

Rep. *J. Santarsiero*

santarsiero

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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Dear Neighbor,

Although it has been one of the harshest winters in recent memory, I take great pride in how the Yardley-Newtown-Morrisville area comes together during times of need to help friends, neighbors and relatives. Unfortunately, we were tested again in February when more than 80 percent of our homes lost power due to the ice storm.

With these major storms becoming more the norm than the exception – this is now the third in 2½ years – we need to sit down and evaluate what has to happen on a region-wide basis to minimize outages and make the ones that do occur of shorter duration.

Toward that end, my office held three meetings between PECO and residents in 2012 and 2013. The work that PECO has done over the last year with your input has helped to address outages caused by minor storm damage. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that these major events are what we need to expect – and prepare for – each year.

I am personally following up with PECO and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) to see what can be done to improve the infrastructure. Also, we are in the planning stages for a Policy Committee hearing to be held locally in the coming months to address this. We will inform you via email, social media and other outlets when the date and place for that hearing are finalized.

I would also like to encourage anyone affected by this last outage to contact the PUC directly. It is taking complaints from customers during its review of PECO's restoration process. Customers can file a complaint with the PUC by visiting <http://is.gd/BRkIIW> or by calling 1-800-692-7380. Please email a copy of your complaint to me at Repsantarsiero@pahouse.net.

Regards,

Eating disorder legislation introduced

Eating disorders are real, complex and devastating conditions that can have serious consequences for health, productivity and relationships. These serious conditions are not a fad, phase or lifestyle choice, but instead are potentially life-threatening conditions that affect a person's emotional and physical health.

Prevention and early detection are important. That is why I have introduced legislation to require schools to provide parents of children in grades 5 through 12 with information about eating disorders. In an effort to advance the legislation with as much stakeholder input as possible, I'm also pushing hard for hearings as the Democratic Secretary of the House Education Committee.

The legislation (H.B. 1959) also would create guidelines for local school boards that exercise an optional development of an eating-disorder screening program with appropriate opt-out and exemption procedures.

Continued on next page

Epinephrine bill advances from House

As a member of the House Education Committee, I had the privilege to vote from committee H.B. 803, which would authorize schools to maintain an emergency supply of epinephrine injectors for students who go into anaphylactic shock, usually from a severe food allergy.

The legislation would allow schools to stock and use auto injectors to address life-threatening allergic reactions and permit authorized personnel to administer the injector to any student suffering from anaphylaxis.

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Eating disorder legislation introduced

Continued from previous page. It would further specify training requirements for the personnel and volunteers who would run such a program, including the parental notification procedures required when a school official identifies a student with a potential eating disorder.

In the United States, 20 million women and 1 million men suffer from eating disorders at some point in their lives, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa or a binge-eating disorder. Other studies show in Pennsylvania, nearly 300,000 women and more than 130,000 men suffer from an eating disorder.

Lockheed Martin closure talks continue

As you probably are aware, Lockheed Martin announced in November that it will be closing its Newtown campus in 2015 and will begin transitioning employees in early 2014. All 1,050 employees will be impacted – many of whom live here in the Yardley-Newtown-Morrisville area.

As I stated at the time of the announcement, I am working with federal and state officials to explore all possibilities for the facility and the employees. Over the past two decades, Lockheed Martin has played a significant role in our local economy as one of the largest employers in our region. The next year will be critical for keeping our economy stable.

I will keep you up to date on this issue in the coming months.



State Rep. Steve Santarsiero, presents a citation on Nov. 6 to Council Rock North High School's Jessica Voutsinas for making the 2013 National In-Service Conference of the National Association for Music Education's All-American Choir.

Epinephrine bill advances from House

Continued from previous page. Studies have shown that between 16 and 18 percent of children with food allergies have had allergic reactions because they've accidentally ingested the food allergen while at school. And, up to 25 percent of severe allergic reactions occurred in children with no prior history of life-threatening allergies. Pennsylvania is one of 23 states that do not have laws requiring schools to have epinephrine auto-injectors on hand without student-specific prescriptions. Food allergies cause more than 300,000 hospital visits a year among children.

This legislation would provide the school with the option to maintain a supply of injectors and would not be mandatory.

I'm happy to announce that this commonsense bill unanimously passed when voted on by the full House and awaits consideration in the Senate.

**For Help
reporting
potholes on
state roads
Contact**



State Representative

Steve Santarsiero's Office

Email me at

RepSantarsiero@pahouse.net

or call my office at 215-493-5420.

2014/15 budget hearings produce more questions than answers

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I am in a unique position to weigh in on the process through which Pennsylvania's annual budget is adopted. Hearings run through the entire month of February each year, and the final budget must be approved by June 30.

I have serious concerns with Gov. Tom Corbett's proposed budget.

The first problem with what the governor wants concerns education funding. It is bad enough that the administration wants to continue (for a fourth-straight year) a cut of nearly a billion dollars in basic education funding (i.e., the money that is used by our schools to help fund K-12 classrooms), but now the governor wants to skip pension payments and use the savings to fund a modest block grant to our school districts. Why is that a bad idea? Recall that we have a \$41 billion unfunded pension liability

for our teacher and state employee pension systems. That liability is, in part, a result of years of both local and state underfunding of the systems. What the governor is proposing, while providing a short-term savings, will add \$13 billion to the unfunded liability over the long term. That means more debt that over time will crowd out funding for all of our other educational needs while placing an unmanageable burden on local property taxpayers.

At the same time, previous cuts to higher education are continued in the governor's proposal. That is, in a word, unacceptable. There is no question that three years of Gov. Corbett's budgets have contributed greatly to saddling college-educated adults beginning their professional lives with an alarming amount of debt. The Institute for College Access & Success report on student loan debt for graduates in 2011 ranked Pennsylvania as the second-highest

Gov. Corbett's policies have **NOT** worked

It's time for Gov. Corbett to try a different approach. To date, the governor has used \$2.8 billion in cuts to education to, among other things, fund \$1.2 billion in corporate tax cuts. Despite those cuts, Pennsylvania is below the national average in economic growth and job creation.

state with an average \$29,959 debt, behind only New Hampshire at \$32,440 and above the national average of \$26,600. Pennsylvania also ranked seventh nationally in percentage of graduates with debt at 70 percent. Further cuts to higher education will only make those numbers worse.

As we move toward June 30, I will have more opportunities to weigh in on next year's proposed budget. I welcome your input. If you have any suggestions or comments please email me at RepSantarsiero@pahouse.net.

State might need to respond to federal flood law

In 2012, the U.S. Congress passed the Biggert Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act. Key provisions of the legislation require the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to redraw flood plain lines to reflect recent flood insurance claims and future flood risk. In late 2013, many property owners began to see substantial increases in their flood insurance premiums and unless Congress acts to delay the implementation of Biggert Waters, those increases will continue for the next four years.

While this is primarily a federal issue, I have been hearing from constituents of the potentially devastating impact it will have on our river and creek communities in the Yardley-Morrisville-Newtown area. The U.S. Senate has passed legislation to grandfather existing residents and delay the rollout of rate increases, so more study can be done to allow for more detailed mapping to reflect more local flood mitigation efforts. Sen. Bob Casey voted for the bill; Sen. Pat Toomey did not. We will follow up with Toomey's office to inquire about the senator's

opposition. As of this writing the legislation is pending before the U.S. House.

Meanwhile, I have joined dozens of my colleagues in the Pennsylvania General Assembly in Harrisburg in a bipartisan effort to explore opportunities to assist residents of communities impacted by flooding. Specifically, I am looking into a state community rating program similar to the federal program. My proposal would provide flood insurance premium discounts to residents of communities that proactively work to mitigate local flooding through updated zoning and planning and capital infrastructure improvements.

As I have done this past summer and winter, I will continue to work with local grassroots groups such as Lower Makefield's R.A.F.T. to collect information on how residents are being impacted and share information on this issue in Harrisburg. In the meantime, you are always welcome to contact my office directly for updates on this issue.

Bills to address backlogged school-building repairs, costs

Across Pennsylvania, school districts are faced with inadequate facilities. We all know of school buildings that are in need of repair or replacement. The state Department of Education has acknowledged that full funding of the current PlanCon program, through which districts are reimbursed for part of their construction costs, would require \$1.2 billion. Yet, in this fiscal year, only \$296 million was budgeted for that line item.

We need to change that for two reasons.

First, despite the Education Department's incredible statement last spring that it is not certain whether there is a link between the condition of school buildings and educational outcomes, the environment in which our children learn does indeed matter. I was able to get the Acting Secretary of Education to admit that fact during February's budget hearings. No parent, teacher or child needs an expensive study to tell them that. Put simply, no child in Pennsylvania should have to learn in a dilapidated school.

Second, building or rebuilding schools – just like building or rebuilding roads and bridges – creates jobs at a time when we are still in dire need of them and at a time when the cost of construction and interest rates remain low.

To address these issues, I am drafting a legislative package composed of two bills.

The first bill would reform the existing PlanCon program with a new one that I call Building Blocks PA. It is intended to make changes and improve the financing of public school construction in Pennsylvania by:

- removing the existing moratorium on reimbursement for new construction projects;
- creating a new, dedicated fund for the reimbursement of construction costs;
- creating a commission to study public school construction financing issues;
- exempting certain types of projects from the current 20-year rule (regarding eligibility for reimbursement) if they improve health and safety, technology, energy efficiency and/or environmental quality of schools, or if they address school repair projects resulting from a storm or other emergency-related damages; and
- requiring school construction work to be performed by a proven, skilled workforce at a stable, living wage.

The second bill would establish a tax on natural gas extraction calculated at a per-volume rate of 29 cents per MCF extracted. This approach would not be linked to income, but rather volume, so we can focus on enabling the production of more natural gas with fewer wells that are more efficient. Unlike the income-based approach, we can confidently and accurately predict revenue from a per-volume approach of at least \$600 million in the first full year with the ability to grow that amount to more than \$1 billion annually within the next few years.

Revenue from the natural gas drilling tax would provide essential funding to public school construction that would more than double current funding levels in the first year alone and would grow significantly after that.

The bill also would add revenue to a number of other important programs, including a significant infusion of funds into technology investment in our schools under the former Classrooms for the Future program. The full breakdown of revenue distribution would be as follows:



50% Building Blocks PA

25% Host Local Governments

11% Marcellus Legacy Fund

(includes all counties' share, the Environmental Stewardship Fund and other drilling-related impact programs)

5% Classrooms for the Future

3% State Conservation District Fund

2% DEP

2% Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund

1% Fish & Boat Commission

1% Game Commission

Save the Dates!

PA-1000 Tax Rebate Seminar

Monday, March 24 | 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Morrisville Senior Center
31 E. Cleveland Ave., Morrisville

My staff will help senior citizens and other residents who qualify for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. The program provides state rebates on property taxes or rent paid in 2013 to eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older.

Legislative Breakfast

Thursday, April 24 | 10 a.m. to noon

McCaffrey's Supermarket, Upper Level
635 Heacock Road, Yardley

I will provide an update on legislative issues in Harrisburg. Please RSVP at 215-493-5420.

Breast Cancer Screening

Supported by the Fox Chase Cancer Center



Friday, April 11 | 10 a.m.

Hampton Inn parking lot, 1000 Stony Hill Road, Yardley

Requirements for receiving a mammogram are:

- Must be 40 or older
 - Name and address of one of your doctors
 - Prescription from your doctor
 - May not be breast-feeding or have breast-fed within the last nine months
 - Must not have had a breast cancer diagnosis within the past two years
 - Must not be under treatment for breast cancer
 - Must not have had a mammogram in 12 months
 - Must be able to board the van and stand while being examined
- Please contact my office at 215-493-5420 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Shredding Event

Saturday, May 31 | 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Lower Makefield Township, location to be determined

There is no RSVP needed to attend.

Common types of items that should be shredded include credit card statements, bank statements, canceled checks, income tax information, insurance records and retirement or pension fund information. Please limit documents to two boxes per car.



Rep. Santarsiero presents a citation to the Pennsbury High School girls' cross country team on Jan. 30. The Falcons were the 2013 PIAA Class AAA runner-up.



Rep. Santarsiero presents a citation on Nov. 6 to Pennsbury High School's Ryan McHenry, David Simon and John Wagner for making the 2013 National In-Service Conference of the National Association for Music Education's All-American Band.



Rep. Santarsiero presents a citation on Nov. 7 to Michael Bliss for his selection to the International Junior Golf Tour's Team USA. Bliss, a junior at The Pennington School in New Jersey, also was identified by the American Junior Golf Association as one of the outstanding junior golfers in the Philadelphia region and participated in the U.S. Rolex/AJGA dinner honoring Arnold Palmer in 2012.



STATE REP. STEVE SANTARSIERO

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Rep. Santarsiero stands on the steps in the Capitol Rotunda with members of the Holy Ghost Preparatory School soccer team, which was recognized in the House on Jan. 27 for winning the 2013 PIAA Class AA championship.



Rep. Santarsiero presents a citation to Lower Makefield resident and Pennsbury High School student Ashvika Dhir on Jan. 30. She was one of two American students younger than 18 selected to the Global Entrepreneurship Summit at the invitation of the Department of State. Only 50 leaders from around the world were invited.

Sign up for email alerts and opt in

I want to alert you about Pennsylvania House rules that prohibit when I can contact you leading up to a state House election. Although you might already be receiving my email alerts, there will be a 60-day period preceding the 2014 primary and general elections when I will be prohibited from sending legislative emails to you unless you have "opted in" to continue receiving my emails.

Please visit my website, www.pahouse.com/Santarsiero, to sign up for email alerts on important information, including legislation being considered in Harrisburg.

On my website, click on the Email Alerts tab in the left-hand column and fill in your information.

You can also keep up to date with me through my Facebook page and following me on Twitter.

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