Statement from Dennis Yablonsky, CEO, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, on withdrawal of proposed tuition tax and renewed commitment to pension reform

(Pittsburgh, PA – December 21, 2009) The Allegheny Conference on Community Development applauds the decision by Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl today to withdraw the proposed tuition tax and to launch a collaborative effort to achieve pension reform.

Municipal pension reform is a long-standing priority of the Allegheny Conference. Resolving the pension funding issue for the City of Pittsburgh is critical to the City's long-term fiscal stability. The kind of funding challenge Pittsburgh faces will happen – and already is happening – across the state because we still need comprehensive pension reform legislation in Harrisburg.

We look forward to working together with the public and private sectors, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations to achieve true pension reform, which begins with the adoption of cost containment provisions and other measures to mitigate and manage the impact of increasing liabilities.

The Conference is prepared to provide the extensive research we have conducted on this issue and to offer technical support as the public-private collaborative effort moves forward.

We also commend the university, nonprofit and business community leaders for the commitment they have made to attempt to resolve this difficult issue that challenges the future financial stability of so many municipalities across the Commonwealth.

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The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Affiliates – the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Southwestern Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance – work in collaboration with public and private sector partners to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania. For more information, visit www.alleghenyconference.org.