

Eye on World & Local

BUDGET CRUNCH: TAXES TO MAKE PHILLY HEALTHY

By: Tiffany Raggins-Morris
Lion's Eye Staff Writer
tjr5073@psu.edu

Philadelphia mayor, Michael Nutter, announced the proposed city budget for 2011. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, Nutter began his speech with the bleak realities of Philadelphia's economy. The Mayor explains the meaning of some important monetary figures: \$150 million, Nutter explains, is the city's current deficit, \$3.9 billion is being requested for Philadelphia in 2011, and \$175 is roughly each resident's yearly tax increase due to the new sugar tax.

In an interview with Fox 29, Nutter voiced concerns for the health of many Philadelphians stating, "This is a Healthy Philadelphia Initiative, but there is no question about it that it also generates a fair amount of money..." The proposed budget would raise the tax on many sugar based beverages affixing an additional two cent per ounce. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, the proposed increase is doubled that of New York's sugar tax.

Many residents see the increase as a burden that can't be afforded. NBC covered the mayor visiting a diner in Mayfair where Angela Quitola had her chance to voice her burden face to face with the mayor. Quitola explained to Nutter that because of the tax increase her husband is at risk of being laid-off at Coca-Cola. After a heated two minute debate about the rising deficit, Mayor Nutter's general response was, "Maybe you'll buy water".

According to the mayor, last year's proposed budget cuts involving libraries, city jobs and recreation raised concern among all Philadelphians. Therefore, he and his team went back to the drawing board to find alternative solutions to the city's deficit. In addition to the Sugar Tax the mayor wants to charge residents \$300 dollars a year for trash pickup. In a day time interview with NBC10 Nutter reaches out to residents stating, "I'm aware of the financial impact on some Philadelphians could be great...but these services really do make a difference."

The hope, according to the mayor, is to alleviate some of the budget issues while promoting a healthier Philadelphia.



Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter is banking on the new sugar tax to help offset the current budget deficit. (photo courtesy The Philadelphia Inquirer)

What First Amendment Rights?

By: Martina Delgado
Lion's Eye Staff Writer mdd5136@psu.edu

Jackson, Mississippi--Constance McMillen, an 18 year old high school student became the talk of this Southern town when her request to bring her girlfriend to her high school's senior prom was answered by officials cancelling prom altogether. Before prom, expectations for the event's dress and other rules were distributed to the students. One of the rules made for the students, was that the prom dates be of the opposite sex.

This did not go well for McMillen who wanted to bring her girlfriend and dress in a tuxedo. McMillen then decided to approach the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) to help her modify that particular rule for prom. Instead of modifying the regulation, the senior prom at Itawamba County Agricultural High School was cancelled. Students chastised McMillen for her actions, but McMillen proceeded to go through with fighting the school board.

In the case of Constance McMillen v. The Itawamba County School District, et al., the ACLU ruled that the school board violated McMillen's First Amendment Right when they did not allow her to attend prom with her girlfriend and then by cancelled the prom altogether. According to uclu.org, in the end, the school is now holding an alternative "private" prom that is arranged by the parents. Therefore, McMillen can bring her girlfriend and wear her tuxedo to her senior prom.

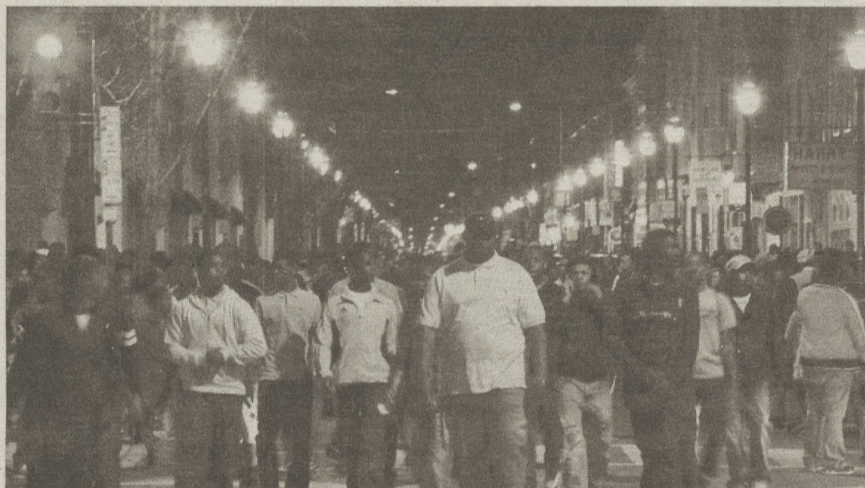
Philadelphia Overrun by Flash Mobs

By: Jennifer Santangelo
Lion's Eye Staff Writer jms1084@psu.edu

On March 23rd a Philly family court judge convicted 10 teens of felony rioting, with one teen receiving a three year sentence. The convicted were part of a flash mob that had ransacked Macy's and stole clothing. All of the mayhem was caught on surveillance camera. A flash mob, according to Wikipedia, is a "large group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an unusual and pointless act for a brief time, and then quickly disperse."

There have been six flash mob incidents since last May. The Gallery has been the site of recent flash mob activity. Teens descend upon the market and push people down and harass shoppers. The group, when chased off by security, turns violent. They spill out into the street, fighting and knocking passerby to the ground. Some pedestrians were assaulted in the Macy mob incident. On Saturday March 20th, teens swarmed South Street. Police were tipped off in advance by an alert parent. However, they were outnumbered. "The cops were overwhelmed," said the manager of a shop located on South Street. The crowd descended onto South Street "[It was] like a tsunami wave" observed a store employee. The owners of South Street businesses have asked Mayor Nutter to intervene and impose a curfew for local teenagers. Even Governor Rendell has voiced his concern: "It's bad and we can't let it go on...Center City is the job engine and it's also the tax engine, and we've got to fight to keep it in good shape."

Police Commissioner Ramsey however lays blame with the parents, stating, "Parents need to keep better track of their children. Parents need to know where their kids are." Hundreds of teens from three area high schools are believed to be using Twitter and other social networking sites to organize these mobs.



Flash mobs hit South Street. (Photo courtesy of the New York Times)

U.S. Recieves Low Ranking

By: Martina Delgado
Lion's Eye Staff Writer mdd5136@psu.edu

In 2006, out of every 100,000 pregnant women, 13.3 died during delivery. The cause of death in half of these cases was not complications during delivery, but poor medical practice. It is also not required for hospitals to report how many women die during delivery. Amnesty International, the global movement that campaigns for human rights, has risen to the occasion when it comes to this maternal health crisis in our country.

Time states that "the report, titled "Deadly Delivery," notes that the likelihood of a woman's dying in childbirth in the U.S. is five times as great as in Greece, four times as great as in Germany and three times as great as in Spain." This likelihood, still under investigation, has been connected to medical practices that veered from procedure. Doctors have been insufficient and risky when providing care to pregnant women. Time states that the overuse of procedures like the cesarean section and the negligence during these delicate procedures has helped lead to the death of many women in the United States.

Discrimination is also practiced in the delivery room in that the "Deadly Delivery" report argues black women in the U.S. are nearly four times as likely as white women to die from pregnancy-related causes. Time also points out that, "a panel of medical experts at a conference held by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommended that physicians' organizations revisit policies that prevent women from having vaginal births after having had a cesarean." This return back to old policies has only increased the number of cesarean sections, and has risked and killed many women in the U.S.

Amnesty International is asking the Obama administration that better attention is given to pregnant women and their health. As a proposal, they suggest that an Office of Maternal Health within the Department of Health and Human Services be established so that the instances of delivery deaths decrease. The U.S. Amnesty International plans to fight this injustice against women's health as infringing upon their right's to proper and equal health-care.

For more information on the Amnesty International report and their fight for Women's health visit: www.time.com and search Amnesty International. You can also visit Amnesty International's website directly at www.amnesty.org.