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State Representative

KEVIN

HAGGERTY

112th Legislative District



## YEAR IN REVIEW

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## Area projects benefit from state grants

In March, I was pleased to see multiple projects in the 112th Legislative District receive \$1.3 million in funding from the Commonwealth Financing Authority as part of the Local Share Assessment program which provides grants to communities near casino locations.

Additionally, the Mid Valley Active Older Adult Community Center in Jessup was one of 38 centers across the commonwealth (and the only one in Lackawanna County) to receive funding from the 2016-17 Senior Community Centers Grants program. I was pleased to be there when Secretary of Aging Teresa Osborne delivered the \$60,000 check, which will be used to make upgrades to facilities, purchase exercise equipment, provide new outreach-based programs, and purchase additional computer and iPad technologies for area seniors.

These projects are important for the safety of our communities and to help improve the quality of life for people who live and work in the 112th District.

### Grant funding from the LSA includes:

- **\$285,000** to the Greater Scranton YMCA Pool Renovation Project, to renovate two pool facilities in Dunmore Borough;
- **\$25,000** for the amphitheater at the Learning Commons at Marywood University for the final phase of the Learning Commons' project through the demolition of an existing library and construction of an outdoor amphitheater.
- **\$50,000** to United Community Outreach Food Bank Building to renovate the food bank's existing food storage warehouse in Blakely Borough so that larger quantities of perishable food items may be stored without spoilage. The funds will be used to buy two new freezers, a new HVAC system, and a fire sprinkler system.
- **\$90,000** for a Scranton safety improvement project at the crossing from Elm Street to Parker Street. Funds were awarded in partnership with Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements in the city.
- **\$115,000** for curb improvements and beautification projects in Scranton's downtown business district.
- **\$63,080** to Archbald Borough for the purchase of a police vehicle.
- **\$60,000** for Archbald Athletic and Sportsmen's Club Facility to renovate the community athletic facility to include ADA and kitchen updates, and connect the pavilion to the main clubhouse.
- **\$44,000** to Scranton for a fire marshal vehicle equipped for a K-9 officer.
- **\$46,000** for Blakely Borough's streetscape/Main Street revitalization to replace the deteriorated sidewalks in the borough's business district.
- **\$220,000** for Everhart Museum renovations and safety enhancements to modernize and upgrade various areas throughout the facility.
- **\$35,000** for Blakely Borough Coal Miners Remembered Memorial Project to erect a monument in honor of all the coal miners from Blakely.

The CFA was established in 2004 as an independent agency of the Department of Community and Economic Development.

There are seven townships and boroughs in the district that have very important projects planned for the benefit of veteran organizations, first responders, and our little leagues just to name a few. While we aren't sure what projects will get funding as of yet, my office is proud of the work we are doing to bring funding back to our communities for the second year in a row. I look forward to bringing you news of what projects will be funded in the near future.

## High school football players unite during March blizzard

During the record snowfall experienced by our area in March, my office staff and I helped to coordinate more than 150 rides for emergency personnel in all of the area hospitals and delivered food to seniors who were in need during the storm. We also assisted Meals on Wheels getting food to people in need.

Thank you to the football players from the Dunmore, Valley View and Mid Valley schools. These student-athletes spent two days shoveling out driveways, sidewalks and people's cars during the record snowfall. Some of the boys received credit hours for the National Honor Society. A special thanks to Coach Dave Rebar, Coach George Howanitz, and Coach Kevin McHale whose districts are all a part of the 112th District.

Thank you also to Gary Lacapra for donating his time and equipment, Bear Owen for donating vehicles, Peckville Assembly of God for donating food, Lowes Dickson City for donating shovels, and an anonymous caller who bought lunch for all of the student athletes.



I couldn't be more proud of these kids for getting together and really helping the people of the 112th!

## Haggerty praises community input, governor for keeping area prisons open

There were a few tense weeks in January, when the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections announced that three prisons in the northeast were being considered for closure. However, by the end of the month the DOC released its decision that all three would remain open.

I truly believe that the outpouring of support by our region's prison employees, their families and our state and federal legislators had a lot to do with the northeast state prisons all remaining open. I would like to thank Gov. Tom Wolf and Corrections Secretary John Wetzel for listening to our concerns and taking the time to respond to our correspondence.

I was proud to stand side by side with fellow lawmakers at state hearings, town hall meetings and visits to our state prison system. We rose above party affiliation to fight together to ensure that all of the state prison employees from the northeast continue going to work right here at home. This was a tremendous united front and everybody should be extremely proud.



*Haggerty helped to keep the area's state prisons open.*





# Join the fight to eliminate school property taxes

Why are Pennsylvanians basically paying a new mortgage on their homes every 10 years? The reason is the soaring hikes in our school property tax bills.

As the representative of this area, I remain humbled and passionate about defending grass roots issues. That's why I have been a strong supporter of House Bill 76 and Senate Bill 76 – the proposed School Property Tax Elimination Act.

Along with the PA Taxpayers Cyber Coalition and the PA Liberty Alliance, I've held numerous town hall meetings throughout the district to inform people about the details behind H.B./S.B. 76.

**For example:** homeowners would win big with the enactment of H.B./S.B. 76.

Right now, homeowners in Scranton pay one of the highest school taxes in the state and some opponents of property tax elimination are saying that if H.B./S.B. 76 become law, it just means we'll end up paying taxes AND debt.

**Here is the truth.** The retained debt under H.B./S.B. 76 for the Scranton School District is 5.88%, which means that there will be a reduction of school property taxes in Scranton by 94%. So if you pay \$3,000 per year for school property taxes, under H.B./S.B. 76 you'd only pay \$188. Once the debt is eliminated, homeowners would pay no school property taxes.

Back in 2015, if only one state Senator changed their vote, this would no longer be an issue.



*Hundreds of people have joined Rep. Haggerty's town hall meetings throughout Lackawanna County to become better informed about H.B./S.B. 76 that would eliminate school property taxes in Pennsylvania. These informational meetings helped to pass a statewide tax referendum on Nov. 7, and pushed forward the reality of passing this important school tax bill.*

## Elimination of school property taxes

**On Nov. 7, the voters of Pennsylvania unanimously passed the Homestead Tax Referendum.**

**This historic passage has now opened up the reality of real tax reform in Pennsylvania and the opportunity to again run H.B./S.B. 76 which only lost by one vote back in 2015.**

## Senior Fair 2017 a huge success

A special thanks to the district staff and Harrisburg staff for all of their work at our annual Senior Fair which was held at the Dunmore Senior Center in October.

There are so many great programs and opportunities for our seniors and this event was a fun, free way to enable the more than 150 people who attended to gain access to services they are entitled to and should be receiving. The event featured more than two dozen nonprofit organizations, state and local government agencies and others offering information and services geared toward older adults.

Thanks to all of the vendors and the PA Taxpayers Cyber Coalition for their involvement. During a break out session, more than 100 seniors listened as I **discussed H.B./S.B. 76, the elimination of school property taxes.** Taxing our property to fund schools in Pennsylvania is not only outdated, it has become dangerous to so many citizens who have done nothing but work hard, raise families and contribute to their community.

Flu vaccines were also available, as well as door prizes and free refreshments. Be on the lookout for my 2018 Senior Fair next fall!

## H.B./S.B. 76 is 'Good for Teachers, Good for Schools'

The elimination of school property taxes would provide a stable and predictable revenue stream that's broad based.

All taxpayers would be treated the same and not just homeowners would be footing the bill.

The property tax system is unsustainable and puts our schools, our students and our teachers at risk. In the first year of school property tax elimination almost 600 million "new" dollars would come into the educational system, and all revenue would be dedicated only to our school systems. Additional school funding would increase year after year when school property taxes are eliminated, spending would increase ten-fold and more money would be dedicated to the school systems.

This legislation is a winner across the board.

# Deadline near for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

The deadline to apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is Dec. 31.

Applications are available at my district offices for eligible residents to claim rebates on property taxes or rent paid in 2016, and my staff is ready to help!

The rebate 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 is excluded and the maximum standard rebate is \$650.

Claimants must reapply for rebates every year because rebates are based on annual income and property taxes or rent paid annually. Spouses, personal representatives or estates may file rebate claims on behalf of deceased claimants who lived at least one day in 2016 and met all other eligibility criteria.

Please ignore offers to assist with filing the application for a fee. My office provides help for FREE and the Revenue Department does not charge a fee to process your application.

Applications also are available online at [www.revenue.pa.gov](http://www.revenue.pa.gov) or by calling 1-888-222-9190.

## Heating aid via LIHEAP now available

The 2017-18 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program – LIHEAP – is open and accepting applications for heating assistance grants.

LIHEAP offers cash grants of \$200 to \$1,000 that are sent directly to the utility company to defray heating costs for eligible households, and crisis benefits of \$25 to \$500 for households in immediate danger of being without heat, from such emergency situations as broken heating equipment or leaking lines, lack of fuel or utility service termination.

We have LIHEAP applications available at my local offices. We also can help you file the application!

Besides my offices, LIHEAP information is available by:

- Contacting the Lackawanna County Assistance Office, located at Room 200 in the Scranton State Office Building, 100 Lackawanna Avenue or by phone at 570-963-4842;
- Calling the statewide LIHEAP Client Helpline at 1-866-857-7095; or
- Applying online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).

The state Department of Human Services, which administers the federally funded program, mailed applications or information to people who received LIHEAP last season.

This season's income guidelines for both LIHEAP cash and crisis grants are \$18,090 for an individual and \$24,360 for couples, and increases for each additional person in the household.

## Monthly outreach for Medicare, veterans issues

Older residents with questions about Medicare or health insurance coverage are helped during the monthly outreach at my Dunmore office.

An APPRISE representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Aging helps constituents with questions about Medicare, Medicare Advantage plans, Medigap plans, Medicare drug plans, PACE/PACENET prescription-drug coverage and various low-income assistance programs, such as the Medicare Savings Program and Extra Help.

The local APPRISE program is sponsored by the Voluntary Action Center and is funded by the Lackawanna County Area Agency on Aging.

Area veterans can take part in a monthly support program that alternates between my Dunmore and Eynon offices.

A representative of the American Legion provides information on services available to veterans and their families including retirement, benefits and more. Legion membership is not required to take advantage of the help, but anyone interested is recommended to schedule an appointment through my office.

Pennsylvania has a number of programs and services available to help veterans and their families. A complete list of programs and eligibility requirements, as well as the appropriate applications and forms, are available online.

As always, if you have questions on senior or veterans issues, or any state-related matter, please feel free to reach out to my Dunmore office at 570-342-2710 or my Eynon office at 570-876-1111.

## Stay connected by email

You can sign up to receive my email alerts by visiting my website at [www.pahouse.com/Haggerty](http://www.pahouse.com/Haggerty), clicking "Contact" at the top of the main page, then "Sign Up for Emails" before filling out the form and leaving the box checked.



Signing up will allow you to receive notices about important issues that matter to you, including:

- ✓ News and events in the district;
- ✓ Updates on legislation;
- ✓ Other government-related information.



*In June, Rep. Haggerty met with Olyphant Borough Manager C.J. Mustacchio and Blakely Borough Manager Thomas Wascura in Harrisburg to discuss the negative impacts of House Bill 1405. Olyphant and Blakely use revenue generated from selling electricity to keep taxes low and provide services to residents. Haggerty is fighting against the potential tax hikes and reduced services including garbage and recycling, road maintenance and police staffing that area residents could see if this bill passes without a change to the bill's language. To see a short video about this meeting, please visit his website [www.pahouse.com/Haggerty](http://www.pahouse.com/Haggerty) and scroll through the Videos section.*

## Opioid Symposium at Olyphant satellite office



*Joining Rep. Haggerty on the panel were student James McKane, Ricardo Horn, Lackawanna County Judge Thomas Munley, Lackawanna County District Attorney Shane Scanlon and business owner and community activist Thomas Depietro. A special thanks to Lori (Tomassoni) Lewis, who lost her son Christopher to this horrible disease and her sisters Maria and Gina who worked closely with Haggerty's office to put this important event together.*

## Did you know?

Under H.B.76/S.B. 76, which would eliminate school property taxes, newspapers would be taxed.



## Did you know?

Rep. Haggerty is the only current legislator from either the Pennsylvania General Assembly or U.S. Congress from Lackawanna County to serve in the military. He became a United States Marine on March 28, 1997, finishing first in his platoon during the physical fitness portion of his training.



## Haggerty's office returns more than \$300,000 to constituents

My office helps to run a program through the Pennsylvania Treasurer's Office called unclaimed property.

There is currently more than \$2.3 billion in this program that is owed to residents of the state.

There are a variety of reasons why people are entitled to this money, and all it takes to see if you are on the list is a visit to any of our district offices.



*Rep. Haggerty's office helped Joe Caterina of Peckville to acquire money that he was unaware was being held as unclaimed property by the state Treasurer's Office.*





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*As a member of the House Game and Fisheries Committee, Rep. Haggerty is at the forefront of discussions regarding sportsmen's issues. One idea that could come before the committee is whether to allow Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania. If you have an opinion on Sunday hunting, please call Haggerty's office and let him know your thoughts on the issue.*



*Rep. Haggerty's office helped Archbald Borough's Hurricane Harvey relief effort, coordinated by Mayor Shirley Barrett and Councilwoman Erin Owen, that led to a full truckload of supplies being donated to help victims of the Texas storm.*



*Rep. Haggerty standing up for our local nurses.*