



Inside Conditions
R-e-s-p-e-c-t
C6

New Pittsburgh Courier BUSINESS

AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 4, 2012

www.newpittsburghcourier.com

Classifieds
Find what you need
from jobs to cars
to housing
C7-C8



Casey Q&A at PowerBreakfast

by Christian Morrow
Courier Staff Writer

Thanks to the partnership of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, African American Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Doris Carson Williams offered her members a unique opportunity to ask U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D- Pa, what he can do for small and minority-owned businesses.

The Aug. 24 town hall-style forum yielded one of the largest PowerBreakfast crowds of the year as Bill Flanagan, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development executive VP for community relations directed audience questions to the senator.

Though questions ran the gamut from immigration to reducing poverty most focused on improving the state's economy and increasing access to new opportunities for

small business.

"I don't think Southwestern Pennsylvania can say it's ever been better situated for the future with its focus on education and natural gas," he said. "With that comes opportunity and responsibility."

From a legislative standpoint, last year Casey introduced legislation to keep prime contractors from fraudulently listing M/WBEs as subs then failing to use them once they'd won the contract.

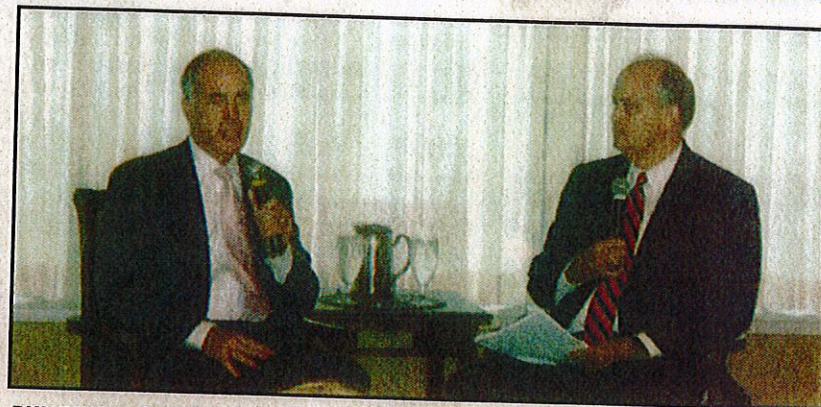
"Companies would list minority firms in bids, then never tell them when they got it," he said. "I'm also working, through seminars and workshops to help small and minority-owned businesses connect with federal contracting opportunities."

In late July Casey moved to keep the state's natural gas industry boom going, now that a glut has reduced the price to

record lows, with legislation that would provide block grants to states to help convert fleet vehicles, it includes rebates for purchasing natural gas buses and tax cred-

its for upgrading filling stations. Such a move would provide jobs and increase the state's energy independence.

But to address the "macro" issues of high unemployment, especially among African-Americans, Casey said we need a national



BUILDING BUSINESS--U.S. Sen. Robert Casey said he is working to increase federal minority contracts and stimulate manufacturing during the African American Chamber of Commerce's Aug. 24 PowerBreakfast townhall meeting at the Rivers Club.

manufacturing strategy.

"We've lost 8 million jobs in this recession, and when I talk to employers in tech and manufacturing they tell me they can't find

SEE CASEY C2

CONTINUED FROM C1

people with the skills," he said. "We don't have a strategy and we need one that includes workforce development and training and early education."

That is one area when immigrants have taken jobs

that could have been filled domestically, had we not abandoned teaching those skills. As to rampant illegal immigration by unskilled people, Casey said this is one of the issues on which he's not afraid to buck his party.

"There's a credibility gap with the administration saying we're going to close the borders and enforce the law," he said. "Until we do that, we won't have support

tion policy. So, there isn't one."

Casey said he is also bucking his party with respect to increased deficit spending.

"Even if we have a surtax on individual income above \$1 million, which I support, it doesn't deal with the growing deficit. We have to cut spending, but not at the expense of our most vulnerable people," he said.

(Send comments to cmorrow@newpittsburghcourier.com)