

## JOBS COULD COME FROM HURRICANE SANDY CLEANUP



New Jersey and New York were hit the hardest by Hurricane Sandy. Pennsylvania was much more fortunate. People believe now is the time to fix and renovate the state's framework in order to revitalize Pennsylvania's plunging economy. Economic outlook across the country has mostly gotten better but unemployment sits at 8 percent, with Pennsylvania's ballooning over the last few months to 8.2 percent, the first time since 2006 that the state was above the national level. No new jobs appear to be on the way. Twelve months ago, Pennsylvania was seventh in the country in instituting jobs. Presently, it is 38<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Sandy gave Pennsylvania all it could handle, but the state's road structures, dams and levees, gas stations and energy grids held up rather well. This allowed citizens to get to clean up right away. Experts believe some of these structures can't withstand many more beatings. A move to fix, restore and rejuvenate them would help protect against future potential disasters, modernize facilities and create jobs. The government doesn't feel it necessary to address these issues. They have no ideas to fix employment and the tax reducing for corporations has not created jobs. On the other hand, they have cut healthcare and some education programs. Eight to nine years ago, the state worked together to create employment during tough times. An economic stimulus program mobilized \$2 billion in funding from the state to gain an extra \$5 billion from private investors to help rejuvenate the community, prep development areas, upgrade infrastructures and invest in companies. \$100 million was contributed in company investments, \$50 million contribution to technology and \$50 million to revive the downtown business area. With repairs taking place to expiring foundations, it should be taken a step further to completely restore them instead of fixing them for the short-term. The state government should go back and invoke the transportation commission's \$2.5 billion plan to invest funding into doing just that. Innovative uses of new revenues as well as tax breaks to those who privately invest in water, sewer and mass transit systems could create billions of dollars to use for enhancements. The state should take the tax on insurance premiums, representing hundreds of millions of dollars, to help funding as well. The state Senate's Democratic Party has an extensive idea for foundation investments, job training and advances in technology to help economic expansion, while not bumping taxes. Sandy should be seen as an opening to shift our attention to establishing jobs that can support families.