



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Scott Conklin

SUMMER 2018
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77TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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State College: 301 S. Allen St., Suite 102 • State College, PA 16801 • (814) 238-5477 • Fax: (814) 863-3898

Dear Friend,

This newsletter contains valuable information for senior citizens living in Centre County. Please take a minute of your time and read about the many state services that are available to you, such as the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, and information about telephone scams and ways you can report cases of elder fraud and abuse. There's also information about other discounts you may be eligible for and support services that may be helpful to you.

My constituent service offices are always available to serve you and have a variety of informational booklets, brochures and other publications on state programs. They are located at 301 S. Allen St., Suite 102, State College, PA 16801; or in the Philipsburg office, 209 E. Presqueisle St. You can also call the State College office at 814-238-5477 or the Philipsburg office at 814-342-4872.

In addition to stopping by my office, you also can reach me via email by visiting my website at www.pahouse.com/conklin and clicking "Contact my office" in the top right corner.

Sincerely,

State Rep. Scott Conklin

USE CAUTION AND DON'T BECOME A VICTIM

Unfortunately, in today's world, criminals are targeting older residents at an alarming rate.

With one of the largest U.S. populations of older citizens living in our state, I wanted to share information that can help lessen the opportunity for crimes and provide access to information for getting help should the need, unfortunately, arise.

Report fraud to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Elder Abuse Helpline

Pennsylvania has the third-highest percentage of older residents in the United States with nearly 2 million people 65 or older.

Senior citizens are favored targets for many kinds of consumer fraud, including identity theft, charities, telemarketing and sweepstakes fraud.

Because various state agencies, local law enforcement, criminal investigators and prosecutors work together to resolve cases of elder victimization, it may be difficult to know where to report certain elder abuse concerns.

You may call the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Elder Abuse Helpline tollfree at 1-866-623-2137. Well-trained staff will provide help.

Learn to Avoid Telemarketing Scams

Every day across the United States, fraudulent telephone scams are at work. Losses are estimated at \$40 billion a year and the costs are rising. Callers often target older Pennsylvanians who have accumulated savings for retirement. How can you avoid being a victim of these scams?

- Ask for printed material through the mail that includes the company's name, address, phone and charity registration number or business registration number.
- 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.



Support for Seniors and Caregivers

Across our state, many older adults and extended family members are now providing care for their parents. In many cases, grandparents are now also providing care and raising their grandchildren.

I hope the following information can offer assistance to those caregivers who are facing unique challenges.

Grandparents raising grandchildren

Kinship caregivers – grandparents and other relatives raising children younger than 18 – face a variety of emotional, legal and financial challenges. The National Family Caregiver Support Program helps to relieve the



caregiver burden by offering qualified primary caregivers up to \$200 per month in reimbursements for approved out-of-pocket expenses. Under special circumstances, there is a potential to receive up to \$500 per month in approved reimbursements. For those qualified, the program also provides up to \$2,000 in pre-approved reimbursements to modify a home or purchase assistive devices or technologies.

To be eligible, you must be 55 or older and be the primary caregiver for children younger than 18 who are relatives and whose parents do not live in the home. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for additional information on eligibility and to apply for the program. You may also visit the Aging Department website at www.aging.pa.gov for more information about programs to help kinship caregivers.

Pennsylvania Caregiver Support Program

The Pennsylvania Caregiver Support Program provides reimbursement to qualified primary caregivers for qualified expenses.

Qualified primary caregivers may receive up to \$200 per month in reimbursements for approved out-of-pocket expenses. Under special circumstances, they may receive up to \$500 a month in approved reimbursements. If qualified, the program also provides up to \$2,000 in pre-approved reimbursements to modify a home or purchase assistive devices or technologies.

To be eligible, you must be the primary caregiver of an adult 60 or older or an adult with chronic dementia and meet income guidelines. Primary caregivers for an individual between the ages of 19 and 59 with a disability, and relatives providing care for minor children, may also qualify for the program.



Don't forget your senior discount!

Retail stores and restaurants aren't the only places offering valuable discounts to seniors these days!

The commonwealth provides discounts to seniors for a variety of state items, ranging from driver services to recreational activities. Here are just a few that you should take advantage of:

Hunting and fishing licenses



Some of the best experiences our state has to offer happen in the great outdoors. The state Fish and Boat Commission and the state Game Commission make it a little easier on the wallet for seniors to fish and hunt.

People 65 or older may purchase yearly hunting and fishing licenses at reduced rates of \$13.90 for a hunting license and \$11.90 for a fishing license. Lifetime licenses are also available at \$51.90 for hunting or fishing.

You can find more information on how to purchase a fishing license online, the latest stocking guides, fishing information in your region, and much more by visiting the Fish and Boat Commission's website at www.fishandboat.com. Game news, state game lands maps, and other helpful resources are also available on the Pennsylvania Game Commission's website, www.pgc.pa.gov.

Car registrations

Retirees with annual incomes up to \$19,200 can register their vehicles for an annual fee of \$10, instead of the usual fee. The necessary forms are available in my constituent service offices.



PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE DEADLINE EXTENDED

The deadline to apply for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2017 under the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program **has been extended to Dec. 31, 2018.**

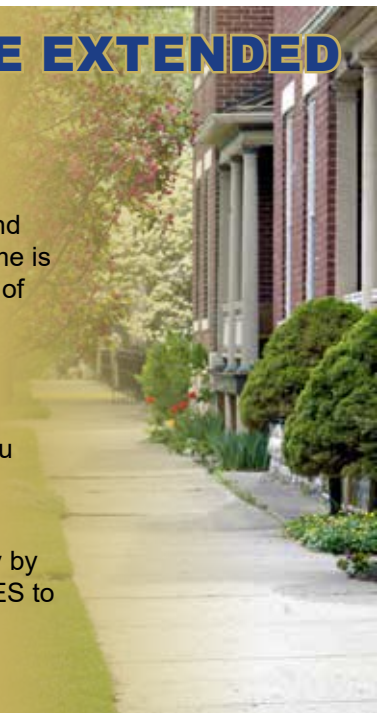
The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. For purposes of calculating income, half of Social Security income is excluded. Spouses, 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 criteria.

The maximum standard rebate is \$650, although supplemental rebates for certain qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975.

You can pick up an application at my office. It costs nothing to apply, and my staff can help you determine if you're eligible and fill out the paperwork. **Please bring proof of local (county, borough and school) property taxes and proof of income, such as a 1099 form.**

If you've already applied for a rebate, you can check the status online at www.revenue.pa.gov by clicking on the "Where's My Property Tax/Rent Rebate?" link. You can also call 1-888-PATAXES to check the status of your rebate.

If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to check it out and see if you're eligible!



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection – Investigates consumer complaints. Call **1-800-441-2555**.



Attorney General's Health Care Section – Helps with disputes with health insurance companies or medical providers. Call **1-877-888-4877**.

Attorney General's Senior Crime Prevention University – Teaches seniors how to avoid becoming a crime or abuse victim. If you would like to attend a Senior Crime Prevention University Program, or have your group host a presentation, please call **717-787-9716**.

Pa. Legal Services – Provides listings, by county, of the organizations that provide free or discounted legal services for individuals with low and moderate incomes. Call **1-800-322-7572**, or visit the website at www.palegalaid.net.

PennSERVE – Promotes volunteering and community service throughout Pennsylvania for people of all ages and levels of physical ability. Call **717-787-1971** or **866-6-SERVE-U (866-673-7838)** or email pennserve@pa.gov.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many seniors hurt in their own homes become injured because of a fall.

Falls are the most common cause of injuries in older adults, including hip fractures and head traumas, and can increase the risk of early death or threaten seniors' ability to live independently in their own homes. Almost 50 percent of older adults who enter nursing homes do so because of a fall, and 71 percent of all injury-related hospitalizations of older adults are due to a fall.

Every 11 minutes a Pennsylvanian 65 or older is hospitalized for a fall, and every week approximately 23 seniors die from fall-related injuries.

To reduce the risk of falling, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends older adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic physical activity per week and engage in muscle-strengthening activities twice per week. In addition, older adults at risk of falling due to a recent fall or difficulty walking, should also engage in balance-training activities three or more days per week.

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging offers a "Healthy Steps" program to reduce the risk of falling. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for information about programs in your area.





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WEBSITE: www.pahouse.com/Conklin

Sign up for email updates at www.pahouse.com/Conklin by clicking on the envelope icon in the upper right corner.

MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Issues with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Inquiries about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Issues with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program problems or questions
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Information about federal, state and local government

Any state government-related matter!

