

Rep. *Steve*

# santarsiero

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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### Dear Neighbor,

I hope this finds you and your family well and enjoying a great summer.

In this legislative newsletter, I share some updates on legislation I have introduced to reduce by 50 percent carbon emissions in Pennsylvania, legislation I have supported to assist families with disabilities and actions being taken to address heroin and opioid addiction.

I am also proud of the bipartisan work that accomplished a significant liquor reform law to improve convenience for residents to purchase wine, spirits and beer.

And finally, I provide some information on an event we held on flood insurance and our upcoming college financial planning seminar.

As always, I encourage you to follow me at Facebook/RepSantarsiero and on Twitter @RepSantarsiero and to sign up to receive occasional email updates at [www.pahouse.com/Santarsiero](http://www.pahouse.com/Santarsiero). You may call my district office at 215-493-5420, as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Representative Steve Santarsiero.

Steve

## College Financial planning seminar Sept. 15

**It's never too early or too  
late to save for college.**

**Thursday, Sept. 15  
7 p.m.**

**Pennsbury High School West**  
608 S. Olds Blvd.  
Fairless Hills, Pa. 19030

Our panel will discuss  
Pennsylvania's 529  
College Savings  
Accounts, financial  
aid tips and the  
college application  
process.



### Bill would make Pennsylvania a leader in addressing climate change

Early this year, scientists proclaimed 2015 as the hottest year on record surpassing 2014 as the previously hottest year on record. It's clear we are on a trajectory of rapid global warming which continues to be a major threat to humanity.

Every minute counts if we are to reverse the damage being done to our environment. It's time for us to act here in Pennsylvania and take the lead on combating climate change.

My legislation (House Bill 2030) would set our state on course for a 50 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2030 while also establishing more incentives to invest in renewable energy jobs.

House Bill 2030 would require the state Department of Environmental Protection to establish a plan for reducing the state's greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, and it would implement strong enforcement mechanisms including incentives for participation.

The legislation calls for a collaborative effort between DEP and other agencies to embrace actions recommended by the Climate Change Advisory Committee. The bill also would "grant those agencies teeth" to reduce emissions not only from power plants, but from agriculture, municipalities, businesses and residences. The plan would also leverage incentives to reduce emissions.

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The federal Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan, which would require Pennsylvania to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 32 percent by 2030 from power plants alone, could serve as the foundation for the state plan.

We can leave our children cleaner air and water and offer good-paying jobs in a growing new energy sector while saving taxpayers money. If we work together, we can turn the battle against climate change into a win-win for Pennsylvania.

# Pennsylvania passes historic change to alcohol sales

Gov. Tom Wolf has signed a bill the House passed in June allowing takeout sales of wine in some restaurants and grocery stores, and making the sale of wine and liquor more convenient for Pennsylvania consumers.

Act 39 of 2016, which includes initiatives like flexibility in pricing, extended store hours, expanded Sunday sales, enhanced direct shipping options, loyalty programs and options for breweries, wineries and distilleries in Pennsylvania to sell each other's products, will take effect in August.



This plan modernizes, rather than dismantles, a state store system that annually delivers millions of dollars to help balance the state budget and provides nearly 5,000 good-paying jobs to Pennsylvania residents; jobs that will be preserved with this new law.

Learn more at [www.lcb.state.pa.us](http://www.lcb.state.pa.us).

## Around the 31st District...



In April, I was honored to present a citation to Newtown and former Lower Makefield resident Carroll Scott. April 15 marked the 80th anniversary of his enlistment in the U.S. Navy. "Scotty" proudly served for 41 years and is a veteran of War World II and the Korean War. Sadly, Mr. Scott passed away at the age of 98 in June.



In May, Troop 99, based out of Newtown, was honored by Morrell Smith American Legion Post 440 for its recent win at the prestigious West Point Scoutmasters Camporee. Congratulations!



I was honored to join Rep. Scott Petri in the April celebration and recognition of Coach Bob Rabberman's 30 years of service and success with the Council Rock and Council Rock North high school baseball teams.



In May, Rep. John Galloway and I had the privilege to lead the state House of Representatives in recognizing the Pennsbury School District for being named a State and National School District of Character in 2015. House Resolution 816 recognizes all 14 Pennsbury schools as state and national schools of character by Character.org, a national advocate and leader for the character-education movement. We recognized the district's superintendent and assistant superintendent, Drs. Kevin McHugh and Donna Dunar, in the House chamber. This is a fitting honor for Dr. McHugh, as he concludes his career at Pennsbury.

# Pa. ABLE savings program will help families with disabilities

In April, Gov. Tom Wolf signed Act 17 of 2016 into law. Known as the ABLE Act, which stands for Achieving a Better Life Experience, this new program will allow families to ensure family members with a disability are taken care of by providing them with a savings account without jeopardizing eligibility for important programs that their loved ones depend on.

I was proud to vote for this legislation, which allows the savings accounts to be used for a wide range of disability-related expenses including health care, housing and transportation. Hopefully, the ABLE Act will foster independence, community-based support and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, while at the same time helping put at ease the minds of family members who worry about caring for them.

The ABLE Program will be administered by the Pennsylvania Treasury, which also administers the Pennsylvania 529 College Savings Program. Under this new law, benefits of the program include:

- Savings of up to \$14,000 per year;
- Tax-free growth;
- Use of the account to pay for a wide range of disability-related expenses;
- Federal and state income tax-free withdrawals when used for qualified disability expenses;
- Exemption from Pennsylvania inheritance tax.

One of the most vital aspects of the ABLE Program is that savings are excluded from eligibility determinations for many government-related benefits. This means Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medical Assistance and other disability and health benefits cannot be taken away because of ABLE savings.

For more information, please visit [www.PA529.com/ABLE](http://www.PA529.com/ABLE) or contact my office. The goal is to have the ABLE Program up and running by the end of 2016.



# Pennsylvania's battle with heroin and opioid addiction

Heroin and opioid addiction is not just something that happens to famous people. It has touched too many families here in Bucks County and is a crisis that requires a coordinated response from lawmakers, first responders and medical professionals.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heroin and opioid overdose are the leading causes of accidental deaths, killing more Pennsylvanians than those involved in deadly crashes.

This epidemic crosses all social, geographic and political lines.

A recent study by the Pennsylvania State Coroners Association provides a harsh reality: seven Pennsylvanians die every day due to heroin or prescription opioid overdose. In 2014, nearly 2,500 Pennsylvanians died from a drug overdose, with 205 in Bucks County.

Pennsylvania has taken several important steps to combat the heroin and opioid crisis. Dr. Rachel Levine, the Physician General, signed a standing order for naloxone, making access to this crucial anti-overdose drug available to all Pennsylvanians.

I am proud to work with our local law enforcement who now are equipped with naloxone when they arrive first on the scene of a drug overdose. This life-saving drug is also available in public high schools across the state at no cost.

Pennsylvania has developed a prescription drug monitoring program to help detect and prevent prescription fraud and abuse.

I supported the funding in the 2016-17 budget to expand services and make them more accessible by opening 20 Centers of Excellence statewide by Oct. 1.

The Centers for Excellence will provide vital, potentially life-saving coordination of care for Pennsylvanians struggling with the disease of addiction. The team-based treatment aims to integrate behavioral health and primary care and, when necessary, evidence-based medication assisted treatment.

Accessing the proper treatment for opioid-related substance use disorders can be very confusing and difficult to navigate. These new centers will be a central efficient hub around which treatment revolves. In Bucks County, Penn Foundation Inc., in Sellersville will be the designated Center for Excellence. For updates, please follow me on Facebook, Twitter or sign up for emails at [www.pahouse.com/Santarsiero](http://www.pahouse.com/Santarsiero).



## Sound barriers, Scudder Falls Bridge project move forward

The Delaware River Joint Bridge Commission announced May 23 that it expects construction for the sound barriers for the Scudder Falls Bridge replacement project to begin in early summer and conclude by the end of 2016.

The walls will cover 14,145 linear feet on the Pennsylvania side. Of this, 13,354 linear feet are west of Taylorville Road.

For more information on the project visit [www.scudderfallsbridge.com](http://www.scudderfallsbridge.com).



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## Help fight the New Jersey Tax Grab

If you live in Pennsylvania and make \$35,000 or more a year working in New Jersey, Gov. Chris Christie is proposing that you pay more in income tax – and that you pay it to New Jersey.

If he gets his way, Gov. Christie would abolish a 39-year-old tax agreement between Pennsylvania and New Jersey that allows interstate commuters to pay income taxes in their state of residence. Without the two-state agreement, Pennsylvanians working in New Jersey would have to pay New Jersey's graduated income tax instead of Pennsylvania's flat income tax.

The Bottom line: Pennsylvanians working across the Delaware River who make \$35,000 or more per year would be subject to New Jersey's higher tiered rates, and if your taxable income from working in the Garden State is \$40,000 or more, you would pay more than 5.5 percent in income tax, a 55 percent hike. For those making considerably more, your tax liability could spike by 200 percent – and all of that money would go to New Jersey instead of benefitting our community here at home. Please look at the table for more information.

All of this can be avoided by keeping the Pennsylvania-New Jersey Tax Reciprocity Agreement in place.

If you are a Pennsylvanian working in New Jersey, lend your voice to keep tax reciprocity by signing the petition at <https://is.gd/NJExit>.

Don't let Gov. Christie get away with an unfair, unilateral tax grab.



## Flood workshop presentation available online

I held a flood insurance workshop June 1 with experts from the state Insurance Department and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to explain the need for flood insurance and offer tips on reducing premiums. If you were not able to attend the event, the Insurance Department materials can be accessed at <https://is.gd/FloodInsurance>.

I also discussed my House Bill 1299, which is being considered by the House Insurance Committee, to address increasing flood insurance premiums. According to the National Flood Insurance Program, Pennsylvania is among the 10 highest states for flood insurance payouts between January 1978 and March 2011, ranking eighth at \$773 million.

I will bring you updates on the bill's progress.

Salary	PA Tax Rate	PA Tax	NJ Tax Rate	NJ Tax	Difference
\$15,000	3.07 %	\$461	1.4 %	\$210	\$ (251)
\$20,000	3.07 %	\$614	1.7%	\$340	\$ (274)
\$35,000	3.07 %	\$1,075	3.5 %	\$1,225	\$151
\$40,000	3.07 %	\$1,228	5.25%	\$2,100	\$872
\$75,000	3.07 %	\$2,303	6.37%	\$4,778	\$2,475
\$500,000	3.07 %	\$15,350	8.97%	\$44,850	\$29,500