



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Gerald Mullery

Winter 2018

119th Legislative District

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Committees: Education • Game & Fisheries • Health • Judiciary • Labor & Industry

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Ice Pond Dam project awarded \$60,000 grant

Rice Township was awarded a \$60,000 state grant to help bring the Ice Pond Dam into compliance with environmental standards.

It's always nice when I'm able to help municipal officials secure financial assistance from state agencies, especially for worthwhile projects like this one in Rice Township.

The funding was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

"The project on the dam has spanned two years and most recently had to deal with the Northern Cricket Frog, adding about \$60,000 to the overall cost. These funds will allow us to complete the project without endangering the frogs and without breaking the backs of our taxpayers," said Rice Township Board of Supervisors Chairman Robert Pipich, who thanked Mullery for his efforts to make the grant happen.

"Representative Mullery is a great friend to the township and our residents, and I know that he worked behind the scenes tirelessly to get these funds for this project."



Construction remains targeted to start around March 1, weather permitting.

Thousands of jobs expected off new South Valley Parkway

Several thousand jobs are expected to be created on the former mine-scarred and reclaimed Earth Conservancy lands that are being converted into prime commercial zones in Hanover Township and Nanticoke.

The January announcement by NorthPoint Development that Adidas and Patagonia have leased under-construction warehouse structures near the Chewy.com facility in what will be called the Hanover Ridge Trade Center is great news for the area's economy.

The development is located off the new South Valley Parkway that will link the commerce and communities of Wilkes-Barre, Hanover, Nanticoke and Hanover Township.

Sen. John Yudichak and I worked together to spur construction of the new highway and associated economic development.

This is a multi-year project that has leveraged millions of dollars in private investment to create thousands of jobs and bring millions of dollars into the local economy.

I look forward to seeing the project expand even more in the coming years.



It was my honor to present Tyler Skoniecki with a House citation recognizing his advancement to Eagle Scout. His project at West Side Park has benefited our entire community. Congrats Tyler!

The fight for family-sustaining jobs

In late January, I joined Sen. John Yudichak and others in celebrating the one-year anniversary of learning that our local State Correctional Institutions would remain open and continue to provide hundreds of family-sustaining jobs.

As you probably know, SCI Retreat, SCI Frackville, SCI Waymart were targeted for potential closure by the state in early 2017. It caught everyone by surprise, but we worked together with corrections officers and their families, as well as local, county and state officials from both parties to make the case to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and Gov. Tom Wolf that keeping these prisons open was extremely important to our communities and our area economy.

For SCI-Retreat alone, we're talking 400 jobs, annual economic input of \$57.3 million, \$1.6 million in tax funding to Greater Nanticoke Area School District, \$400,000 in tax dollars to Newport Township and \$250,000 to Luzerne County.

The state Senate held public hearings in Harrisburg, so all involved from the affected prisons could offer their input and ultimately the state decided not to close any of the three local prisons, instead choosing an older one in the western part of the state.

So where do we go from here and how do we keep from being blindsided by another announcement like this?

I am a strong supporter of Senate Bill 748 – the Public Safety Facilities Act -- legislation that would protect our law enforcement networks and the communities they serve by ensuring responsible notice and consideration of any proposed closure of State Correctional Institutions or State Police Barracks.



Senator John Yudichak and I commemorated the anniversary of Governor Tom Wolf's decision to keep our local State Correctional Institutions open and called for support of Senate Bill 748.

Specifically, this legislation would:

- Establish a clear list of stakeholders who must be notified at least one year before a proposed closure is intended to occur;
- Require the overseeing state agency to gather information from stakeholders, hold at least one public hearing at least six months before any closure, and provide a written report detailing their findings; and
- Permit the overseeing state agency to decide whether a facility may be closed, but only after strategies are developed to minimize the impact on our workforce, local and regional economies, and the delivery of law enforcement and public services.

Mullery named to Labor Committee



In late October, I was appointed to the House Labor and Industry Committee.

This committee has oversight on topics such as minimum wage, workers' compensation, unemployment compensation, building and construction codes, workplace health and safety. I look forward to learning more about these important issues and working with my colleagues on them and many others.

In making the appointment, House Democratic Leader Frank Dermody said: "Representative Mullery has a sincere commitment to working men and women, such as when he went to bat to stop the state prison at Retreat from being closed. Helping workers throughout the state is a central concern for us and I know he will do a great job on this committee so that more Pennsylvanians can find great jobs."

Since the 2017-18 session began, I have served on the House Education, Game and Fisheries, Health and Judiciary committees.

\$11 million from Pennvest benefits Hazleton sewer authority

I'm pleased to report that the Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority will receive \$11.4 million in funding from the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority.

A Pennvest grant of \$8.99 million was secured for the project, while \$2.42 million will come from a low-interest loan. The project is expected to create 20 construction jobs in the region.

The \$11.4 million in funding will help the GHJSA complete its Sewage Sludge Incinerator Project. The purpose of the project is to provide a long-term disposal method for the authority's sewage sludge, which is a by-product of wastewater treatment. The incinerator will provide a greater than 90 percent reduction of waste material currently being sent to landfills for disposal.

It is expected that several businesses will be able to expand their operations and hire additional employees. A total of over 300 jobs will be created and retained through this project with over \$28 million invested locally.

"This funding from Pennvest will help us to complete this crucial project and allows us to re-work the projections on a pending rate increase resulting in a lower increase for our 19,500 customers," said Christopher Carsia, GHJSA Director of Operations. "On behalf of our Board of Directors, I personally want to thank our local legislators for helping us to secure this funding."

Story does not define the great people of Nanticoke

In December, the Harrisburg Patriot-News newspaper published a story as part of its coverage of the opioid crisis facing the commonwealth and our entire country. I felt that the piece took an unnecessary shot at the hardworking people and good businesses of Nanticoke and I responded with a Letter to the Editor that was published soon after I sent it. You can read my response below.

This is how Nanticoke was described in a recent Penn Live story about the opioid addiction problem facing towns large and small across our nation: "If you were to knock on people's doors here, you will get all old people and addicts. That's it. That's what you get." Obviously, the reporters didn't knock on too many doors in our community.

If they would have knocked on an East Union Street door, they would have met a physician who developed a way to feed patients without having to go through their digestive systems. His technology has saved literally millions of lives.

If they ventured over to West Ridge Street to knock on doors, they would have met the family of a recent high school graduate currently enrolled in the United States Military Academy at West Point.

They could have knocked on the Slope Street door of our mayor, who is currently battling an aggressive acute myeloid leukemia. He would have told them of the hundreds upon hundreds of Nanticokeans who have supported him and given him hope during his ordeal.

They were welcome to knock on the Center Street door at the House of Rhone on Thanksgiving morning, where they would have been welcomed with open arms to help prepare and deliver hundreds of meals to the less fortunate in our town and surrounding communities. There, they would have been joined by professionals, blue collar workers, retirees and students of all ages volunteering to better our area.

I would have ushered them to a South Walnut Street home where they could have met a family who is near single-handedly working to reform prison safety so that our corrections officers can return home safely after protecting our communities.

They could have knocked on an East Main Street door where they would have met students training in a state-of-the-art medical facility so they could later provide dental, emergency medical service, surgical and respiratory care for people throughout our region.

If they would have spent any time in Nanticoke, the doors they approached would have been answered by police officers, loving families, doctors, lawyers, veterans, school teachers, community activists, fellow reporters, students, corrections officers, public servants, doting grandparents and so much more than the "old" and "addicts."

I do not deny that Nanticoke, like virtually every other city its size, is experiencing a problem with drug use. But that does not define our community. We are working to help those addicted and educate those who are not. I am confident the great people of Nanticoke will persevere through this crisis and our city will remain a great place to live, work and raise a family.



IBEW Local 163 member Ken Matulewski and I celebrated the opening of the new training center.

IBEW building renovation in Nanticoke

If you didn't know, there's a great story happening in Nanticoke about the transformation of a potential eyesore into a facility training and educating men and women to access family-sustaining jobs.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union 163 and Penn-Del-Jersey chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association turned the former PJP School in Nanticoke into a training center for electricians.

Special thanks to John Olejnik and John Nadolny of Local 163, Senator John Yudichak and Mayor Richard Wiaterowski for assisting and supporting this project.

Before opening the new training center, IBEW rented space from Luzerne County Community College.

Apprentices in the program receive technical training as well on-the-job paid training with contractors.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of electricians is projected to grow 9 percent over the next eight years. As homes and businesses require more wiring, more electricians will be needed.

For more information, call 570-258-2665.



I would like to thank Attorney Ferris Webby, Assistant District Attorney Sam Sanguedolce, District Attorney Stefanie Salavantis and Sheriff Brian Szumski for helping with our 2nd Amendment Gun Rights Seminar in November. Also, thank you to everyone who came out for the presentation. Finally, special thanks to the Hazle Township Supervisors for use of the Authority Building.



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Save the date! **FREE Shredding Event**

10 a.m. to Noon

Saturday, May 19

Upper parking lot of
John S. Fine High School

Kosciuszko Street, Nanticoke

This event is only for residential documents.
Business documents will not be accepted.

Documents will be shredded on site.

This is a great opportunity to protect yourself from identity theft by properly disposing of documents that contain personal information such as Social Security numbers or bank or credit card account numbers. Types of old documents you may no longer need can include:

- Credit card applications
- Canceled or unused checks
- Insurance and income tax records
- Pension information



Please do not bring plastics, such as page protectors, binders and checkbook covers, or metals, such as large spring clips, wire from wire-bound notebooks and file folders with metal prongs in material to be recycled.

For more information, please call my Nanticoke office at 570-740-7031.



JoAnn Bucher has been a truly professional public servant for the people of the 119th Legislative District for over a decade. If you've ever visited my office in the Capitol, I'm sure Jo has greeted you and made you feel at home. I wish Jo much enjoyment in her retirement. I'm pleased to welcome Paola Zamorano as my new legislative assistant in Harrisburg.



I was happy to celebrate in the grand opening and ribbon cutting at the Hanover Township Fire Headquarters. Our firefighters deserve the very best because that is what they provide when duty calls. I was proud to work with my legislative colleagues to secure a \$3 million state loan for the building.