

State Representative Harry A.

READSHAW

report

36TH DISTRICT



November 2016

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Bridge Educational Foundation offers scholarships for St. Sylvester School

In September, I was proud to take part in a check presentation from the Bridge Educational Foundation, as it gave a grant of \$10,000 to be used for student scholarships to attend St. Sylvester School.



The money was given by a private business under the state's Educational Improvement Tax Credit program, which allows businesses to receive tax credits in exchange for funding scholarships for private-school students in grades K-12.

As part of the presentation celebration, I read the book "How Full is Your Bucket" to some of the younger students.

Readshaw recognized for 20 years of service to ALCOSAN

In October, I was honored by the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority, locally known as ALCOSAN, for serving on its Board of Directors for 20 years.

I was recipient of the Clean Water Stars award, which ALCOSAN presents annually to people or institutions that go beyond expectations in the effort to keep our rivers and streams clean.



As I have learned during my term on the board, cutting corners may be easier but that doesn't make it right. Mistakes we make with our waste today can affect the environment for decades. We are the caretakers and I take that job seriously. Thank you for the recognition.

First steps taken in combatting opioid epidemic in PA

Pennsylvania is dealing with a major epidemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control, heroin and opioid overdoses are the leading causes of accidental deaths, killing more Pennsylvanians than those involved in deadly crashes. This epidemic crosses all societal, geographic and political lines.

The Pennsylvania Coroners Association recently released a report on overdose deaths in 2015. The new report shows a harsh reality, as overdoses increased by 30 percent from 2014 to 2015, with 3,500 overdose deaths in Pennsylvania last year – an average of nearly 10 Pennsylvanians dying by overdose every day. There were 414 deaths reported in Allegheny County alone, more than one per day.

Pennsylvania has taken several important steps to combat the heroin and opioid crisis. Dr. Rachel Levine, the state's physician general, signed a standing order for naloxone, making access to this crucial anti-overdose drug available to all Pennsylvanians. State troopers are equipped with naloxone for when they arrive first on the scene of a drug overdose. This life-saving drug is also available in public high schools across the commonwealth at no cost. Pennsylvania also has developed a prescription drug monitoring program to help detect and prevent prescription fraud and abuse.

Gov. Tom Wolf has been hosting roundtable discussions with state lawmakers, local officials, law enforcement, emergency responders and health care professionals to discuss ways to work together to combat the opioid abuse and heroin use epidemic. A bipartisan task force was formed to

study the opioid problem in the commonwealth and recommend legislation.

As the legislature was taking final votes in late October, a series of bills that I co-sponsored were passed and later signed by the governor as we began a serious effort to save lives and reduce the other personal costs of opioid addiction. Among the new laws are rules that:

- Require physicians to check the commonwealth's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program each time they prescribe opioids.
- Prepare doctors and physicians for prescribing opioids and pain management by improving medical school and continuing education curricula on opioids.
- Limit the number of opioids a child or an emergency room patient can receive to a seven-day supply with no refills.
- Require doctors to check the state's prescription drug monitoring database every time they write an opioid prescription; not just the first time they write one for a patient.

My colleagues and I are also looking at other bills to include more of the governor's announced goals, such as:

- Requiring insurance companies to cover abuse-deterrent opioids.
- Allowing patients to establish a voluntary directive if they do not want to be prescribed opioids.

You can read the entire 2014 and 2015 coroners' reports on their website, www.pacoroners.org. The links are near the top of the page.

Baldwin EMS is 2016 Pa. EMS Agency of the Year

In September, state Rep. Bill Kortz and I presented a citation to the Baldwin Emergency Medical Services team, to salute them for being selected as the 2016 Pennsylvania EMS Agency of the Year by the Pennsylvania Emergency Health Services Council and Department of Health.

To win the award, an EMS unit must be nominated and then judged on a number of criteria, including response time, staffing and training levels, community participation and local community cooperation.

Congratulations to the crew of the Baldwin EMS!

Baldwin Borough Police receive international accreditation

Congratulations to the Baldwin Borough Police Department for receiving two prestigious accreditations this year.

The Baldwin Police Department was one of only 15 departments in Pennsylvania to receive the International Accreditation by the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. To receive this honor, the department successfully passed a review of 420 best police practices, including facilities, policies and equipment.

The department was also one of only 108 to receive accreditation from the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. To receive this recognition, the police department successfully completed a review of 120 state-specific standards.

We are blessed to have such qualified first responders serving our communities.

Thank you to Chief Michael Scott and the entire force.



Rep. Readshaw was at the 2016 Labor Day Parade in Pittsburgh. Joining him were (l-r) Allegheny County Councilman Mike Finnerty, Pennsylvania Fire Commissioner Tim Solobay, state Sen. Wayne Fontana and Allegheny County Councilman John Palmiere.

Will your driver's license be a valid ID?

In 2013, the federal government passed the Real ID Act, meant to allow for easy cross-referencing driver's licenses across the country. The law has been phased in over several years, with the last pieces taking place in January 2017 and also in January 2018.

However, Pennsylvania passed its own law, which prohibits PennDOT from making the required changes to state licenses.

That means as of Jan. 30, 2017, Pennsylvanians will not be permitted into federal buildings without another type of approved ID, such as a passport or military ID.

Beginning in 2018, Pennsylvanians also will be banned from flying unless they have another type of government-approved ID.

I will keep you updated if any of these variables change.

Pennsylvania has the largest number of volunteer fire departments!

A recent Center for Rural PA study reports that there are an estimated 2,215 fire companies in Pennsylvania. Of those, 28 are career fire departments, 92 are combination career and volunteer, and 2,095 are strictly volunteer fire companies.

Pennsylvania has the largest number of volunteer fire companies in the nation, with approximately 12 percent of the nation's 20,000 all-volunteer fire companies. Our appreciation goes to all who volunteer!



The Great Outdoors!

Hunters Sharing the Harvest celebrating 25 years

As hunting season rolls around, I ask you to remember to share the harvest.

This year marks the 25th year of the Hunters Sharing the Harvest program and last year was one of the most successful! More than 2,500 deer were donated, which provided nearly 110,000 pounds of venison that was distributed to more than 5,000 outlets, including food banks, soup kitchens, missions and more. Over the quarter-century, more than 1 million pounds of venison have been donated!

Please hunt safely!

For more information, or to locate a deer processor in your area, visit www.sharedeer.org.



'Brown-bag' seed sales are illegal in Pennsylvania

If you are considering purchasing and planting seeds for next year, I wanted to remind you that there are laws in place designed to protect you.

Seed distributors in Pennsylvania are regulated and must obtain an annual \$25 seed license from the Department of Agriculture.

All seed packets sold in Pennsylvania are required to list the name and address of the packager, the lot number, purity and the germination percentage, as well as the month and year the germination test was completed.

Seeds for sale without that information are considered "brown bag" seeds and are illegal to sell in the state.

If you purchase "brown bag" seed, there is no guarantee of the quality of the seed, and it may have a lower germination rate and can also contain unwanted seeds for invasive or noxious weeds.

The state tests thousands of seeds every year, from flowers to trees, vegetables and lawn mixes.

I strongly urge you to avoid purchasing and planting "brown bag" seeds to ensure a good growing season.

You can learn more about Pennsylvania's seed program at <http://bit.ly/brownbagseeds>.

Property taxes – state rankings

Every year during budget season, we hear about how Pennsylvania's property taxes are used to fund schools and local governments. But where does Pennsylvania stand against the rest of the country?

In March, WalletHub studied the property taxes in each state and Pennsylvania was just out of this year's top 10.

The average Pennsylvania homeowner spends approximately \$2,650 per year on property taxes for a median-priced home.

New Jersey had the highest tax rate – the median-priced home would cost a New Jersey homeowner more than \$4,000 per year in property taxes.

The national average spent on property taxes for that same median-priced home is about \$2,100, so Pennsylvanians pay about 20 percent more than the median homeowner in the country.

Life jackets required between Nov. 1 and April 30

Be aware that between Nov. 1 and April 30 each year, Pennsylvania boating law requires a life jacket to be worn by ALL people aboard any watercraft less than 16 feet in length, which would include small boats, canoes and kayaks.

Wearing a life jacket in cold water may save your life!

The body's first reaction to immersion in cold water is frequently an involuntary gasp, which can lead to swallowing water, and can also lead to changes in heart rhythm.

The colder the water temperature, the less time a person can remain conscious and survive.

A life jacket will keep you afloat even if your body is unable to respond.

Learn more about boating on the Fish and Boat Commission website, www.fishandboat.com.

City snow removal hotline!

If you find a city street this winter in need of snow or ice removal, you can call the city's snow removal line at (412) 255-2621.

Readshaw honored by Pennsylvania Auctioneers Association

In October, I was proud to receive an honorary auctioneer award from the Pennsylvania Auctioneers Association.

The award, presented in Harrisburg, recognized my work as Democratic chairman of the House Professional Licensure Committee in passing H.B. 325, which was signed into law as Act 88 of 2016.

The bill, which was signed by the governor in July, updates rules for online auctions, among other changes. Most specifically, the online auctioneer must hold a Pennsylvania license if the property owner – or the property itself – is located in Pennsylvania. An exemption to that rule was created that permits a Pennsylvania-based seller to contact an out-of-state auctioneer to sell items online as long as the auction company is also based outside of Pennsylvania.

Auctions are a Pennsylvania tradition. Although auctions have been around for decades, auctioneering continues to evolve. Technology also evolves, and we need to keep our laws current as well.

My committee Executive Director Marlene Tremmel also received a certificate acknowledging her work on the bill.



Joining Rep. Readshaw are (l-r) Capital Associates President Jay Layman, Marlene Tremmel, PAA President Bill Anderson Jr., PAA Treasurer Robert Ensminger and PAA Administrator Kimberly Hemingway.

16th annual Ride to Gettysburg



Rep. Readshaw hosted his 16th annual motorcycle "Ride to Gettysburg" from Harrisburg to Gettysburg in September. Around 400 riders took part on the ride, which supports the Pennsylvania Gettysburg Monuments Project. Readshaw created the Gettysburg Monuments Project in 1997 to repair and restore the over 140 unit monuments and markers honoring Pennsylvanians on the battlefields in Gettysburg. The 2017 ride is set for Sept. 23 and the 2017 Preservation Ball is scheduled for March 23.

Readshaw receives PMAA Service Award

In August, the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association honored me as their 2016 Sahli Service Award winner. The Sahli award is given in honor of I. S. Sahli. The award is presented at its annual conference banquet and is given in recognition of faithful and outstanding service for authority officials who have served for 20 years or more. I have served on the ALCOSAN Board of Directors for 20 years, 15 of them as chairman.



Rep. Readshaw with ALCOSAN Executive Director Arletta Scott Williams.



Rep. Readshaw and MaryBeth Barnes from Rep. Dan Deasy's office at the Brookline Breezefest that was held on Brookline Boulevard in August.

Smacky the Clown recognized for 50 years of laughs

In August, Smacky the Clown visited my constituent service office. My staff and I were proud to recognize his 50 years as a clown in the Pittsburgh area. Quite a change from his time served as a veteran. Thank you, Smacky, for sharing your fun with hundreds of birthday



boys and girls over the past half-century! Smacky is the alter-ego of Carrick's Richard Busby.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program accepting applications through Dec. 31

The deadline to apply for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been extended to Dec. 31.

This program provides a state rebate on paid 2015 property taxes or rent to income-eligible residents 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older.

To be eligible, your household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter.

When applying, you only have to count half of your Social Security or federal railroad retirement Tier I benefits toward your total income.

You can obtain information about the program, an application and free help applying through my district office at 1917 Brownsville Road, (412) 881-4208 or on the state Department of Revenue's website at www.revenue.pa.gov.

There is no charge to apply. If you receive an offer to apply for a fee, please disregard it.

New school funding formula was long overdue

In June, Gov. Tom Wolf signed the School Fair Funding Formula bill into law.

This is a crucial step to helping our public schools perform better, by using geographic, economic and other demographic information to ensure the schools that need the most money to properly educate our children receive the most. The new plan will use a three-year average of student enrollment and will also specifically include district poverty levels, students that have English as their second language, and also the percentage of students enrolled in charter schools.

Additionally, the new funding plan will base special education funding on actual need. Previously, special education funds were figured out on the statewide average, about 16 percent of all students. However, districts vary in their special education student enrollment, from 8 percent to more than 25 percent. As it costs more to properly educate a special needs student, this can be a critical issue for some districts.

I know many people think we are just throwing money at our public schools, but in reality, Pennsylvania ranks 46th out of the 50 states in public school funding – and before this new formula was enacted, the state ranked dead last in funding equality.

This is a good first step to making sure our students get the education they deserve.

Millennials moving to Pittsburgh!

A recent Pew Charitable Trusts review of U.S. Census data from 2010 to 2014 has determined that Pittsburgh ranks third nationwide in cities experiencing a millennial boom.

While the population of Pittsburgh has dropped by about 29,000 people, the number of young, college educated residents under age 35 has grown by 15,000.

Among the reasons Pittsburgh is drawing younger adults are the number of quality higher-education institutions in the area, a solid base of technology companies and research, a lower cost of living, and a strong arts and culture community.

Other Rust Belt cities such as Buffalo, Chicago and St. Louis are also experiencing population growth of millennials. To read more, check out the Pew Charitable Trust's feature at <http://bit.ly/Pittsburghmillennials>.

Plan now for medical insurance for 2017

Most medical insurance plans have open enrollment periods for coverage for the next calendar year.

Open Enrollment for 2017 Medicare plans began Oct. 15 and runs through Dec. 7, 2016.

Your choice will affect which doctors you can see and will also affect your out-of-pocket expenses. Some plans also cover you when you are away from home, so if you travel a lot, you will want to consider that, too.

Plan options will vary based on costs, and may affect your co-pays and deductibles as well as which doctors or hospitals will accept your insurance.

All plans are required to cover yearly wellness visits, including cancer screenings and a yearly "wellness visit" to sit and talk with your doctor, as well as name-brand drug discounts if your **prescription expenses reach the Part D drug coverage gap, or "donut hole."**

The Medicare website has a quick search function that will allow you to see what plans are available and to compare them to find the best for you. Visit <http://bit.ly/FindMyPlan> to start your search.

Learn more about Medicare at www.medicare.gov.

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging has specially trained counselors who can help determine the best plans for your family's specific Medicare needs. The APPRISE counselors host Open Enrollment programs throughout the state during the enrollment period. To learn more about the APPRISE program, or to check the event schedule, you can call 1-800-783-7067 or visit its website, www.aging.pa.gov/insurance.

If you purchase health insurance directly or on the ACA Marketplace, or need to for next year, the current open enrollment runs through Jan. 31, 2017. Policies currently in effect will remain valid through Dec. 31, 2016.

To ensure that your coverage does not lapse when changing plans, you must enroll in a new plan by Dec. 15, 2016.

You can learn more about choosing health insurance in Pennsylvania at <http://bit.ly/healthinsurancePA>.

To learn more about the ACA Marketplace, or to compare coverage or enroll in a plan that may qualify for a subsidy, visit the ACA website, www.Healthcare.gov.

ACA provides income-based federal subsidies to help pay insurance purchased through the Marketplace. Three out of every four subscribers who apply through the ACA Marketplace are eligible for federal subsidies to help pay the premiums.

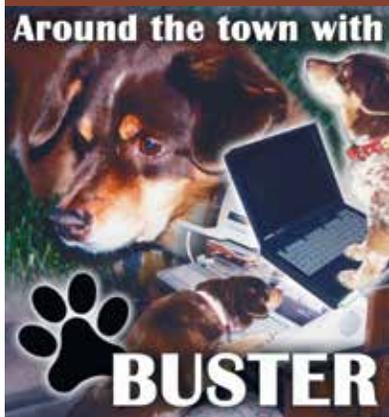
Since ACA was enacted, Pennsylvania has become one of the leaders in the percentage of those who have health insurance. The state's uninsured rate has dropped to 6.4 percent, well below the national average of 9.1 percent.

If you have questions regarding health insurance coverage, please contact my staff at (412) 881-4208.





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changes included a plan to upgrade the crime of aggravated animal cruelty that results in serious bodily injury to the animal to a felony count.

I'm growling and barking over the fact that this legislation was not considered for final passage. I will be a grouch until this bill becomes law!



Harry missed walking me a few times this fall because he was busy promoting a bill he co-sponsored, H.B. 869.

In October, a Boston terrier puppy, Libre, traversed the halls of the Capitol and even sat in on a House Rules Committee meeting to rally support for the bill that would stiffen penalties for animal abuse.

Libre, of course, garnered national headlines after being discovered in critical condition on a Lancaster County farm earlier this year. The puppy and his mother were both surrendered by their owner and nursed back to health. The rescuer who adopted him chose the name Libre, after the Spanish word for "liberty" or "free."

The bill, which was amended in the Senate, was expanded to include a wider scope of animal cruelty law changes. Among the



As we move into the holiday season, our family would like to wish you all a happy, healthy and safe holiday, and a great start to 2017.

Plan now if you may need help with your winter heating bills!

Pennsylvania's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) began accepting applications for the winter on Nov. 1. Depending on funding availability, applications will be accepted through March 31, 2017.

LIHEAP provides heating funds based on income and family size, as well as emergency grants for those in immediate danger of losing their heat.

Income eligibility is as follows:

Household Size	Income Limit
1	\$17,820
2	\$24,030
3	\$30,240
4	\$36,450
5	\$42,660
6	\$48,870
7	\$55,095
Each Additional Person Add	\$6,240

Applications are available at my office, 1917 Brownsville Road, (412) 881-4208. You can also apply through the state's website, www.compass.state.pa.us.

The commonwealth also offers a weatherization program for low-income households to reduce heating bills. Families that make less than 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline are eligible for this program. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/PAWeatherization>.