



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
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 133RD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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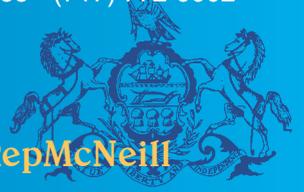
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ADDRESSING UNLAWFUL FIREWORKS USE

This year my offices, like the offices of my colleagues across the commonwealth, have noted a growing uptick in the number of residents calling to complain about fireworks. The heightened level of these unauthorized displays is adding to stress, upsetting pets, depriving many from sleep, negatively impacting our veterans with PTSD and, in our cities, posing a safety issue.

Our frontline workers, specifically those who are called upon to protect and serve – from our police departments to fire companies – have already seen an increase in demand for their services in our communities. As such, the added burden from pyrotechnics, now continuing well past the July 4th holiday, is not making their jobs any easier, or our streets any safer.

From accidents in cities like the Bronx to an incident in Scranton leading to the death of a teenager, fireworks are proving to bring more than just the intended joy and are now prompting an overwhelming cry for “something to be done.”

While fireworks are available for legal purchase by Pennsylvania residents, there are regulations and laws that limit where and when they can be used. Those who are caught violating existing use laws do face citations, but catching people using legally purchased fireworks *illegally* can prove to be a taxing and challenging nightly occurrence for law enforcement.

There are strict rules about where you can legally use the aerial fireworks that a new law made available in 2017. Pennsylvanians can purchase “consumer fireworks,” which contain up to 50 milligrams of explosive material. This includes firecrackers, Roman candles and bottle rockets.



Pennsylvania State Police restrictions include:

- You must be more than 150 feet away from any “occupied structure” – defined as “any structure, vehicle or place adapted for overnight accommodation” or business – whether any people are present there.
- You can’t set them off on public or private property without express permission of the owner.
- You can’t set them off from, within or toward a building or vehicle.
- You can’t set them off if you’re under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- And, keep in mind, municipalities may have regulations that differ from state or federal guidelines.



The fireworks are likely to continue, so too are efforts and conversations to find a balanced solution to address safety concerns that ensure our celebrations are mindful of the safety and well-being of others. Rest assured; I am working with my colleagues in Harrisburg to address this issue so that a balanced solution can be found.

Rep. Peter Schweyer, and I are co-authors of House Bill 2735, which would repeal the most recent changes to Act 43 and reinstate the provisions as they existed prior to the passage of Act 43, restricting sales to the purchase of novelty fireworks, such as sparklers, sprinklers and spinners. It’s important to note this legislation would not prohibit Pennsylvania residents from using novelty fireworks or enjoying display fireworks that are professionally set off at community events or in celebrations like the Fourth of July and other holidays.

Additionally, I’ve signed on as a co-sponsor of House Bill 2670, Rep. Robert Freeman’s legislation that will give municipalities more authority to regulate the use of fireworks, along with penalizing people who violate those regulations. There is no reason why our communities should feel like, as one person called it, “a war zone.”

On Feb. 4, the House unanimously adopted House Resolution 624, which I sponsored to direct the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study on the shortcomings of mental health services available to victims of sexual assault and rape in this commonwealth and how mental health services can be improved. It’s unacceptable that survivors of sexual assault and rape have trouble getting help. I’m thankful my colleagues have joined me and support the efforts to make mental health treatment more accessible and affordable for these brave individuals.

Local projects benefit from state funding



Rep. Jeanne McNeill's legislative district received several state grants in the first half of 2020. Below is a list of the projects receiving state funding that Rep. McNeill helped secure, totaling nearly \$2.3 million:

- **\$35,000** grant to advance science and technology education to Whitehall-Coplay School District.
- **\$61,516** in local fire department, EMS grants to be used toward repairing, building or renovating facilities. The money can also be applied toward the purchase of new equipment, training and certification of staff, or toward repayment of equipment purchases or facility building and maintenance. The following grants were awarded:
 - **\$13,152** – Eastern Salisbury Fire Ambulance and Rescue.
 - **\$12,604** – Fountain Hill Fire Department.
 - **\$11,509** – Han-Le-Co Volunteer Fire Co.
 - **\$12,194** – Hokendauqua Fire Co.
 - **\$12,057** – West Catasauqua Fire Company No. 1.
- **\$500,000** in school safety grants for the funding of a counseling psychologist and for mental health

and behavioral services, and for other security system programs that benefit the following:

- Catasauqua Area School District – **\$35,000**
- Whitehall-Coplay School District – **\$45,000**
- Bethlehem Area School District – **\$385,000**
- Salisbury Township School District – **\$35,000**
- **\$20,029** to Saint Elizabeth Catholic Church to acquire safety and security equipment or technology; safety and security training; threat awareness and response training; upgrades to existing structures; and/or safety and security planning.
- **\$17,300** state grant to Whitehall-Coplay School District to purchase computer equipment, such as laptops, tablets and internet hot spots, or to provide instructional materials, such as paper lessons and coursework.
- **\$263,000** in grant funding for children and family programs to benefit the following:
 - **\$191,386** to Valley Youth House Committee Inc. The funding will be used for cognitive behavioral intervention for trauma in the Whitehall-Coplay School District.

The program will help students in 4th through 12th grade who have experienced trauma and are showing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and behavioral problems.

- **\$72,265** to Diakon Child, Family & Community Ministries. The funding will be used to implement a positive parenting program to support families at risk for disruption and families working toward reunification.
- **\$10,038** grant to the Whitehall Active Community Center for assistance and activities to benefit older residents.
- **\$820,958** to the Lehigh Valley International Airport to construct a new TSA screening area.
- **\$563,933** awarded to Catasauqua Borough for the construction of new public streets and improvements for pedestrian and bicyclists in and around the former Crane Iron Works brownfield site.

Please keep in mind that state grants are awarded only to entities that apply for them. All local municipalities are encouraged to apply for the numerous grant opportunities that are provided by the state.

In March, I joined colleagues in Pittsburgh for Rep. Dan Miller's annual Disability Summit.



Historic Police Reforms Now Law

“Until our world decides that every human matters, that everyone has the right to food and safety and freedom and healthcare and equality, it is the obligation of those privileged to have food and safety and freedom and healthcare and equality to fight tirelessly for those who do not.” – L.R. Knost

In the wake of the unjust death of George Floyd in Minnesota, Gov. Wolf signed historic police reforms into law, answering the call to change policing policies and practices in our commonwealth.

These legislative efforts are important and long overdue. I was proud to join my colleagues in unanimously passing legislation in a historic response to the calls for equality, justice and accountability for those policing our neighborhoods. While these are important first steps, they are nonetheless important ones to ensure that all people receive equal treatment under the law – especially for members of Black and Brown communities.

The legislation, now law, includes the following:

- H.B. 1841 will require a hiring agency to review an applicant’s previous employment record before he or she can be hired. It also requires law enforcement agencies to keep records of the reason for a police officer’s separation from service. This includes criminal records, civil suits, and any other misconduct complaints against the officer.
- H.B. 1910 will require mandatory training to help law enforcement officers detect and report suspected cases of child abuse, training on interacting with individuals of diverse racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds, and training on the use of force and



I was pleased to work with colleagues to bring about swift and historic police reform.

de-escalation, as well as require post-traumatic stress disorder evaluations upon request by a law enforcement officer or his supervisor and within 30 days of an incident involving the use of lethal force.

It is my hope that these laws will be seen as the positive measures intended and be effective in addressing systemic racism. Accountability does matter, as does acknowledging the hardworking people we have protecting us each day. I’m confident that those who really look at these laws will see them as an enhancement to our current guidelines and a benefit to the entire commonwealth.

More info | www.2020census.gov

How to take the 2020 Census



Online



Phone



Mail

Why it matters

Federal funding

For local programs and organizations

Better planning

For roads, schools, healthcare and emergency services

Determines representation

In Congress and the state legislature

Helps businesses

Locate factories and stores, recruit employees and conduct market research

Shape your future
Your community, your voice

Census

The 2020 Census will provide a snapshot of our nation – how many we are, where we live, and so much more. The results of this once-a-decade count determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is also used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

Over the next decade, lawmakers, business owners and many others will use 2020 Census data to make critical decisions. The results will show where communities need new schools, new clinics, new roads and more services for families, older adults and children.

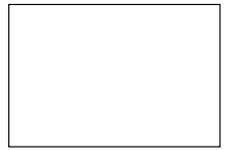
The results will also inform how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding are allocated to more than 100 services, including Medicaid, Head Start, block grants for community mental health services, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP.

I encourage everyone to participate if you have not already done so. The process is safe. Your answers are secure. And, the funding that our communities depend on is determined by everyone’s participation.

If you have questions or a state-related issue that my office can assist you with, please email RepMcNeill@pahouse.net or call (610) 266-1273.



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E-Waste Collection

Due to the overwhelming success of last year's event in Salisbury Township (16,963 pounds of e-waste collected), I have scheduled my next Electronic Recycling and Paper Shredding Event in the borough of Catasauqua for **Saturday, Sept. 19, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** My staff and I are still finalizing a location, and please keep in mind that the date is tentative based on the progress of mitigating the coronavirus. We will be in constant contact with the borough of Catasauqua as to whether we can safely hold the event.



This event will be open to residents of Catasauqua, Coplay and Hanover Township (Lehigh County). ID will be required to participate!



My office Can Help With:

- PACE (pharmaceutical assistance for qualified senior citizens)
- Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate forms (for qualified seniors)
- Information regarding PHEAA (PA Higher Education Assistance Agency)
- Information on PA's 529 College Savings Plans
- CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program)
- Information Obtaining birth or death certificates PennDOT problems or questions – including disability license plates and placards
- Questions or problems with any state agency
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Citations from the PA House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and important family milestones