



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**100 High School Students to Shadow State Legislators in Harrisburg Tuesday as part of Women and Girls Foundation's GirlGov program**

Harrisburg, PA – October 18, 2011 – One hundred high school students from Southwest Pennsylvania will have the opportunity to walk a day in a State Legislator's shoes on Tuesday October 18<sup>th</sup> as part of the Women and Girls Foundation's GirlGov program. The program is supported by generous grants from PNC Bank, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and the Fine Foundation.

**DATE: Tuesday, October 18th, 2011**

**TIME: 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**WHERE: State Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA**

"I was truly shocked to discover that less than 17% of our State Legislators are female and that of the 50 states ours ranks 42nd for women's political participation," said Chareeni Kurukulasuriya, GirlGov participant (2010). "This really sparked the idea in my mind that it is up to young girls currently in high school, like myself, to take an interest in politics and break into this male dominated field."

GirlGov ([www.girlgov.org](http://www.girlgov.org)), a program created in 2009 by the Women and Girls Foundation (WGF), provides teenage women in SWPA the opportunity to experience what it is like to be a State Legislator for the day. 100 students were invited to participate this year. Fifty legislators will each be assigned two teen "shadows" for the day. Participants in the program shadow a Pennsylvania State House or Senate Representative for an entire day at the Capitol Building in Harrisburg, PA attending committee meetings, constituent and staff meetings, and legislative sessions and lunch with their Representative or Senator.

"The goal of the program is to engage teen girls to become more informed, engaged, and interested in the political process." Said Heather Arnet, CEO of the Women and Girls Foundation. "The program idea was created by our teen group, the Regional Change Agents. Their first year (2010) was such a success we decided to make it an annual WGF program."

Participating legislators include Senator Wayne Fontana, Rep. Marc Gergely, Rep. Randy Vulakovich, Senator Jay Costa, Rep. Mike Turzai, Senator Jane Orie, Rep. Matthew Smith, Rep. Chelsa Wagner, Rep. Dan Frankel, Senator Joseph Preston, Rep. Daniel Deasy, Rep. Robert Matzie, Rep. Frank Dermody, Rep. Jake Wheatley, Senator Tim Solobay, Rep. Brandon Neuman, Rep. Deberah Kula, Rep. Jesse White and Senator John Pippy.

GirlGov is an initiative of the Women and Girls Foundation. For more information about WGF, Regional Change Agents or GirlGov, visit [www.wgfpa.org](http://www.wgfpa.org). To interview a GirlGov participant or WGF representative, please contact Heather Arnet 412-720-4280

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