



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PETER G. SCHWEYER

22ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Spring 2018

A Message from Rep. Schweyer

If my first-grade teacher graded the performance of the PA State Government over the past six months, we would at best get an “incomplete.” We passed a budget that included no increase in sales, tobacco or income taxes and included an additional \$100 million for our schools, but did so by borrowing against future revenues from programs like our Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement. This is, admittedly, a one-time fix for our seemingly endless budget problems.

We reauthorized our Children’s Health Insurance Program and continued efforts to combat our opioid and heroin epidemics, while failing to pass a minimum wage increase or reduce property taxes for our seniors. We made significant strides on the implementation of our state’s medical marijuana industry and reduced regulations to allow easier access of beer and wine to consumers. At the same time, we failed to even consider reforms to the process of legislative redistricting in an effort to end political gerrymandering.

There are a limited number of days scheduled for us to be in Harrisburg during the spring when we can consider these and other legislative priorities before important negotiations begin in earnest on the 2018-19 state budget. I will continue to prioritize funding for Allentown’s public schools, programs that help create and maintain family-sustaining jobs and help provide access to health care for our children, seniors and those most at risk.

PLAN4PA

My colleagues in the House Democratic Caucus and I have introduced the Plan4PA which focuses on job creation, fair taxes, investment in education and health care. Before every major detail of our legislative package is ironed out, members of the House are on a listening tour to learn from those on the front lines of these issues.



To that end, on January 10, colleagues from across Pennsylvania joined me at Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network in South Allentown for a policy hearing focused on access to health care. There, we heard testimony from leaders in the health care community about how we, as policymakers, can help provide greater access to quality health care for all Pennsylvanians.

We learned about the need for access to preventative medicine as a way to control costs and improve health outcomes for patients. We learned about lack of mental health providers and the difficulties for vision and dental professionals to keep their doors open and we heard about the need for further investment in community health.

More information about the Plan4PA is available online at planforpa.pahouse.com.

STAFF UPDATE



If you had the opportunity to stop by my Allentown office last year, you may have met Yorman DeLaRosa, who served as one of my Legislative Assistants. Yorman stepped down in August to move to Morocco to serve in the Peace Corps for the next 27 months, where he will continue to have a positive impact on everyone he meets. I couldn’t be more proud of this incredible young man.



In November, Carol Gonzalez became the newest member of our team as a Legislative Assistant, working alongside Elizabeth Martinez and Nancy Wilt in my district office. Carol, who lives in Allentown, comes to the position with years of experience working in the health care and government industries and is an active community member here in our city.

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO VISIT THE CAPITOL?

You can book a tour of the Pennsylvania Capitol, which is both a National Historic Landmark and the place where public policy is set for the more than 12 million Pennsylvania residents. To do so, either contact my office or visit pacapitol.com/book-a-tour/.

The tours are free to the public, available every weekday and start at 8:30 a.m. Tours typically run 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the size of the group. Groups of 10 or more are asked to schedule a date and time, with the maximum tour group not to exceed 80 people.



OUT AND ABOUT IN THE 22ND



I enjoyed reading to some of my new friends in the Allentown School District this fall.



In October, I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Tina Richardson, Chancellor at PSU Lehigh Valley, where I learned about new and exciting things happening with the PSU Innovation Center.



I was pleased to have the opportunity to present a copy of my Transit Workers Resolution to Owen O'Neil, Executive Director of LANta and Ricky Vega, Allentown Transit Union President.



On January 10, I joined my colleagues at Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network's Health and Technology Center to discuss access to quality health care in Pennsylvania.



COORDINATED EFFORTS FOR PUERTO RICAN REFUGEES FROM THE HURRICANE

I am proud that many Lehigh Valley agencies have collaborated to welcome those families displaced from Puerto Rico due to the devastation of Hurricane Maria. Many of these families came to the Lehigh Valley to seek shelter with family members with little more than the clothes on their backs. Community organizations have come together creating and implementing a plan of action to help these hurricane victims. If you or loved ones need assistance or would like to continue supporting these efforts, please contact my district office for information about the agencies that can help.

Did you know?

Disability placard

Even if you don't have a car or driver's license, you can still have a disability placard.

The reason is that a disability placard is assigned to a person, not a vehicle. That way, if you are getting a ride to the store or a doctor's visit from a friend or family member, you can still park in a space that makes your day a little easier. Contact my office at 610-791-6270 to learn more about obtaining a free disability placard.

Yellow Dot

This program helps first responders who arrive at a vehicle crash know the specific health concerns of the passengers. By simply placing a Yellow Dot decal (provided by the state) on your vehicle's rear window, first responders will know to check your glove compartment for vital information to ensure you receive the medical attention you need. The program is a cooperative effort between the state departments of Transportation, Health and Aging, the Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, first responders and local law enforcement. Contact my office at 610-791-6270 to obtain a Yellow Dot Kit.



My office is here to help

Help for seniors and veterans available in my district office



For our seniors: Each month, I host an APPRISE counselor in my district office to assist seniors with questions about Medicare and other health care-related programs. The APPRISE counselor can help you with Medicare Part A and Part B enrollment, prescription drug plans, Medicare Advantage plans and other health insurance options.

The APPRISE benefits counselor is available to meet with you from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month.

For our veterans: On the third Friday of every month between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., a representative from the American Legion is available in my office to answer questions from veterans and their loved ones. This person has great knowledge about pension benefits, survivor benefits and VA-related health care issues; as well as other veteran-related benefits to which you may be entitled.

To meet with either the APPRISE counselor or American Legion representative, you must schedule an appointment. To arrange a time, please contact my office and speak with any member of the team at 610-791-6270.



HELP WITH PA BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Have you lost or misplaced your Pennsylvania birth certificate?

My staff is available to assist you in contacting the Department of Health and completing the forms required for a replacement. You can also order birth certificates online at <https://www.vitalchek.com/vital-records/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-vital-records>.

NEW GUIDELINES FOR REAL ID

Following the attack on September 11, 2001, the federal government is requiring all states to update their state-issued photo identification cards (including driver's licenses) to include specific information. This law is known as Real ID. This is important to you, because in order to board a plane for a domestic flight or visit a federal office building, you will need a new identification card or driver's license (note: you will still be able to use a passport).

As of this printing, Real ID-compliant driver's licenses and identification cards will be available to Pennsylvania residents sometime in the spring of 2019. This date could change, but for now, you can continue to use your current Pennsylvania driver's license or state identification card (provided it is not expired) for domestic flights and to enter federal facilities.

The best thing you can do to prepare is to gather the acceptable documents now and keep them in a safe place because PennDOT will need to verify your identity, your Social Security number, and your Pennsylvania residency. Contact my office for a checklist of acceptable documents that you can take to any of the 71 PennDOT Driver's License Centers starting in September 2018 when they will all be equipped for verification.

Again, Real ID-compliant driver's licenses and state identification cards are scheduled to be available in the spring of 2019. You will hear more from my office in the weeks and months before to help ensure that you have no challenges flying to Florida or visiting Washington, D.C. office buildings.

SAVE THE DATE!

I'm excited again to join my colleague Rep. Mike Schlossberg (D-Lehigh) to host our annual Senior Fair! This year, it will be held Friday, May 18 from 9 a.m. until noon at the East Side Youth Center, 1140 E. Clair St. on the East Side of Allentown.

In years past, our Senior Fair has had more than 500 seniors come visit us where they talked with more than 40 vendors from various governmental and community organizations. This event is a terrific opportunity for you to learn about the vast number of community services available to you, all in one convenient location. Please consider spending the morning with us learning about these organizations and also taking advantage of some of the health screenings that will be offered by vendors in attendance.

Registration isn't necessary and light refreshments will be available.



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GET ALL THE LATEST UPDATES

Connect with Rep. Schweyer on social media!

You'll get the latest updates on community news, local events and legislative updates:

TWITTER:

@RepSchweyer

FACEBOOK:

www.facebook.com/RepSchweyer

WEBSITE:

www.pahouse.com/Schweyer



MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU

- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Unemployment compensation problems
- Birth certificate applications
- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Complaints about road conditions
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Disability plates and placards
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Problems or questions about the state lottery

Any question regarding the state government!

VISIT MY SATELLITE OFFICE

To better serve residents in their own neighborhood, my district office staff holds community outreach hours from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the first Monday of each month at Casa Guadalupe, 218 N. 2nd St. in Allentown.

Just like in my permanent district office at 1912 S. 4th St., my staff can assist you in all areas of state government, including completing Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program applications, processing PennDOT paperwork, finding heating assistance through LIHEAP, helping you work through the unemployment compensation process, assistance with the PACE/PACENET prescription-drug program, searching the unclaimed property database and any other state-related matter.

To find out more, call my office at 610-791-6270 or stop in at Casa Guadalupe on the first Monday of the month. No appointment is necessary. Hablamos Español.