

State Representative Peter J. Daley

Democratic Chairman, Commerce Committee

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Summer 2011

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Daley to serve a third term as Democratic chairman of the House Commerce Committee

Earlier this year, I was reappointed by House Democratic Leadership to serve a third term as Democratic chairman of the House Commerce Committee.

The committee reviews and considers legislation that involves

the banking and financial services industries, economic development agencies and programs, and housing agencies and programs, as well as providing legislative oversight for regulations proposed for those areas of the economy.

I believe that this committee is particularly important now with the continued impact of the economy on the housing market and mortgages, as well as the need to support and foster job-sustaining business growth and development in Pennsylvania.

Daley honored with Champion of Small Business award



Pictured from left are Diane Sandstrom, associate state director of the Small Business Development Center, myself and Dr. Mary T. McKinney, director of the Duquesne University Small Business Development Center.

It was an honor to be selected by the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Center as a Champion of Small Business.

The award presentation took place during the 13th annual Entrepreneur's Growth Conference at Duquesne University in May.

On a daily basis, the SBDC reinvigorates the American dream of opportunity for all. Every dime that the state invests in the centers is returned many times over through business growth and expansion, job creation and something more that is hard to put a price tag on – the opportunity for every individual who has a great idea but needs a helping hand to get the business off the ground, direct access to a great network of resources that will allow him or her to turn that dream into a reality.

Giving every child a healthy start on life

I have begun work on a legislation that would make it a secondary offense to smoke in a vehicle in which young children are riding.

It is my hope that the bill will serve as a reminder to parents that when they are inside a vehicle with a young child, their child is inhaling the same chemicals as the person who is actually smoking.

Secondhand smoke has been linked to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute lower respiratory infections, such as bronchitis and pneumonia and is known to exacerbate attacks in asthmatic children. Further, children exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk for ear infections.

My bill would make it a summary offense to smoke in the presence of any child required to be in a child safety seat, which would include those younger than 8 or less than 80 pounds. Because it would be a secondary offense, a citation could only be issued to those drivers pulled over for a separate vehicular or traffic violation. The first offense could result in a warning or a fine of up to \$100. A subsequent conviction would result in a fine of no less than \$250.

Mentored Youth Hunting program to expand

For the past several legislative sessions, I introduced legislation that would expand a state program geared toward educating youth about hunting opportunities while ensuring youth are armed with safety information to safely hunt with an adult. My idea, which is now law (Act 9 of 2011) allows an adult mentor to transfer one antlerless deer license per year to a participating youth.

The Mentored Youth Hunting program, which is open to youths under 12 who are accompanied by a properly licensed adult 21 or older, has a great reputation for not only teaching firearm safety and how to hunt responsibly, but also for educating young people about wildlife conservation. In Pennsylvania, we are fortunate to have a number of great outdoor opportunities, including hunting. For many families, hunting is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation.



Help for homeowners facing foreclosure

Pennsylvania will receive \$106 million of the \$1 billion in federal funds allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to implement the Emergency Homeowners' Loan Program. The funds will help thousands of Pennsylvania families facing foreclosure to keep their homes.

The program offers a declining-balance, deferred-payment "bridge loan" for up to \$50,000 to assist eligible homeowners with payments of arrearages, including delinquent taxes and insurance, plus up to 24 months of monthly payments on their mortgage principal, interest, mortgage insurance premiums, taxes and hazard insurance.

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency is administering the program in Pennsylvania. PHFA has until Sept. 30, 2011 to use Pennsylvania's share of the funds. The application process takes around four weeks. **If you are facing a home foreclosure, please look into this program now.**

As chairman of the House Commerce Committee, I have worked closely with PHFA over the past few

years to not only ensure programs are in place to address the economic impact on the housing market, but also to establish the affordable housing trust fund in Pennsylvania.

For a list of agencies in the area, call PHFA at 1-800-342-2397 Monday through Friday during normal business hours. Additional information is available online at www.phfa.org/consumers/homeowners/ehlp.aspx.

To qualify, homeowners must:

- be at least three months delinquent on their mortgage due to involuntary unemployment, under employment or medical reasons
- be the owner and occupant of the property in foreclosure
- meet income requirements
- have reasonable likelihood of being able to resume repayment
- work through a PHFA-approved counseling agency



Commerce Committee moves legislation to create uniform recording standard

In June, the House Commerce Committee advanced legislation to the House that would streamline the way property transfers are filed in every county.

The legislation (H.B. 970) would establish an Electronic Recording Commission charged with developing uniform standards for the electronic recording of mortgages, sales contracts and promissory notes in the county recorder of deeds offices.

Much of this paperwork can now be filed electronically and in Pennsylvania there are 61 counties that already use some form of electronic means to process the work. With this commission in place, Pennsylvania would be assured of an orderly transition as the recorders of deeds move from a paper-based system to one that is electronic.

Pennsylvania airports and jobs to soar under bill

As Democratic chairman of the House Commerce Committee, I continually look for new ways to grow the job sector and reinvigorate the economy. Earlier this year, I began to work with the Aviation Council of Pennsylvania on legislation (H.B. 1100) that would eliminate the sales and use tax on the sale and repair of fixed-wing aircraft.

Why is this important? Because we know that the tax only generates an estimated \$5 million for the Commonwealth, while at the same time making Pennsylvania an uncompetitive marketplace, with most of our neighboring states already doing away with this form of taxation.

When Pennsylvania eliminated a similar tax on helicopters, a new company relocated to Pennsylvania from New Hampshire, creating 412 new jobs and bringing in new revenue.



Pictured during a meeting in Harrisburg are from left myself, Reps. Jim Marshall and Kerry Benninghoff and Marvin Miller, legislative liaison to the Aviation Council of Pennsylvania.

To give you an idea of what this could mean:

- Pennsylvania employs only 2,900 people in this sector, creating about \$605 million of economic impact.
- In contrast, Ohio employs 8,300 people, New York 9,400 people and both states clear more than \$1.2 billion in total economic impact.
- These are family-sustaining jobs that pay \$50,000 or more annually.
- We already have available resources through our public use and regional airports.
- With the elimination of this tax, the aviation and aerospace industry has the potential to become one of the top five business clusters in Pennsylvania.

House bill to protect landowners in Marcellus Shale transactions

I co-sponsored legislation (H.B. 953), which is now before the House Commerce Committee, that would ensure local property owners are not being taken advantage of by large companies seeking to capitalize on Marcellus Shale gas drilling.

We know that with the gas reserves in Pennsylvania, there are literally years' worth of gas that

can be drilled and extracted, but a system of pipelines will be needed to transport that fuel across the state. This legislation would restrict the use of eminent domain powers by companies that are purchasing right of way to construct mid-stream natural gas gathering or transportation pipeline, protecting landowners and ensuring they can

fully negotiate easements and have control over how their property is accessed and used.

Eminent domain is a legal process by which certain governments, utility companies and redevelopment corporations can acquire private property.

Marcellus drilling fee debate put off until fall

Since the start of gas drilling in the region, I have heard from many people who believe that Pennsylvania should join other states in placing a fee on the extraction of natural gas from the Marcellus Shale formation. This was a common theme during town hall meetings that the Commerce Committee held on the issue at the Mon Valley Career and Technology Center last October.

We know that Marcellus drilling will have a significant impact on the Commonwealth's economy for years to come. In terms of the energy sector, there is little doubt that we stand to make tremendous gains in terms of production and employment.

While I support this new economic growth, I feel that we must do everything possible to ensure that the industry develops responsibly and provides our local municipalities that are affected by drilling, with revenue to address impacts on our environment and infrastructure both today and for the future.

During the final weeks of debate on the state budget for 2011-2012, there was another push to open debate on extraction fees in large part to try to ease some of the painful cuts included in the spending plan. Unfortunately, the efforts were scuttled, but assurances were given by the current administration that the issue would be given full debate in the fall.

Washington County sites selected for federal EPA study

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has selected Marcellus Shale sites in Washington County to be included in its congressionally mandated hydraulic fracturing study. The goal of the study is to assess the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources.

Field work will begin in the regions this year and tests will be conducted to determine changes in drinking water quality by assessing whether drinking water wells are contaminated and if surface spills affect surface and ground water. By 2012 the EPA expects to have results from the data analysis.

The formal process for identifying potential study sites is closed, but if you have concerns about either a site selected for study or another property, you may contact the tip line at 1-877-919-4372 or e-mail: eyesondrilling@epa.gov.



A very special thanks to the Monongahela Fire Department for naming me an honorary member. William "Rusty" Polonoli presented me a framed certificate in recognition.



At a Harrisburg news conference, I spoke out in support of legislation that would raise awareness for prevention of head injuries in student athletes.



It was an evening of education and fun at my third annual Kidz Fair, which was held at Center in the Woods, Brownsville.



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To visit my website, scan with your smartphone's QR reader.

Your input is requested

Laws in Pennsylvania are written in two ways – either through the legislative process or by regulation. Often people will contact my office asking for information about proposed regulations and how they can offer their input. The Independent Regulatory Review Commission, or IRRC, is in charge of handling the process.

With changes recently made to the website maintained by IRRC, participating in state government is even easier. For more information, please visit www.irrc.state.pa.us.

Honoring local heroes

Legislation that I introduced to honor several local heroes is poised for passage in the Senate.

Each of these three people, with their bravery and talent, is uniquely deserving of this type of recognition, and I am honored to be playing a role in the efforts to make it a reality.

The bills honor:

- **H.B. 584:** Sgt. Nathan P. Kennedy who was killed April 27, 2010, in Afghanistan while serving in the U.S. Army, by naming the Claysville interchange off Interstate 70 after him.
- **H.B. 585:** Stanley Jurgaitis, a Carroll Township resident who was awarded a Bronze Star for his gallantry in World War II, by naming a Carroll Township bridge after him.
- **H.B. 586:** Stan "The Man" Musial, one of Donora's most famous athletes, as well as a patriot, by naming the Donora-Monessen Bridge after him.

Daley reappointed to state energy development board

House leadership and the speaker have chosen me to serve a fourth consecutive term as the Democratic representative from the House of Representatives to the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority.

The authority was established in 1982 to promote applied energy research, provide financial incentives for the deployment of clean, alternative energy projects, and promote investment in Pennsylvania's energy sector. This appointment is a natural extension of the work of the Commerce Committee and I look forward to continuing to help advance energy research and development projects throughout the Commonwealth. In the process, jobs will be created and we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil, while at the same time improving air and water quality.