

State Representative Harry A.

READSHAW

36TH DISTRICT **report**



1917 Brownsville Road • Pittsburgh, PA 15210 • (412) 881-4208 • www.pahouse.com/readshaw

New Laws to Note

CASTLE DOCTRINE

Act 10 – Expands the right of a person to use deadly force to protect themselves and their family. Previous law restricted the use of deadly force in defense to only inside one’s residence and only if they are unable to retreat or get to a safe place.

The new law extends the right to use deadly force to a person’s car, porch or anywhere he has the legal right to be, and provided he did not provoke the attacker. It also grants immunity in civil cases when a person justifies the need to protect himself against someone threatening him with death, serious bodily injury, kidnapping or rape.

The law specifies that a person using deadly force cannot be engaged in criminal activity and cannot use deadly force against police or other public safety officers in the performance of their duty. They must also be in legal possession of the weapon.

SUNSHINE LAW

Act 56 – Increases the fines for elected officials who meet with the intent of violating the open meetings law. This covers officers such as school board directors, township supervisors and commissioners and members of county councils. Under the new law, the fine for a first violation rises from \$100 to as much as \$1,000. The penalty for a second offense jumps from \$500 to as much as \$2,000.

HOMICIDE BY WATERCRAFT

Act 33 – Brings Pennsylvania’s penalty for homicide by watercraft while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance into line with penalties for homicide by motor vehicle under the same circumstances. The penalty is a mandatory minimum of three years in prison for each death resulting from the incident.

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Rep. Readshaw takes part in the presentation ceremony for a \$20,000 check to St. Sylvester School of Brentwood to be used as scholarship assistance for students to attend the school. The funds were made possible through the state’s Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program and the Bridge Educational Foundation.

Readshaw voted to create the program in 2001. The EITC allows businesses to receive tax credits for money donated to assist families in sending a child to a private school.



Protecting, Expanding Pennsylvania’s Military-related Jobs

I have been designated co-chairman of the Military Installations and Base Development Caucus. The newly formed caucus is dedicated to preserving military installations in Pennsylvania in the event of future base closure considerations by the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

At stake are the Commonwealth’s 11 military installations with 164,000 defense-related jobs and \$18 billion in annual defense spending.

The last report from the commission in 2005 resulted in the elimination or scaling down of dozens of military installations across the country and had a major adverse impact on defense spending in Pennsylvania.

An updated BRAC report is scheduled for 2015.

We don’t want to have to play catch-up when the next round of considerations arrives. We will use the intervening time to work with military and civilian leadership to be fully prepared to protect any or all of Pennsylvania’s military facilities.

The caucus activity will include improved communications with defense contractors to learn not only about their operations and challenges, but also about those of associated businesses that are their suppliers.

This is an exemplary way in which we can combine the support of both the state House and Senate, and the Democratic and Republican caucuses within both chambers. When the next BRAC report comes around, Pennsylvania will be united and ready to defend our role in keeping the U.S. military supplied and ready.

LIHEAP

Can Keep Your Family Warm

The state has mailed applications for Pennsylvania's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to those who received LIHEAP assistance last year.

Other limited-income individuals and families can also apply. Please consider applying now. Because of funding cuts, less money is expected to be available for the program.

LIHEAP helps eligible families and individuals pay their heating bills through home energy assistance grants and crisis grants. Cash grants are awarded based on household income, family size, type of heating fuel and region.

Crisis grants will be available beginning January 3rd, but the program will accept crisis applications early. Crisis grants are provided in the event of a heating emergency. An emergency could include broken heating equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced, lack of fuel, termination of utility service or danger of being without fuel or of having utility service terminated.

For more information, contact my constituent service office or go to www.dpw.state.pa.us.

New Laws to Note

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CANCER IN FIREFIGHTERS

Act 46 – Permits firefighters to receive workers' compensation if they develop cancer and can establish that they were directly exposed to cancer-causing substances in the course of responding to an emergency incident. Firefighters also must have a physical examination showing they did not have cancer before the incident or when they became a firefighter.



Rep. Readshaw speaks with members of Boy Scout Troop 338 from Baldwin Borough in the Rotunda of the Capitol in Harrisburg. The scouts visited the Capitol in June to fulfill one of the requirements to earn the Citizenship merit badge.

Did You Know?

According to the U.S. Conference of Mayors, every \$1 invested in water and sewer infrastructure increases the economy by more than \$6 in return, including the hiring of workers and boosting of the local economy.

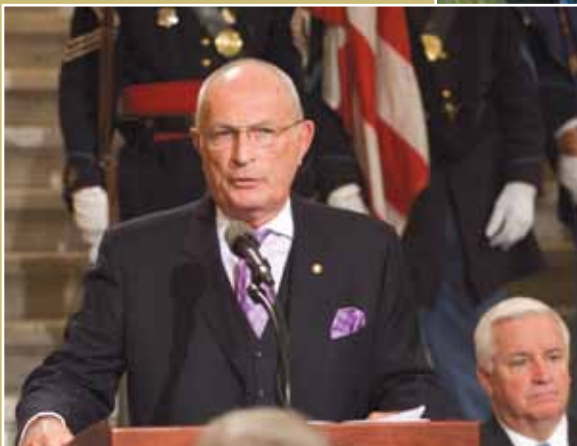
Ride for Gettysburg Maintains Tradition of Success



The 11th annual motorcycle 'Ride to Gettysburg' held in September was a great way to start off the second decade for the event, sponsored by the Alliance of Bikers Aimed Toward Education. The trek from Harrisburg to Gettysburg raised approximately \$12,800 compared to last year's record \$13,500. Half of the proceeds from the ride go to the Pennsylvania Gettysburg Monuments Project. Readshaw began the campaign in 1997 to repair and maintain the more than 140 monuments and markers commemorating Pennsylvanians at the epic 1863 battle.

ABATE presented Readshaw with a symbolic check as the organization broke the \$100,000 mark in funds raised in the ride's 11 years.

Rep. Readshaw addresses a ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda to mark the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War. Gov. Tom Corbett, right, also addressed the gathering.



News for Seniors

PACE and PACENET help seniors pay for their prescription drugs. PACENET has a monthly premium if you are not enrolled in a Medicare Part D plan, which will be cumulative if not met each month. If you are not enrolled in a Medicare Part D plan, your monthly premium begins with your first prescription claim and the premium is paid at your pharmacy.

To be eligible for PACE, you must:

- Be 65 or older and a Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days before applying.
- Not be enrolled in the Department of Public Welfare's Medicaid prescription drug program.
- Have an income of \$14,500 or less if you are single or an income of \$17,700 or less for a married couple.

To be eligible for PACENET, you must:

- Be 65 or older and a Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days before applying.
- Not be enrolled in the Department of Public Welfare's Medicaid prescription drug program.
- Have an income of between \$14,500 and \$23,500 for a single person or between \$17,700 and \$31,500 for a married couple.

For additional information and to obtain an application, visit my constituent service office or check online at <http://www.aging.state.pa.us> and click on "Prescription Assistance."

Reduced-fee vehicle registration

If you are retired and receiving Social Security or other pensions and your total annual income from all sources is \$19,200 or less, you qualify to register your passenger vehicle or light truck (9,000 pounds or less) for a \$10 processing fee per year instead of the annual registration fee.

To apply, obtain Form MV-371 "Application for Retired Status," from any notary, tag service or the Bureau of Motor Vehicles' website, www.dmv.state.pa.us/pdotforms/mv_forms/mv-371.pdf. Complete the form and include it with your regular registration renewal, along with a check or money order for \$10 made payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For more information, call PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services at 1-800-932-4600.

Official state I.D. card available

Under some circumstances, seniors no longer need a driver's license but the photo ID function a license provides would still be useful. To meet that need, the state Department of Transportation offers an official state identification card that can be used as legal identification in place of a driver's license. The forms are available in my constituent service office, online at www.dmv.state.pa.us or by calling PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services Customer Care Center at 1-800-932-4600.



Rep. Readshaw presents a legislative citation to Mayor John Dindak for his 42 years (and counting) of public service to the people of West Homestead Borough.

Did You Know?

Pennsylvania has 5,205 structurally deficient bridges – more than any other state in the nation.

WHAT IS THE CAPITAL BUDGET?

Most people understand that the state's general fund budget primarily covers the day-to-day costs of running the state. It's the legislation at the center of the annual budget debate in the spring – and sometimes into the summer.

But as part of that package, the legislature also considers what is known as the "capital budget." I have had people ask me what is covered by the capital budget.

The capital budget is that portion of the state budget that provides for projects in several categories:

- The construction, rehabilitation, renovation and improvement of facilities, including the acquisition of land and structures.

- The purchase of original furniture and equipment for newly constructed state-owned facilities.
- Capital projects related to mass transit, rural and intercity rail, air transportation and rail freight.
- Redevelopment assistance projects for economic development and elimination of blight.
- Flood control projects.
- Public highway and bridge projects.

The capital budget is separate from the various types of budget-related legislation dealing with agency operating budgets and non-preferred appropriations.

The Pennsylvania Constitution requires the General Assembly to adopt a capital budget each year.

Unfortunately, the majority leaders in the legislature have yet to bring to a vote the capital budget for 2011-12. The Commonwealth recently borrowed more than \$811 million from the bond market, but thus far the lack of a capital budget this deep into the fiscal year has not adversely affected our state's excellent bond rating.

Hopefully, capital fund approval will occur before that happens.

Remember Me?



It's been a full year since Harry's last newsletter. I've had four other columns written and ready to go over that time and now they're all outdated.

Harry's on a kick about saving taxpayer money for printing and postage while state finances are so tight. He forgets that the one year since his last newsletter has been five or six DOG YEARS to me.

Lately, I hear my four-legged pals barking about pet insurance and how more owners are getting it.

When I was a pup, if you got something seriously wrong inside or broke your hip, it looked like your next visit to the vet was going to be your last.

Because of advances in veterinary medicine and technology, today many of the problems that took one of us to the end of life's leash can be addressed by medicines, therapy or surgery.

When you figure that some of my pedigreed friends cost hundreds of dollars – that's an investment, not to mention the bond that develops with canine and cat companions such as me.

So, more owners are getting insurance to afford treatment in the event of a pet calamity. Depending on what an owner wants to spend regarding coverage, it can provide reimbursement for acute care or even preventative care such as vaccinations.

Harry has a pamphlet telling the ins and outs of purchasing pet insurance. To get one, just call or drop by his office or send him an email at www.pahouse.com/Readshaw.

Before I go, a "paws up" to the Baldwin Rescue K-9 Unit and my pals Plunkett and Band-Aid, a top-notch search and rescue duo that has been getting snout-time in the media lately. When Band-Aid was donated to the unit in 2007, Harry helped with the cost of training, equipment and veterinary care.

Autographs are an issue with them, but they do make personal appearances. If you're interested in booking such a visit, contact them by email at Station510@BaldwinEMS.com. We'll see if my helping them master their email skills pays off. Otherwise, call the Baldwin EMS business office at 412-884-0666, but don't be surprised if a human answers.

Got to go – I'm going to chase some rabbits and cats in dreamland.



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Capitol Office:

221 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202036
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2036
(717) 783-0411

Constituent Service Office:

1917 Brownsville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15210
(412) 881-4208

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At the Baldwin Borough Community Day, Mayor Sandy Bennett proudly explains to Rep. Readshaw the features of his classic H.H. Franklin coupe. The 1933 model was one of the last produced by the Syracuse, N.Y. manufacturer.