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- Contact the Attorney General’s Office to verify the information sent to you.
- Never send cash through the mail or give it to someone at your door.
- Never reveal your credit card number or bank account information over the phone unless you initiated the call.
- Tell the person that you do not wish to be called again, and record the party calling and the date on a list by the phone. If he or she calls back, or if you have any doubts about the legitimacy of the call, contact the state Attorney General’s Office, Bureau of Consumer Protection at 1-800-441-2555.
- Put your phone number on the state’s Do-Not-Call list, 1-888-777-3406.

Meet the Staff!

If you need assistance with any service, call or stop by Rep. Thomas’ district office and his staff will be happy to lend a hand. Pictured from left to right are Susan Stanton, legislative/administrative assistant; Carol Smith, legislative/constituent service assistant; Sharon Stocker, legislative/special events assistant; Charlotte Greer-Brown, legislative/community outreach assistant for west side of the district; and Tanya Fowler, legislative/community outreach assistant for the east side of the district. Pictured to the right is Dr. Mary Palmer, executive/legislative assistant to Rep. Thomas.

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Dear Neighbors,

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As always, if you would like to provide input on a legislative issue or need any assistance with state-related programs and/or services, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (215) 560-3261 or visit my office at 1415 N. Broad St., Suite 226A in Philadelphia. My staff and I are happy to help.

Sincerely,

W. Curtis Thomas
State Representative
181st Legislative District

House adopts resolutions honoring two leaders from Philadelphia

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives recently adopted two condolence resolutions sponsored by Rep. W. Curtis Thomas, that honor the legacy of Willie L. Williams and Samuel Staten Sr.

Williams, who passed away in April, began his career in 1964 as a Fairmount Park guard but would go on to become the first African-American police commissioner of the Philadelphia and Los Angeles police departments.

As police commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department, Williams broke up open-air drug markets operating in the city, targeted residences that were being used to facilitate the drug trade and spoke out about the increased flood of illegal guns in the community.

Staten Sr., who also passed away in April, was a longtime leader of the Philadelphia Laborers union and renowned champion for local charities.

In 1970, after working as a construction laborer, Staten became a Local 332 field representative. In 1973, he was appointed assistant business manager, and in 1978 he was elected business manager, a position he held until 2008. He officially retired in 2010.

Staten, who is credited with raising millions of dollars for charity, was a mentor to many and an inspiration to leaders throughout Philadelphia.
Home heating assistance program

Local residents can apply for Pennsylvania’s Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for this winter. LIHEAP is a federally funded program that provides grants to eligible people and families to help cover the costs of heating bills. Assistance is available through cash grants, which help with home heating bills, and crisis grants, which aid in emergency situations such as a broken furnace or lack of fuel. Winter can be unpredictable, so all who could benefit are encouraged to apply early in the season. This program can help lower income families stay warm and also provide emergency funding in the event of a fuel shortage or a furnace issue.

Household income limits to qualify vary according to family size. Applications can be completed online at www.compass.state.pa.us. Rep. W. Curtis Thomas’ constituent service staff can also assist in the filing process for this program, as well as other state programs.

Deadline for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Dec. 31

The deadline to apply to the state’s Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2015 is Dec. 31, 2016. The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit is $35,000 a year for homeowners and $15,000 annually for renters. Half of Social Security income and all Social Security cost-of-living increases are excluded, and the maximum standard rebate is $650. Claimants must reapply for rebates every year because they are based on annual income and property taxes or rent paid each year. Spouses, personal representatives or estates may file rebate claims on behalf of deceased claimants who lived at least one day in 2015 and meet all other eligibility criteria.

The application is available on the Department of Revenue’s website at www.revenue.pa.gov or by visiting Rep. W. Curtis Thomas’ office.

Energy-saving tips for your home

With the days getting shorter and the nights getting colder, now is a good time for you to take the necessary steps to save electricity, natural gas and money this winter. By taking some of the following steps, you could potentially save 20 percent or more on your winter heating bills.

- Keep it sealed. A drafty house lets warm air escape and is much more costly to keep warm – especially during cooler weather. Use caulking around doors, windows and any openings for utility services. Looks on your windows can make them tighter and more resistant to drafts. Keep your fireplace damper closed when the fireplace is not in use.
- Upgrade your insulation. Insulating your home can significantly reduce your heating costs, while increasing the comfort of your home. Reducing air leaks – in floors, walls, ceilings, ducts, fireplaces, doors, windows and vents, and around plumbing – could cut 10 percent from an average household’s monthly energy bill.
- Check ducts for air leaks. Look for joints that should be connected but have separated. Leaky ductwork can increase your utility bill significantly.
- Warm up your system. Service your heating system at the beginning of each heating season. A well-maintained system will last longer, operate more efficiently and save you money.
- Manage your thermostat. Keep thermostats set at a constant, comfortable level. You can save about 2 percent on your heating bill for every degree you lower your thermostat.
- Be prepared for cooler weather. Remove screens and air conditioners from windows and install storm windows.
- Shorter days and longer nights. Don’t forget to adjust outdoor lighting timers as the nights grow longer. Take the time to replace older incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs.

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Rep. Thomas speaks out in the House chamber about issues facing the 181st Legislative District and Philadelphia.

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Members of the Philadelphia Delegation stand in support of Rep. Thomas as he shares remarks and expresses condolences for the loss of Willie L. Williams and Samuel Staten Sr.