

LEGISLATIVE REPORT



from State Representative

Scott Conklin

CAPITOL OFFICE:

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

I have introduced the following legislation for the 2011-12 legislative session:

H.B. 763 – Would call for a comprehensive constitutional convention to be held in Pennsylvania. The most recent Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention was held Dec. 1, 1967 through Feb. 28, 1968.

Currently awaiting consideration in the House State Government Committee

H.B. 766 – Would establish a statewide registry of convicted arsonists by requiring them to register their name, Social Security number and contact information with the Pennsylvania State Police. Similar measures were introduced by me in previous sessions in response to the growing number of arson crimes in the Centre Region.

Currently awaiting consideration in the House Judiciary Committee

H.B. 768 – Would amend the Oil and Gas Conservation Law by creating public notice requirements for drilling permit applications. It would require well operators, before filing an application for a drilling permit, to give public notice of the filing within a local newspaper published where the permit would be applied. The notice must appear in the publication once a week for four consecutive weeks.

Currently awaiting consideration in the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

H.B. 769 – Would require a sexually violent predator to secure a place of residence and provide the address to the Pennsylvania State Police before being paroled from a correctional institution.

Currently awaiting consideration in the House Judiciary Committee

H.B. 1631 – Would create a statewide toll-free telephone number regarding oil and natural gas violations. Under the bill, individuals could call 1-855-CALL-4GAS if they suspect an oil or natural gas drilling violation has occurred.

Currently awaiting consideration in the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

H.B. 1858 – Would make it a third-degree felony to conceal the death of a child. Currently in Pennsylvania it is a first-degree misdemeanor for a parent to conceal the death of a child in the event of a still birth.

Essentially, this would enact a ‘Caylee’s Law’ in Pennsylvania. The introduction of this bill is sparked not just by the verdict in the nation-gripping Casey Anthony case but by how Caylee’s disappearance was handled.

Currently awaiting consideration in the House Judiciary Committee



SIGN UP FOR EMAIL UPDATES!

Please visit my website, www.pahouse.com/conklin, to sign up for e-alerts on my bills, state-related issues, community events and more.

Scan the code at left with your smartphone’s QR reader to get connected now.

New driving laws

Legislation I supported to ban texting while driving on Pennsylvania's roadways has been signed into law.

The new law, which takes effect in March 2012, makes reading, typing, or sending a text message while driving a primary offense.

More than 90 percent of Pennsylvanians agree that texting while driving should be illegal, and I'm proud to say our commonwealth now joins the ranks of other states with texting bans on the books.

Distracted driving not only puts those doing it at risk, but it also puts every other driver and pedestrian in harm's way. The results of countless studies have shown that the risk of an accident is as much as three to four times higher when drivers text behind the wheel. This, in my opinion, is commonsense legislation that will save lives and enhance the sense of safety on our roads.

I also voted for legislation that strengthens teen driver laws. The new restrictions take effect on December 27, 2011.

The new law limits the number of teen passengers to one in a vehicle for the first six months that a junior driver has a license, with exceptions for family members. After six months, the limit is three non-family members. It also expands training requirements before a teenager can take a test for his or her license, adding 10 hours of nighttime and five hours of bad-weather driving to the current 50-hour requirement.

Sadly, car crashes continue to be the leading cause of fatalities among American teens. There are numerous studies and statistics that make clear the dangers teenagers face with driving alone or with other teens. Here in Pennsylvania the number of deaths from crashes involving 16- and 17-year-old drivers increased nearly 43 percent in just one year, from 2009 to 2010.

I believe these new laws will make a difference in lives of all drivers on our highways. I realize we cannot prevent every accident, but if we can save a life, our mission is accomplished.



Job number one is job creation

Creating jobs is a top priority. More than half a million Pennsylvania workers are unemployed. I have been working with our caucus leadership to develop a jobs package called JumpstartPA.

JumpstartPA would fix and upgrade roads, bridges and mass transit; restore funding to public schools to develop a high-skill and globally competitive workforce; increase early childhood education subsidies to help reduce the burden of child care on working families; protect displaced workers from discrimination; and encourage Pennsylvania employers to create family-sustaining jobs.

JumpstartPA would be an investment in our state's infrastructure and create long-term economic benefits. For every \$100 in infrastructure investment, it would return \$350 to our economy. A \$1 billion investment in highway and bridge improvements would support 30,000 jobs. The creation of the Pennsylvania investment bank would capitalize \$1 billion in new sewer infrastructure through Pennvest, assuring environmentally safe streams and rivers.

JumpstartPA would create tens of thousands of jobs. These jobs would provide immediate economic stimulus and make use of our state resources, leverage private investment and make critical long-term capital investments that would create new opportunities for future growth and development.



Rep. Conklin working to create jobs in Centre County.



Constituent Services

LIHEAP

If you need help paying your heating bills, or have a heating emergency ... LIHEAP may be able to help. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program helps low-income families pay their heating bills.

FAMILIES MAY APPLY FOR:

Cash Grants – Cash grants help families pay their heating bills. The grant payment is sent directly to your utility company or fuel provider, and it will be credited on your bill. (In some cases, the check may be mailed to you directly.)

Crisis Grants – Crisis grants help households who have an emergency and are in immediate danger of being without heat. Emergency situations include: a fuel shortage that may leave you without heat; having utility service shut off; or having broken heating equipment or leaking lines.

**You must meet income guidelines; for example, a family of four would be eligible if it earned less than \$35,280.

HOW DO I APPLY?

- Apply online at: www.compass.state.pa.us
- Request an application by calling the Statewide LIHEAP Hotline at 1-866-857-7095 or TDD for the hearing impaired 1-800-451-5886
- Applications are available at your local county assistance office

For more information, or if you would like help applying, please contact one of my constituent service centers.

PACE and PACENET

PACE and PACENET are Pennsylvania's prescription assistance programs for older adults, offering low-cost prescription medication to qualified residents 65 and older.

To be eligible for PACE, you must be 65 or older, a Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days before applying for the program, and cannot be enrolled in the Department of Public Welfare's Medicaid prescription benefit. For a single person, your total income must be \$14,500 or less. For a married couple, your combined total income must be \$17,700 or less.

To be eligible for PACENET, you must be 65 or older, a Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days before the date of application, and cannot be enrolled in the Department of Public Welfare's Medicaid prescription benefit. A single person's total income can be between \$14,500 and \$23,500. A couple's combined total income can be between \$17,700 and \$31,500.

Under PACE Plus Medicare, PACE/PACENET coverage is supplemented by federal Medicare Part D prescription coverage. Older adults continue to receive the same prescription benefits while, in many cases, saving more money.

For additional information about these programs, as well as to obtain a PACE/PACENET application, visit my constituent service office or go online at www.aging.state.pa.us and click on "Prescription Assistance."

Tell me what you think about selling the state's liquor stores

As you are likely aware, there is a proposal to eliminate the state liquor store system as it operates today.

The proposal would close some 600 state liquor stores, and auction off 1,250 retail licenses – 750 licenses for grocery stores or "big box" retail outlets; 500 licenses for smaller, independent stores.

Many people – myself included – believe that this proposal would cost Pennsylvania thousands of jobs and millions in tax dollars, while compromising public safety.

WATCH how privatization could hit close to home.

1. Go to my website.
2. Click on Videos.
3. Click on Paying the Price of Privatization.

I want to know how you feel about this issue. Please take a few minutes to fill out my online survey by going to my website – www.pahouse.com/Conklin – and clicking on State Store Privatization.





State Representative

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- NEW DRIVING LAWS
- JOB CREATION INITIATIVE

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Rep. Conklin annually donates several turkeys to area food banks to help with their holiday drives. He is shown at the State College Food Bank and says he makes this donation to help raise awareness for the need to give, especially during the holiday season when food banks face critical shortages.