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EDWARD G. RENDELL, Governor

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**GOVERNOR RENDELL COMMENDS VOLUNTEERS ON
NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBRANCE
*'GET HELP NOW, PA' AND 'WILLS FOR HEROES' SESSIONS HELD TO PROVIDE FREE
FINANCIAL AND LEGAL SERVICES***

HARRISBURG – Governor Edward G. Rendell praised volunteers for their time and commitment to providing community service today, and all summer long, through the “Get Help Now, Pennsylvania” and “Wills for Heroes” financial and legal service projects. He also called for a renewed commitment to public service to honor the thousands of Americans who died in the 2001 terrorist attacks, as well as the nation’s first responders.

“Today is the culmination of nearly 10 weeks of extraordinary volunteerism across Pennsylvania, and I am pleased to be here with Secretary LaHood to thank the dedicated volunteers who are improving the lives of their fellow citizens on this National Day of Service and Remembrance,” said Governor Rendell. “I also applaud the many volunteers who, without fanfare or recognition, faithfully work on a regular basis to better the lives of others and strengthen their communities.”

In response to President and Mrs. Obama’s call for Americans to pursue public service in honor of September 11th, the Governor and First Lady Judge Marjorie Rendell decided to focus Pennsylvania’s efforts on the needs of those who are suffering during these difficult economic times – with 540,000 state residents unemployed and 127,000 Pennsylvania mortgages currently past due.

“We are grateful to the Pennsylvania Bar Association, local bar associations and the financial community for answering the call to service in such a powerful way through Get Help Now, Pennsylvania,” said Governor Rendell.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood joined the Governor in commending volunteers in Pennsylvania and throughout the nation who have joined President Obama’s United We Serve initiative.

“It is heartening to see people here in Pittsburgh sharing their skills to help their neighbors in such an important way,” said Secretary LaHood. “President Obama asked all Americans to make meaningful community service a part of their lives and people are answering that call.”

“There is no better example of the spirit of volunteerism than the Wills for Heroes project that we are seeing in action today, and it is especially appropriate as we observe the anniversary of the terrible events of 9/11,” said Governor Rendell.

Wills for Heroes has helped 518 Pennsylvania police officers, fire fighters, paramedics and other first responders prepare wills to ensure their families are protected, should the unexpected occur.

Through Get Help Now, volunteers at 19 locations throughout the state provided free assistance and referrals to Pennsylvanians who have been affected by the financial downturn. Since July 7, more than 800 state residents have received help from more than 1,000 legal and financial professionals who gave a combined 5,000 hours of voluntary service.

While today marked the closing of a summer of service and the Get Help Now project, volunteers were urged to continue to provide ongoing community service.

Get Help Now is a collaborative effort of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, the Pennsylvania Bankers Association, the Pennsylvania Credit Union Association, the Pennsylvania Association of Community Bankers, the Mortgage Bankers Association of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Association of Mortgage Brokers, the Pennsylvania Financial Services Association, the Office of the First Lady, the Pennsylvania Department of Banking, the United Way, Americorps VISTA and the Community Action Association of PA.

Wills for Heroes is an initiative of the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s young lawyer division. The program provides essential legal documents free of charge to our nation’s first responders, including wills, living wills, and powers of attorney. By helping first responders plan now, they ensure their family’s legal affairs are in order. The 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit Wills for Heroes Foundation supports these programs.

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The Rendell administration is committed to creating a first-rate public education system, protecting our most vulnerable citizens and continuing economic investment to support our communities and businesses. To find out more about Governor Rendell’s initiatives and to sign up for his newsletter, visit: www.governor.state.pa.us.