City of Allentown in 2011. After the completion of the memorial and its park, working with Board President Sharon Fraser and other board members, she created and launched in 2015 the multiple year "Stories That Shaped A Nation" bringing to Allentown a host of national civil rights leaders including 104 year old Amelia Robinson, Congresswoman Maxine Waters and Stories Honorary Co-Chairs U.S. Congresswoman Fudge (then Chair of the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus) and U.S. Congresswoman Yvette Clarke. In 2016, Sam was honored with the 2016

Community Leader Award by the Benevolent and Improved Protective Order of the World Wide Elks 2016 - one of the oldest and largest African-American organizations world-wide with 500,000 members.¹

On the political front, recruited by prominent Democrats and Republicans, Sam lost by only 46 votes to Roy Afflerbach in Allentown's 2001 Mayoral Race. In 2004's presidential faceoff between Kerry and Bush, Sam was the Lehigh Valley Regional Field Director for America Coming Together (ACT) the largest ever voter mobilization effort in U.S. history - leading the Valley to be the top-performing swing region performance in the nation (as reported by CNN on election night). After coming in second in her second bid for Allentown Mayor in 2005, she was elected the first female chair of the Allentown Democratic Committee, generating one of the highest Democratic turnouts in an off year municipal election in 2005's general election and the first ever Democratic sweep of all offices on the ballot in the city. Re-elected Chair of Allentown's Democratic Party and also elected Vice-Chair of the Lehigh County Democratic Party, Bennett focused on growing Democratic performance in both the city and the county - and was recruited by party leadership to run for U.S. Congress in 2008, where she garnered a historic amount of votes and funds raised and was one of the most endorsed U.S. Congressional challengers in the nation. In early 2009, after an extensive national search, Bennett was selected CEO of Washington, D.C.

¹ ibpoew.org; "Our Brief History"; retrieved December 11, 2016.

based Women's Campaign Fund and its foundation She Should Run - the oldest organization in the nation financially supporting women when they run for office. In that role, commuting from Allentown to Washington, D.C. each week for five years - while running The Historic Benner Mansion on the weekends, Allentown's first and still only bed and breakfast - she was instrumental in the founding of the historic *Political Parity*, the first ever coalition of women's organizations focused on electing more women to office; the creator and co-founder of *Name It Change It*, the widely influential initiative that provided groundbreaking research on the negative impact and strategies to minimize political sexism against women - while raising record amounts of money and media attention for this storied national organization over her five year tenure. Bennett stopped her D.C. commute to make her final bid for elected office - to run for Mayor Allentown 2017, before the current FBI probe into the current administration was launched.

With the support of her Inaugural Chair, former Allentown City Councilwoman Jeanette Eichenwald and supporters like U.S. Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz - Bennett looks forward to garnering many more local, statewide and national endorsements for her bid for Mayor of Allentown 2017. "I am deeply honored to be endorsed by the PA Democratic Black Caucus and its Chair Jacque Whambush and Treasurer James Tyson. I look forward once elected to ensuring Allentown serves as a beacon for tolerance and civil rights while also working

with other leaders to make sure Allentown and its county are national role models for citizen engagement and voter turnout. I'm inordinately proud that Allentown and Lehigh County were among the highest performing in PA in 2016's Presidential, voting for Clinton at nearly the same rate as Obama - despite the pall of the current FBI probe which kept presidential candidates away and the local party in transition. I attribute that performance to our years of political organizing here, which I have been proud to both lead and serve. As Mayor, I'd look to ensure Allentown citizens of all political parties to be as engaged as possible - guaranteeing best outcomes on all civic and political fronts."

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