



State Representative Ed Gainey

Serving the 24th District

Wilkinsburg, Homewood, East Liberty, East Hills, Lincoln-Lemington, Larimer, North Point Breeze, Highland Park, Garfield and parts of Point Breeze and Stanton Heights

Spring 2018

Here To Serve You

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Committee Assignments:

- Appropriations
- Education
- Health
- Insurance
- Transportation

Memberships:

- Allegheny County Delegation
- At Risk Children & Families Caucus
- Early Childhood Education Caucus
- LGBT Equality Caucus
- PA HOPE Caucus, Co-Chairman
- PA Legislative Black Caucus
- PA SAFE Caucus
- Steel Caucus
- Women's Health Caucus

PA HOPE Caucus:

Website: www.pahopecaucus.com

Twitter: @PAHOPECaucus

Facebook: /PAHOPECaucus

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Reminder: Patients are allowed to opt out of opioid prescriptions



In January, Gov. Tom Wolf declared the opioid crisis an emergency in the state of Pennsylvania. I fully support and applaud the governor. The epidemic is a serious one that affects thousands of families living in the commonwealth.

In 2016, I introduced House Bill 2335, the Pennsylvania Patient Non-Opioid Directive, to allow patients who are concerned about taking opioids (such as oxycodone, Vicodin or morphine), to sign a voluntary non-opioid notice to deny opioid treatment. Language from my bill became law as Act 125 of 2016. It is now an option available for both medical and dental care procedures. Additionally, the bill requires the licensing board of a health care practitioner to implement "a safe prescription of a controlled substance." The two-page medical form is now available through the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

As the co-chairman of the legislative PA HOPE (Heroin, Opioid Prevention and Education) Caucus, I want you to know that your state legislators and I are serious about working together to make sure every Pennsylvanian has access to substance abuse treatment and prevention. If you or someone you know needs help, call 1-800-662-HELP.

Reforming life sentences

I often think about all of the young people who have made mistakes as kids and end up paying for them when they go to jail for life as adults. We need to help our young people and provide them with second opportunities in life as they become adults. I believe in rehabilitation and that felony non-violent convictions should be expunged.

That is why I authored legislation, House Bill 191, which calls for an expungement for non-violent felony convictions, provided certain conditions are met.

Parameters for eligibility for expungement would include having a clean record for 10 years after prior conviction and subsequent release from incarceration; consistent growing of gainful employment, education, housing and treatment (if needed); and having paid or entered into a payment plan accepted by the court for restitution resulting from a prior conviction.

Ban on rapid firearms

When Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Montgomery, and Rep. Dom Costa, D-Allegheny, introduced House Bill 1872, which would update the state's definition of offensive weapons to include "multi-burst trigger activators," I decided to co-sponsor the legislation.

Multi-burst trigger activators are manual or power-driven trigger activating devices that, when attached to a semiautomatic firearm, can increase the rate of fire. This type of weapon was used in the deadly Las Vegas massacre that occurred in October 2017.

These weapons are dangerous and should be added to the list of already banned weapons that include machine guns, sawed-off shotguns and grenades. Gun violence is a serious problem within our district, the state and across the nation. I am committed to lowering violence in our communities.



It was my pleasure to meet with older constituents during the 2017 Senior Fair that was held for the fifth year on Sept. 6, 2017 at the Pittsburgh Coliseum, 7310 Frankstown Ave. We were able to provide free health screenings, information and entertainment to approximately 600 residents. I also want to personally thank the local, county and state agencies who were in attendance.



The fourth annual Book Bag Drive was held last August and was an overwhelming success thanks to volunteers and vendors who helped to organize the event. During the drive, we were able to provide book bag donations, free haircuts and hair styles, and hand out important information to families.

Resolution recognizes November 2017 as Food Insecurity Month

Last year Rep. Jake Wheatley, D-Allegheny, and I introduced House Resolution 433, to highlight the importance of food insecurity as a serious issue in Pennsylvania. The resolution was adopted and designated November 2017 as Food Insecurity Month.

The issue is important to me because food insecurity is a real issue across the commonwealth from our more urban areas, to even the suburban and rural ones. A lack of healthy choices and financial means can lead families to opt for more fatty foods and, moreover, can cause diet-related diseases and poor educational outcomes.

During the month of June, Wheatley and I went without eating or drinking anything from sunrise to sunset, participating in a Hunger Challenge. We logged our approximate cost of the daily sustenance we went without and later donated that amount to hunger relief organizations in our respective districts.

If you can, I urge you to help your neighbors by donating or supporting through charitable giving, volunteering, or advocacy efforts. There is much work to be done in order to increase support to our food banks and pantries. Every little bit counts!

Revitalizing Pittsburgh's Homewood neighborhood



Three years ago, I wrote a letter of support for Bridgeway Capital Inc. to receive funds from the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP), to complete the 7800 Susquehanna Street Project in the Homewood section of Pittsburgh.

I'm happy to report that in 2017 it was announced that \$500,000 was awarded for the project to improve the physical and economic conditions of the Homewood neighborhood. Bridgeway will use the funding to remove existing blighted structures and create a multi-faced, community-centric development site that will help to enhance the physical condition of the property. It is my hope that businesses and other entities that occupy the building will create good jobs and new opportunities for residents living in and around that community.

The 7800 Susquehanna Street Project is a gem and located in one of Pittsburgh's most important and historic neighborhoods. I look forward to more investments like this throughout our district in the future. RACP projects are state-funded and cannot obtain primary funding under other state programs.

Supporting the #MeToo movement

Over a decade ago Tarana Burke founded the #MeToo movement to help survivors of sexual violence and to provide them with a voice. Brave women continue to come forward to share their experiences. When state Rep. Leanne Krueger-Braneky, D-Delaware, created the #MeToo PA General Assembly Act, I did not hesitate to support the legislation.

House Bill 1965, similar to the one drafted in the U.S. House of Representatives, would end taxpayer-funded bailouts for elected officials who have harassed employees, create an independent office to investigate complaints and ban non-disclosure agreements that mask the names of legislators who harass, among other things.

Gainey: Abortion is a choice for a mother, not lawmakers

When it comes to abortion, I believe it is a woman's right to choose and decide what is best for her body. That type of decision is a personal one, one that needs to be made by a woman, her doctor and her spiritual being or counselor.

I voted against Senate Bill 3, which would have outlawed abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy instead of the 24 weeks under current law. Furthermore, I was against the legislation because there were no exceptions made for victims of rape or incest. I applaud Gov. Tom Wolf for vetoing the bill.

The General Assembly should not restrict the rights of people and their choices. I will always fight for a woman's right to make decisions about her own body. I honor and respect that. We cannot restrict the right of women to choose what they want to do. We cannot continue to make laws that govern every person in America, because every family's circumstances are different.

Again, I want to empower and support women and allow them to have a choice over their voices, bodies and lives.



Information on the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

For residents living in the commonwealth who are 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older and people with disabilities 18 or older, I want to remind you that the deadline to submit an application to the 2017 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is June 30, 2018.

In addition to age requirements, the income limit is \$35,000 for a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and half of the income from Social Security is excluded. Spouses, personal representatives or estates may also file rebate claims on behalf of claimants who lived at least one day in 2017 and meet all other eligibility requirements, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue.

For more information about the program, call 1 (888) 222-9190 or visit the Department of Revenue district offices, local area agencies on aging, senior centers or my office for application forms and assistance.



Cannabis reform is needed now

In January, I participated in a rally at the Capitol in support of marijuana reform. It is imperative that we break down the myths regarding the usage of the drug and provide support to those who may have a problem, just like we've done with the opioid epidemic.

I've introduced legislation, House Bill 195, which would decriminalize the possession of small amounts of marijuana, moving it from a misdemeanor to a summary offense.

Misdemeanor convictions carry lifelong consequences and can hinder a person from employment opportunities, public housing and even educational loan eligibility.

Please join me in spreading this message in bettering our cannabis laws and breaking down stereotypes within our communities.





State Representative

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24th Legislative District

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LEGISLATION I'VE INTRODUCED

Bills:

- **H.B. 1982** – Updates to the PA Worker's Compensation Act would revise outdated information and provide eligibility of Workers' Compensation death benefits in the event of remarriage by a widower or widow of a first responder.
- **H.B. 1923** – Would require dispensers of veterinary medicine to submit information to the Achieving Better Care – Monitoring All Prescriptions Program regarding controlled substances that are prescribed. This legislation is meant to help curb pet owners who "vet shop," to secure prescription opioids to feed their addictions.
- **H.B. 197** – Patient Comfort and Palliative Care (re-introduction of former H.B. 630 during the 2015-16 session). This would establish a Bill of Rights for Palliative Care and Pain Management, including the right for terminally ill patients to be informed of all available options related to terminal care.
- **H.B. 193** – Automatic Voter Registration and Voter ID legislation, which would register all eligible voters with provisions to opt out.
- **H.B. 194** – Assault Weapons Ban, which would prohibit the possession, purchase, transfer, use or manufacture of an assault weapon.
- **H.B. 192** – Nursing Home Accountability Act, which would implement a living wage accreditation program for long-term nursing facilities, among other changes.
- **H.B. 190** – Would create a program within the Department of Human Services for bulk prescription drug purchases.
- **H.B. 196** – Would create a statewide needle exchange in Pennsylvania.
- **H.B. 195** – Small Amounts of Marijuana Legislation, would grade possession as a summary offense and not a misdemeanor.



Resolutions:

- **H.R. 511** – Sept. 25, 2017 was designated as a "Day of Remembrance for Murdered Victims."
- **H.R. 567** – Would direct the Joint State Government Commission to establish an advisory committee to conduct an ongoing study on the legalization/ decriminalization of marijuana.
- **H.R. 25** – Recognized "Martin Luther King Jr. Week of Remembrance," from Jan. 15-22, 2017.

Medical marijuana program up and running

I am pleased to share information regarding the implementation of the Medical Marijuana Act. The Medical Marijuana Program was signed into law by Gov. Tom Wolf in April 2016.

Dr. Rachel L. Levine, the state's acting secretary of Health and physician general, announced late last year that physicians, patients, and caregivers can now register to participate in the program.

Since December, nearly 17,000 patients have registered to

participate in the medical marijuana program by December, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

Additionally, 708 physicians have registered, and of those, 376 have completed training to become certified practitioners. Patients who have serious health conditions now have access to medical marijuana.

For a list of serious medical conditions defined in the Act or for more information, visit: www.medicalmarijuana.pa.gov.