



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
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 58TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

MESSAGE FROM REP. HARHAI

HARHAI KICKS OFF 10TH TERM, NEW SESSION WITH RENEWED HOPE FOR CONSENSUS, COMPROMISE

Dear Friends,

With my swearing in to a 10th term to start the 2015-16 legislation session in January, I hope the presence of new Gov. Tom Wolf, a fellow Democrat, will translate into stronger advancement for education funding and job creation – two of my hallmark priorities while serving as your state representative.

As we witnessed the deterioration of education and the state economy over the past four years, caused by the prior administration's neglect and bad priorities, I have joined many of you in yearning for fresh leadership in Pennsylvania.

Entering this new era, although Republicans remain firmly in control of the state House and Senate, I'm optimistic we'll be able to put partisan differences aside and craft the type of compromises that work for all Pennsylvanians.

We face major challenges with the 2015-16 state budget, especially if we want to restore funding for our public schools and do something to alleviate their heavy reliance on property taxes. There is no easy fix – but I look forward

to robust debate and your steady feedback to help guide me in voting for what's best for the 58th Legislative District.

I encourage you to visit my website – www.pahouse.com/Harhai – to keep abreast of my legislative performance, and to find out how my constituent service offices can assist you with state programs and issues.

Please consider signing up for my legislative emails, by clicking the "Contact" tab on the navigation bar, then clicking "Sign up for emails." You can also "like" me on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RepHarhai to stay posted on important updates and my community involvement.

It is a privilege to serve as your state representative, and I look forward to connecting with you in person and through social media, as we work together to improve life in the 58th Legislative District and across Pennsylvania.

Ted

HARHAI NAMED DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OF HOUSE GAME AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE

Given the popularity of hunting and fishing in our area, I proudly began my 10th term in January being named Democratic chairman of the House Game and Fisheries Committee.

This committee reviews bills affecting the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission, both of which rely on licensing and user fees for a significant portion of their funding. I look forward to working with my Republican counterpart, state Rep. Keith Gillespie of York County, to make sure the voices of these statewide constituencies are heard.

I switched over to this post after spending the last two years as Democratic chairman of the House Urban Affairs Committee, which has a long history of developing strategies to eradicate blight and stimulate revitalization of older communities, and thus had a direct correlation to third-class cities like Monessen and Jeannette.

As Democratic chairman of the House Game and Fisheries Committee, state Rep. Ted Harhai recently visited the Poconos to participate in a Pennsylvania Game Commission educational field trip to a bear den. Participants got the rare opportunity to view a hibernating bear and its cubs, and to watch as Game Commission biologists tagged the animal and recorded its measurements.



HARHAI ANNOUNCES CONFIRMATION OF MONESSEN STATE HEALTH CENTER REOPENING

In a hard-fought battle to restore state health services, I was able to obtain in February official confirmation of the reopening of the Monessen State Health Center in the Monessen Municipal Complex.

As a response to my persistent inquiries, I received this email from an official with the Pennsylvania Health Department:

"I am writing to thank you for your support as we move to reopen the Monessen State Health Center in the near future. While the date and the logistics have yet to be finalized, I wanted to reach out to you and confirm that the center will be reopened. Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of residents of the 58th Legislative District."

After the local health center was closed by the Corbett administration in July 2103, I joined four other legislators and SEIU Healthcare in filing suit against the planned closure of 26 such centers across the state.

Our legal action culminated in a fall 2014 court action that ordered their reopening. I thank the Health Department under Gov. Tom Wolf for its responsiveness to my request for information and for planning to reopen the center in the same location.

NEARLY \$267,000 IN STATE GRANTS AWARDED TO 58TH DISTRICT FIRE DEPARTMENTS, EMS PROVIDERS

In February, 23 fire and ambulance companies in the 58th Legislative District received nearly \$267,000 worth of state grants to assist in their operations, as part of \$30 million disbursed statewide through Pennsylvania's Fire Company and Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program, funded by gaming revenue.

I supported changes to the program in 2012 that increased the grant amount available to fire departments and ambulance companies, and extended the program through June 30, 2016.

The money can be used for several purposes, such as: repairing, building or renovating facilities; purchase of new equipment, training and certification of staff; and repaying debt related to equipment purchases or facility building and maintenance.



Grant recipients and their corresponding amounts were:

- Adamsburg and Community Volunteer Fire Dept., \$13,730;
- Collinsburg Volunteer Fire Dept., \$13,453;
- East Huntingdon Township Volunteer Fire Co. and Relief Association, \$11,514;
- High Park Volunteer Fire Dept., \$11,514;
- Jeannette Fire Dept., \$14,284;
- Monessen Ambulance Service Inc., \$7,444;
- Monessen Volunteer Fire Dept. Hose House No. 2, \$14,284;
- Mount Pleasant Medic 10, \$7,444;
- Mount Pleasant Volunteer Fire Dept., \$12,622;
- North Belle Vernon Volunteer Fire Dept., \$13,176;
- Rescue 14 EMS Inc., \$7,444;
- Rostraver Central Volunteer Fire Co., \$14,284;
- Rostraver Township Volunteer Fire Dept., \$11,514;
- Rostraver/West Newton Emergency Services Inc., \$7,444;

- Sewickley Township Community Ambulance Service, \$7,444;
- Sewickley Township Volunteer Fire Co. and Relief Association No. 4, \$11,514;
- Sewickley Township Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1, \$12,622;
- Sewickley Township Volunteer Fire Co. No. 3, \$11,791;
- Suttersville Volunteer Fire Co., \$14,284;
- Turkeytown Volunteer Fire Co., \$11,514;
- Volunteer Fire Dept. and Relief Association of Monessen, \$14,007;
- West Newton Volunteer Fire Co. Inc., \$11,791; and
- Yukon South Huntingdon Volunteer Fire Co., \$11,791.

PRIVACY PROTECTION FOR LOTTERY WINNERS FOCUS OF HARHAI BILL

In order to provide them protection from criminals and scam artists, I plan to reintroduce my legislation that would give a lottery winner the option of choosing to disclose his or her name or other personal information.

The prize winner's city and county of residence would still be disclosed, but the confidentiality change could give added peace of mind to a person suddenly enriched by perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars.

I'm proposing this because lottery winners often become big targets, facing swindles, burglary and even more serious threats, including murder. Other states – including Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, South Carolina, Kansas and North Dakota – give winners the option to remain anonymous, so it makes sense for Pennsylvania to do the same.



FAMILY CENTERS WOULD BE PRESERVED UNDER HARHAI LEGISLATION

I believe family centers like the one in Monessen should be spared from threats to their operational funding, so I'm going to reintroduce legislation to ensure they remain operational.

This is a high priority for me, as I have personally seen the effectiveness of family centers in improving lives. Employees there teach critical parenting skills, including nutrition, health and recreational exercise. They also visit homes and help families survive and thrive, and intervene when child health and safety issues emerge.

In 2013, I sought to legislatively preserve funding for family centers across Pennsylvania, including the one operated by Monessen School District in collaboration with Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services Inc., which served 300 families.

HARHAI SUPPORTS WOLF'S MEDICAID EXPANSION

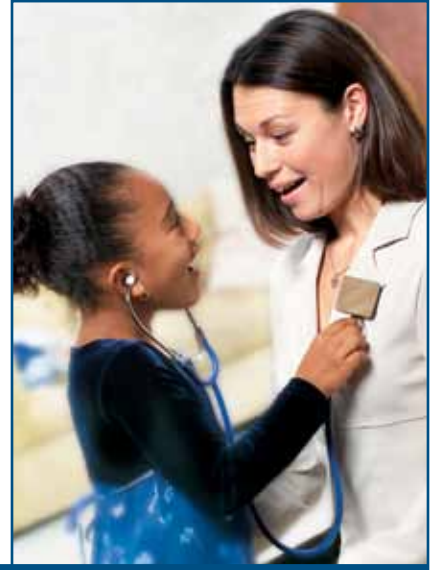
I hailed February's decision by Gov. Tom Wolf to scrap a Corbett administration alternative and opt for traditional Medicaid expansion under the federal Affordable Care Act.

The course reversal engineered by Wolf is economically pragmatic, as it permits an additional 500,000 Pennsylvanians to obtain health insurance – including 23,000 veterans and 10,000 of their family members – while creating an estimated 40,000 jobs.

This expansion is 100 percent funded by the federal government for three years, after which the federal funding rate remains 90 percent. It's a problem-solving – and life-saving – solution to the problem of insuring our state's low-income citizens, many of whom work but don't have job-related health care coverage.

I never understood the prior administration's reluctance to embrace the phenomenal deal offered by Medicaid expansion, as was done in many states headed by governors from both political parties.

The course our governor has chosen will infuse an estimated \$40 billion into our state's economy over the next 10 years, with positive impacts on jobs and taxes.



BILL GIVING VETERANS PUBLIC HOUSING PREFERENCE SIGNED INTO LAW

A bill I supported that gives public housing leasing preference to veterans and their families was signed into law in October as Act 188 of 2014, when I served as Democratic chairman of the House Urban Affairs Committee.

This legislation amends the state Housing Authorities Law to require local housing authorities to give preference to active-duty service members and veterans and their families when leasing public housing.

Under the new law, the preference will be extended first to the household of which the active service member or veteran is a member and then to the surviving household members of a deceased service member or veteran who died of service-connected causes.

However, nothing in the state law will supercede U.S. laws and regulations that govern federally funded public housing. Some housing authorities in Pennsylvania already provide a veteran's preference. But those that do not will be required to do so under the new state law.



Rep. Harhai awarded John Huchrowski of Rostraver with a citation celebrating 80 years of violin performances.

HARHAI TO REVIVE LEGISLATION SEEKING TEMPORARY AID FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Because school districts that unexpectedly lose a large employer face a sudden fiscal hardship, I will continue my efforts to pass a law to provide up to two years of emergency state aid in those instances.

We need look no further than Southmoreland School District, which suffered a significant revenue loss when the Sony plant closed, to see the negative ramifications. That's why I want to amend the Public School Code of 1949 to provide temporary aid through the state Department of Education whenever a school district experiences at least a 25-percent loss in payment in lieu of taxes caused by business relocations.

My legislation would allow school districts affected by the abrupt relocation of a business some financial breathing room when balancing their budgets and meeting short-term expenditures.

Similar temporary special aid programs are available when a district loses revenue as a result of property reassessments or the bankruptcy of businesses in the district.



Rep. Harhai spoke with three different classes of seniors for teacher Ken Stough, as part of Project 18 at Hempfield Senior High School.



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THREE GRANTS TOTALING \$460,450 AWARDED IN HARHAI'S DISTRICT

Last fall, I was pleased to announce that nearly a half-million dollars' worth of state grants will benefit projects in Monessen, Rostraver Township and North Belle Vernon.

The Commonwealth Financing Authority – under the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program – made these two awards:

- \$100,000 to Monessen for public walking track improvements, including paving and erosion control measures, at the one-half-mile City Park track and the one-quarter-mile Ninth Street Park track.
- \$201,450 to Rostraver Township to help make the DiVirgilio Sports Complex handicapped-accessible, through improvements of restroom facilities, parking and playgrounds, and building ramps leading to all playing fields with interconnected paved paths.

Through a separate funding stream, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, via its Community Conservation Partnership Program, awarded \$159,000 to North Belle Vernon for a slew of renovations and improvements to the Graham Street/ Mayor Patricia Angelo Memorial Park.

These include: a new artificial turf soccer field; a dek hockey court; playground equipment and related safety surface, along with lighting and fencing; rehabilitation of the comfort station; and Americans with Disabilities Act access, including landscaping and signage.



Rep. Harhai is pictured with Brianna Lazar, the 2014 Glass and Ethnic Festival Queen, during the Mt. Pleasant Glass Festival.



Rep. Harhai met with students and support staff from the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf when they visited the Capitol. As a person who had hearing impairment issues that were surgically corrected, these kids hold a special place in Rep. Harhai's heart.

MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Birth and death certificates
- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints about utilities and the PUC
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property tax/rent rebate problems or questions

ANY QUESTION ABOUT STATE GOVERNMENT!