

My offices are here to serve you!

Capitol Office:
121 Main Capitol Building
P.O. Box 202033
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2033
(717) 787-3566

Constituent Service Office:
HARMAR
1331 Freeport Road
Cheswick, PA 15024
(724) 274-4770
1-800-582-VOTE



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Frank Dermody

Spring 2010

MAJORITY CAUCUS WHIP

Dermody elected Whip, expands leadership role

At the end of 2009, the House leadership position of Majority Whip became vacant. I went for it and was elected by colleagues to serve in the post for 2010. The term “whip” comes from the British parliament, but essentially what it means in the modern legislature is the deputy floor leader.

Primarily, the Whip is responsible for surveying House members before important votes and making sure there

is sufficient support to pass needed bills. In a chamber with more than 200 voting members, this is a large and complicated job, but I am grateful for the opportunity.

The main reason many House members gave for voting for me was my commitment to bringing political reforms to the legislature.

By taking on additional duties as the Whip, I will be better able to advance the issues that matter most

to us in the 33rd District. I share your concerns about property taxes and assessments, job creation, health care, services for older residents, protection of children and education.

In my new position as a senior legislative leader, I have a larger voice and responsibility to speak up for solutions to meet these needs statewide. It is time to put Pennsylvania on a better path.

State budget remains tight



The current state budget was finished months too late, but it finally was completed with no tax increases and a good boost in money for school districts that should reduce the need for larger property tax increases. But state tax revenues are still behind previous years, due to the national recession, and that is going to make passing the next state budget tougher.

The good news is that nobody in Harrisburg wants to repeat last year's failure to get a budget on time. The effects of that delayed budget on people and service providers across the state were devastating.

The governor has proposed to continue

increasing funds for education in the next budget. I certainly hope that we can do that, but it will depend on whether or not state revenues begin to recover. These are very uncertain times because of the ongoing economic challenges we face. Just as families and employers have had to cut back, so, too, does state government.

Economists tell us that we have turned the corner on the recession, but the road back will be a slow one, especially with regard to jobs. In many areas of the state budget, the best result to be hoped for this year may just be to avoid additional cuts on top of the ones already made.



Halting county reassessments

A state Supreme Court ruling last year said that Allegheny County's reassessment system violates the state constitution. And since most other counties use the same method, the court urged the General Assembly to take steps to ensure the constitutionality of reassessment methods.

As a result, I proposed a halt on court-ordered property tax reassessments in all counties while a statewide review is conducted. My bill passed the House last summer and has made some progress through the state Senate, where it is awaiting final passage.

My bill would implement a moratorium on all court-ordered reassessments to give the General Assembly time to sensibly study the reassessment system and address the problems that exist across the state by passing new legislation.

The legislature should take advantage of the opportunity to understand and properly address the many issues that come from reassessments, most especially the cases of homeowners who experience sudden and dramatic increases in their assessments after a county reassessment is done.

Health Information For You

Bill to protect access to medicine awaits Senate action

When the federal stimulus funding package was enacted in 2009, senior citizens were provided with a one-time \$250 payment. Unfortunately, that small payment hurt some seniors by

pushing them over the income limits for PACE and PACENET, the state's prescription assistance programs, endangering their access to low-cost medications.

The House passed a bill (H.B. 1480), which I support, that would protect senior citizens' eligibility for PACE and PACENET. The Senate has not yet taken action on the bill.

Health insurance for young adults

Health insurance is something that too many young adults go without because they either cannot afford it or their job does not offer it. Young people take a chance on their good health, which can lead to financial disaster in case of accident or illness.

Pennsylvania has a new law that lets sons and daughters keep insurance coverage under their parents' health insurance plans up to age 29. Call or visit my office to get a brochure that explains this new health-care option for young adults.



New state law to prevent serious medical errors

The Preventable Serious Adverse Events Act, which became law in 2009, establishes a system that ensures health-care providers cannot collect insurance payments, or any other kind of payment, for preventable medical mistakes made by their physicians or hospitals, or for the follow-up health care needed as a result of the medical error.

In addition, the Department of Public Welfare is required to develop a list of adverse medical errors that occur in nursing homes. Once completed, this will be the first list of its kind in the country.

This law should discourage preventable medical mistakes and drive down insurance costs in Pennsylvania.



These residents of the 33rd District visited Harrisburg in October. Another bus trip to the state Capitol is planned for April 27. Contact Charlene in my Harmar office for more details.

Video poker should be an option

With all of the talk of legalizing table games at the state's slots casinos, which finally was approved in January, I think one source of revenue is being overlooked: video poker and similar games in smaller locations.

I introduced a bill last year that would allow neighborhood establishments in Allegheny County to operate video gaming machines to give them an added, legal revenue source, which so many of them desperately need.

Under my bill, any Allegheny County bar, hotel, restaurant, tavern or club with a valid beverage license could apply to install up to three video gaming machines, such as video poker, keno, blackjack or something similar. An application fee and annual fees would be required, and the net profits from the games would be split among licensed establishments and vendors, with Allegheny County getting almost half of the proceeds to fund services throughout the county.

So many of these machines are already in place that I do not think this measure would alter the character of our county, nor would it threaten profits at the larger slots casinos which support property tax relief. But this bill would provide a critical lifeline to the taverns, restaurants and clubs that do so much good work and are the backbone of our local communities.

My Office Can Help You With:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Public Welfare (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax forms or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property tax/rent rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- Consumer complaints
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- Information about federal, state and local government agencies

Any state government-related issues!

Sign up for e-alerts!

Have you visited my Web site lately? Go to www.pahouse.com/Dermody and check out the news and information there. I hope you also will leave your e-mail address on the contact page so that I can update you about news you can use right away, such as application deadlines for state programs and movement on the bills you tell me are of interest to you.



FRANK DERMODY

Majority Caucus Whip

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Come To a Town Meeting with Frank Dermody



I will hold town meetings in early April to update you about state news and to hear directly from you. I want to know what is on your mind, so I hope you can attend one of these sessions. I look forward to seeing you!

Also, please remember that you can contact me at any time by calling my office or clicking the "contact me" button on my Web site, www.pahouse.com/Dermody.

Tuesday, April 6 • 7 p.m.

Harrison Township Municipal Building

Wednesday, April 7 • 7 p.m.

Springdale Township Fire Company