



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Tony DeLuca
32ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
LEGISLATIVE REPORT
SPRING 2019

Capitol Office: 115 Irvis Office Building • P.O. Box 202032 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2032 • (717) 783-1011
Constituent Service Office: 7205 Saltsburg Road • Pittsburgh, PA 15235 • (412) 793-2448

WORKING FOR YOU

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Now that the harsh memories of winter are fading and we are enjoying the warmth and rebirth of a new season, it's a busy time in the state Capitol as discussions and meetings are well underway on a new budget for fiscal year 2019-20, which begins on July 1. Last year, the governor signed the new budget a week before the deadline – the first time in 17 years! We are hoping this year for a similar experience.

It is my privilege to be your state representative. I take this responsibility very seriously, and I'm proud to be part of the 32nd Legislative District.

I'm constantly on the lookout for policies that may help the people who live in our district. I want you to know that I continually communicate the needs of our district to the General Assembly and will do so in budget negotiations.

As one of the senior members of the state House of Representatives, I speak directly and regularly with those preparing the budget. I make certain that all concerned know of my interests in making sure our schools get adequate funding; that law enforcement get the tools they need to keep violent offenders, drug dealers and child predators off our streets; and that we have proper funding for programs with proven success, such as those funded by the lottery, which benefit older Pennsylvanians.

I truly enjoy being your powerful voice at committee meetings, debates and voting in the House chamber.

State Representative Tony DeLuca
Democratic Chairman of the House
Insurance Committee



Protecting Consumers

I have once again introduced legislation mandating training and minimum education requirements for pharmacy technicians in the commonwealth.

Pennsylvania is one of only four states that does not regulate these important positions. House Bill 770 would require pharmacy technicians to register with the state Board of Pharmacy; be at least 17 years of age; have at least a high school diploma or equivalent; complete a board-approved training program; and pass a criminal background check. Last session this bill passed the House but was never considered by the state Senate.

I also have introduced HB 469, the Essential Health Benefits bill, which would protect consumers who purchase health insurance policies to make sure essential health benefits are included, like emergency services; hospitalization; maternity and newborn care; mental health and substance abuse disorder services; and pediatric care.

These items already are protected under federal law, but

if the Affordable Care Act is ever repealed, state residents would be protected under my bill. Specifically, the bill – which I introduced with my colleague Rep. Dan Frankel – would write federal essential health benefits into state law so they can't be taken away.

When I am not in Harrisburg tending to legislative business, I am in the district working on your behalf. That includes participating in area meetings, attending community events, and meeting with constituents by appointment in my office at 7205 Saltsburg Road. Please feel free to call the office at 412-793-2448. My door is always open to serve you.

I also am blessed to have a dedicated, well-trained veteran staff, under the direction of Chief of Staff Liza King, who can help you with state-related matters such as PennDOT, PA Turnpike, disability placards, vehicle title transfers and Property Tax/Rent Rebate forms. I also offer numerous informational pamphlets and booklets, local and state maps, and free notary service.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

A Letter from a constituent

It is always gratifying and humbling to receive thank you letters from my constituents. I am very proud of the work my staff does every day in our district – not just for our constituents, but for everyone who calls or comes into my office, no matter where they reside. We do our very best to help when we can.

Thank you, Mr. Edwards, for taking the time to send me a note. See the letter below.

Dear Tony,

This is just a letter to let you know how much I appreciate the actions and efforts of you and your wonderful staff on behalf of the residents of Penn Hills, Western Pennsylvania and the entire state.

Over the years, I have been aware of the personal issues and needs of many people in our area. In an unofficial role, I have tried to provide assistance and counseling to a number of local residents on matters such as grief, health care, home maintenance, zoning and other social and government issues.

In many cases, with the assistance of your compassionate, helpful, friendly and expert staff, my referral of these residents to your office has resulted in great beneficial service to my friends (and, has made me look like some kind of hero!).

I just want to say I wish other people in our political system were as committed and dedicated to the positive welfare of the people they represent, as you and your staff.

Thank you and your staff for all the good that you do for our community every day.

Your Advocate

As Democratic Chairman of the House Insurance Committee, I am always championing consumers -- protecting your health and well-being, your property and your wallet.

In early May I hosted a Policy Committee public hearing in the district on the high cost of pharmaceuticals. I brought together lawmakers from across the state, as well as drug manufacturers, pharmaceutical benefit managers, pharmacies, insurers, medical representatives, and consumer advocacy delegates to a roundtable discussion in hopes of obtaining factual insight as to what each entity is doing to control medication costs.

It was a positive discussion, and we gained some valuable insight, which hopefully will be used as we move forward with trying to address this critical situation.



Money coming back to the district!

I am excited to announce that over the past months I have been successful in securing money from numerous commonwealth departments for very worthwhile projects and programs in the 32nd Legislative District. It is extremely rewarding to lead the way in helping the state invest in our local communities, which enables them to grow and provide much-needed services to my constituents.

■ **Turner Dairy Farms, Inc. on Jefferson Road in Penn Hills was awarded \$23,500** to assist with the development of a ready-to-drink coffee beverage. The local dairy farm is planning to develop and market the beverage in partnership with an experienced local coffee roaster. The funds, approved by the Commonwealth Financing Authority's PA Dairy Investment Program, also will go toward the purchase of coffee processing equipment and the hiring of a graphic design firm to develop packaging.

■ **CFA also disbursed \$390,000 to Verona Borough** to aid in the reconstruction of First Street and sidewalks between North and South Avenues. The borough will also benefit from the installation of 26 ADA-compliant ramps along First Street during reconstruction efforts. The grant is through CFA's Multimodal Transportation Fund to encourage economic development and ensure transportation is available to all PA residents.

■ **The Municipality of Penn Hills received \$3 million from the Multimodal Fund** to repave and improve roadways throughout the community, complete ADA-compliant cutouts and sidewalks, and make streets more accessible for bicycle traffic.

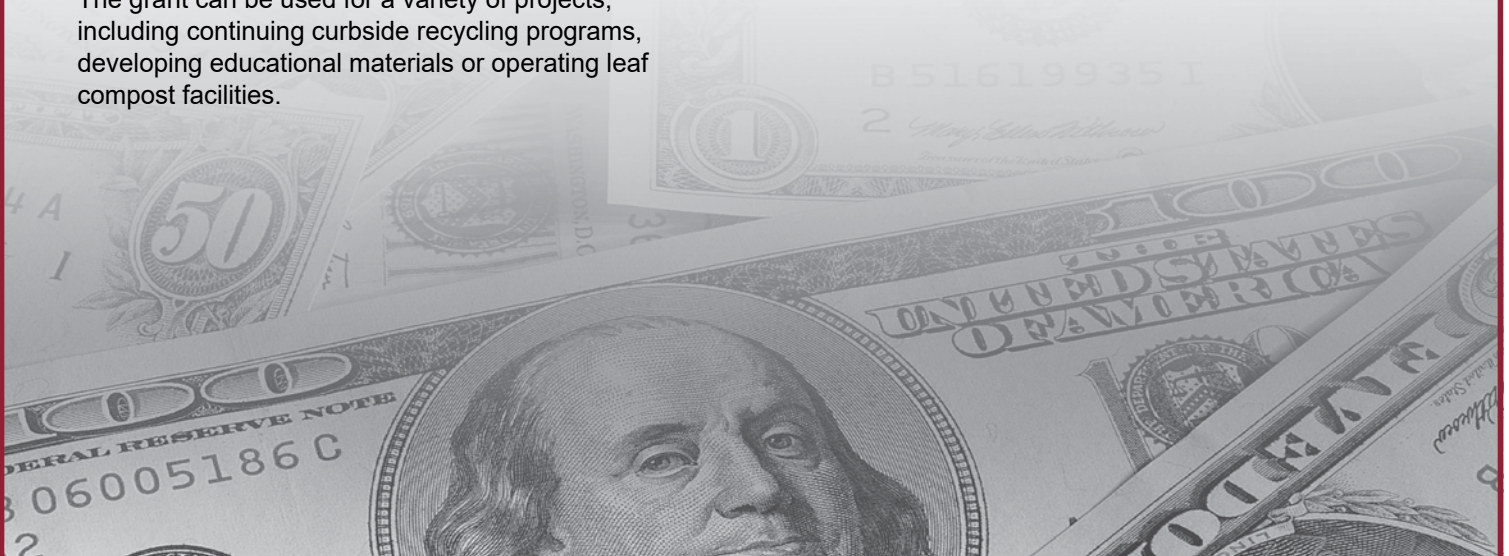
■ **Penn Hills also was awarded a \$288,000 Recycling Development and Implementation grant** from the state Department of Environmental Protection. The grant can be used for a variety of projects, including continuing curbside recycling programs, developing educational materials or operating leaf compost facilities.

■ **The Plum Borough School District received a \$30,000 grant from the state Department of Education** to provide training and compensation for school resource officers. (School resource officers are police officers from local or state law enforcement agencies who are assigned to schools in cooperative agreements with education officials.)

■ **The Fox Chapel Area School District was awarded \$13,000 from the Department of Education** to go toward a program to reduce unnecessary student disciplinary actions and to promote a safer learning environment. The funding also will enhance antiviolence efforts between schools, parents, law enforcement, and community organizations.

■ **Penn Hills will benefit from nearly \$530,000 in state grants** to use toward projects relating to its aging sewer and water infrastructure. The municipality was awarded \$418,200 to replace a section of the Lime Hollow Road sewer line to meet requirements set by the state Department of Environmental Protection. Another \$110,500 was awarded to Wilkesburg Penn Joint Water Authority to upgrade a water storage tank on Lougeay Road.

■ **Plum Borough received \$75,000 in Greenways, Trails and Recreation funds** for improvements to Renton Park, including a new play area, new play structures and a poured-in soft surface. Oakmont Borough received \$150,000 from those same funds for Phase 2 and 3 of the Plum Creek Trail System in Penn Hills, Oakmont and Verona. The second phase includes removing fill to improve flood carrying capacity, and the third phase consists of a bridge and trail accessible to walkers, runner and bicyclists.





I was happy to be part of the celebration recently at Seneca Hills Village in Penn Hills honoring 93-year-old Ruth Huey. Ruth was one of the first residents in the Village in February 1994, now living 25 years in the same apartment! She holds the Village record for Wii bowling, loves to travel and still plays the piano at a hymn sing on Sundays before the noon meal. To mark the happy occasion I presented Ruth with a special House citation I drafted for her.

DON'T MISS MY UPCOMING SHREDDING EVENT

I will host my next free Paper Shredding Event on Monday, May 20 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the parking lot in front of my office, 7205 Saltsburg Road, in the Alcoma Plaza in Penn Hills (weather permitting). In addition to the shredding of paper, I also accept non-perishable food items, which I distribute to various food banks within my district. Donations are not required to participate in the Shredding Event.

The Shredding Event is for individuals only and is limited to paper -- absolutely no electronics, floppy discs or CD/DVDs. We also do not accept magazines, telephone books, spiral notebooks, binders, rubber bands or paper clips. Documents to consider bringing to the event are those that contain personal information, including Social Security numbers, credit card numbers and bank account numbers.

Please be advised if the weather is inclement that the Shredding Company makes the decision whether or not to proceed with the event – not me. Wet paper solidifies quickly and cannot be shredded as it will ruin their equipment.

PAPER MUST BE IN PAPER OR PLASTIC TRASH BAGS – NO BOXES. PLEASE ALSO CHECK THE DATES ON NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS YOU ARE DONATING. WE CANNOT ACCEPT EXPIRED ITEMS!

Grand Jury Recommendations

In February, the Allegheny County Grand Jury investigating the Penn Hills School District concluded **“reckless financial decisions (primarily to construct a new mega elementary school and new high school) made by the Penn Hills School Board, School Administrators and their advisors** over the past decade plunged the District into an accelerating downward financial spiral that has resulted in the District’s economic ruin. **The District’s taxpayers** may face a future of tax increases accompanied by loss of property value, while the District’s students face vast uncertainty regarding their education.”

As part of the report, the grand jury made a number of recommendations, which were presented to me in hopes that I’d take steps to get legislation enacted to prevent other school districts in the commonwealth from ever acting as irresponsibly as that of the school officials in Penn Hills. That said, last month I was pleased to stand with state Auditor General Eugene DePasquale to announce that I have introduced six bills in the House as part of “The School Board and Administration Financial Reform Package.” Individually those bills would require that:

- A referendum be required for any borrowing by a school district which would amount to 50 percent or more of its borrowing base limit;
- Calculations used to determine debt limits for school districts be modified to include not only the district’s revenue but also expenditures;

- The school district shall submit building construction cost estimates to the Department of Education, which shall review and determine if the maximum building construction cost authorization exceeds total building expenditures;
- The Statutes of Limitation be extended for Ethics Act violations for public officials acting in their official capacity;
- A school district or school board be held accountable should it falsely communicate to the PA Department of Education;
- The Public School Code be amended to require the PA Auditor General or another independent agency conduct an audit and certify a school district is financially capable of fulfilling its obligations prior to issuing a bond and the findings of that audit be reported to the public.

Penn Hills property owners are innocent victims in this financial debacle. The school board simply cannot continue to punish them by raising taxes every year to pay for their irresponsible decisions.

DePasquale held a town meeting in February at Boyce Campus to discuss the dire financial condition in the Penn Hills School District and to solicit input from residents about the future. **“Penn Hills School District is in the worst financial shape of any school district I’ve seen as your auditor general,”** he told the audience. **“It will be nearly impossible to turn this situation around without the governor’s administration and lawmakers stepping up to bail it out but it is going to be a tough sell.”**



*It was a special day at the Capitol when I brought the Penn Hills High School football team into the House Chamber and introduce them to the Speaker of the House and all of my colleagues. **The Big Red team captured the PIAA Class 5A State Championship.** To honor this accomplishment, I presented individual citations to the players and then later souvenir photos to commemorate the day. Congratulations to these fine young men, their coaches and families on a stellar season. You made us proud!*



STATE REPRESENTATIVE TONY DELUCA

115 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202032
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2032

lpo • ad • 0419

Welcomed Road Projects

Motorists who use busy Hulton Road in Penn Hills will be relieved when work is set to begin in June repairing the landslide near Milltown. The northbound lane is failing, has been closed for many months and is being controlled by temporary signals.

According to PennDOT, in addition to repairing the landslide, the project includes installing a retaining wall to support

the fill-slope; reconstructing the lane and shoulder on the embankment side of the road; and milling and resurfacing the lane and shoulder on the cut slope side. The reconstruction length is approximately 700 feet.

Detour signs will be posted. Weather permitting, the work is scheduled to be completed by September. When the project is finished, both lanes of the road will be completely open.



Work is underway on the installation of an anticipated traffic signal at Allegheny River Boulevard and Wildwood Avenue in Verona Borough.

The project, for which I advocated, is partially funded through a \$200,000 grant from PennDOT's Automated Red Light Enforcement Program.

Installing a traffic signal at this busy intersection will not only minimize congestion, but also make it much safer for motorists and pedestrians. The project is slated to be completed by the end of summer.