



# State Representative Dan Miller

## THE STATE REPORT

Serving the 42nd Legislative District

Summer/Fall 2014

### Here To Serve You

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#### Committee Assignments:

Aging and Older Adult Services  
Children & Youth  
Policy and State Government

#### Caucuses:

At-Risk Children & Families  
Autism & Intellectual Disabilities  
Early Childhood Education  
Fire/EMS  
Government Reform  
LGBT Equality  
Steel

Sign up for my monthly  
updates by emailing me at  
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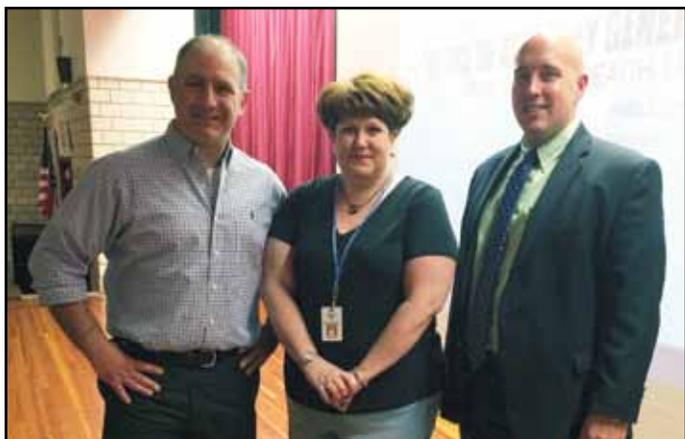
**LOOK INSIDE FOR:** Youth Health and Safety ● Fighting for Seniors  
● Partnering with Municipalities and School Boards ● Upcoming  
Events ● Prioritizing Disability and Mental Health Issues  
● Government Gift Reform ● Reapportionment Reminder

# Fighting for Seniors



*Reading with students at Crafton Children's Corner.*

## Youth Health and Safety



*Glad to partner with law enforcement and Mt. Lebanon PTA to keep our kids safe.*

We recently brought our Online Social Media Safety program to the students of Mellon Middle School. This program continues to be a priority for us given the ever-changing risk factors present on the Internet. This fall we will bring this program to Keystone Oaks High School and other sites throughout the district.

### Young Adults and the Law

Join us for a discussion with District Judge Blaise Larotonda on November 13th to talk about the rights, obligations, and legal consequences often associated with the transition to adulthood.

### Senior Bus Tour to Harrisburg

Join me and Senator Smith for a tour of our Capitol! Call my office at 412-343-3870 for details.

As a member of the House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee, most of my work this year has been on bills related to senior fraud and elder abuse. We have debated several initiatives that would create more stringent background checks for care facilities and limit the ways those employees may receive financial windfalls from residents. Other bills have looked to create stricter penalties for those who abuse the trust given to a power of attorney.

Such abuse is a multi-billion dollar problem and has hit many of our friends and neighbors throughout our district. Nationwide one in 30 individuals will be a victim of identity theft each year and seniors are targeted the most.

Continuing our efforts to keep you updated on the latest public safety issues, we have partnered with the Office of the Attorney General to create an updated presentation covering both the latest senior scams and the most successful ways to keep you and your resources safe from identity theft. Two more workshops have been scheduled in conjunction with Senator Matt Smith:

**August 5th at the Hillsdale Community Resources Center, 14444 Hillsdale Avenue in Dormont**

**August 19th at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Department Senior Luncheon at the Rec Center**

If you suspect that you or a loved one is a victim of fraud or abuse, call your local police department immediately.



*Holding another senior ID theft seminar with the Attorney General's Office.*



*Glad to stop in at the Primary Colors Art Guild's Spring Art Show in Dormont, which was an event to support local senior programming.*

# Prioritizing Disability and Mental Health

## Children and Youth Disability & Mental Health Summit Recap

Earlier this year my office was pleased to host this event that brought together service providers, schools, and government resources for a day-long summit at Beth El Congregation. We had hundreds of attendees, dozens of resource exhibitors, and 16 hours of programming on a variety of issues ranging from early intervention and school transition, to independent living and employment. I benefited personally from hearing firsthand from individuals with disabilities and their loved ones about the challenges embedded in the system and what needs to be done in order to increase independence and opportunity for all. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and we hope to offer this event again next March.



*Thank you to all the exhibitors and volunteers who helped make our Summit a big success!*

## Urging Congress to pass the ABLÉ Act



*Sen. Casey and I spoke on the ABLÉ Act at a press conference.*

Recently I introduced House Resolution 697 which urges Congress to pass Senator Bob Casey's Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. Senator Casey's bill would allow families to create tax-exempt savings accounts for their loved ones with special needs just as many currently do in relation to education planning and senior care. These accounts would help make sure that individuals with disabilities have greater access to appropriate housing, healthcare, transportation and other basic life needs. Thus far this bill has garnered widespread bipartisan support and in today's climate of shrinking state services, it could prove to be a financial game changer for many families.

## Adult Autism Study

As young people with autism transfer into the adult system they are often put on a waiting list for housing and community-based supports. There are currently thousands of people waiting for help, many in critical need. The Department of Public Welfare has recently estimated that the number of adults with autism in Pennsylvania will quadruple by 2020. Our underfunded system has a coming surge that will dwarf our current shortfalls. Accordingly, I have authored House Resolution 948 that is a bipartisan effort to coordinate available government resources and make recommendations as to the service levels and funding challenges that we face in dealing with this current and coming need.

## Ensuring People with Disabilities can become Taxpayers

I believe it is a moral and economic imperative that we help people with disabilities and mental health diagnoses reach their fullest level of independence. Accordingly, I have introduced House Bill 2405 which is a bipartisan bill aimed at providing greater support and opportunities for young adults as they transition into the workforce. Often with only minor accommodations, most people with a disability can offer valuable work in almost every environment. This bill designates the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) as the lead state agency for bridging the gap between school and work. Specifically, OVR would collaborate with officials of local education agencies to develop Individual Educational Plans for high school students, ensuring that job readiness skill training is included in such plans where appropriate. OVR would also facilitate the placement of students in internships, on-the-job training, and full- or part-time work in integrated settings. Additionally, this bill would ensure that state matching funds are allocated so that no federal dollars are left on the table since the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act authorizes a 4-to-1 federal match of state dollars invested in these programs.



*I hosted a shred event for constituents this spring.*

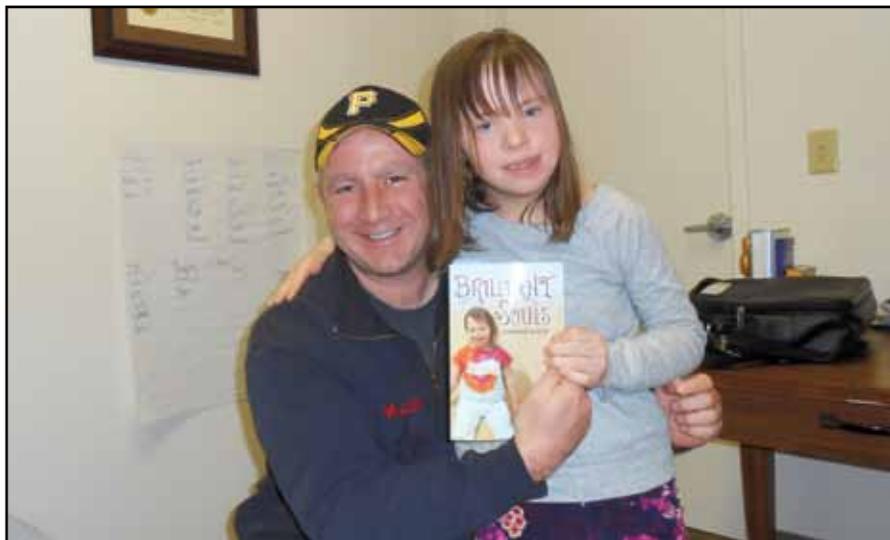
# Health Issues

## Mental Health Bed Registry, a needed tool

Decades ago Pennsylvania correctly determined that our state mental health system was antiquated to say the least, and leaders decided that keeping people at home with appropriate community-based supports was the more effective and humane way to go. Unfortunately it has become painfully clear now that the appropriate community-based supports have never materialized, nor been properly funded.

In today's system many individuals with mental health issues are forced to seek care at emergency rooms – at least temporarily – while they seek a bed at an inpatient mental health facility. Hospital staff then attempts to find an open bed at an appropriate facility. Depending upon a variety of factors, this could take a sizeable amount of time. This delay can often lead nowhere or at least not in time to help.

House Bill 2267 would mandate the creation of a statewide online, real-time mental health bed registry so that no one would be forced to return home after asking for help. Quite simply maintaining the status quo in our mental health system is not acceptable. This legislation has the bipartisan support of over 30 of my colleagues and I am optimistic that over the coming months we will have action in committee.



*Glad to have advocates of all ages come to speak with me on disability issues.*



*Glad to join with Senator Smith and Commissioner Fraasch in supporting the Ultraparty efforts to make playgrounds more accessible for all kids.*

## HB 2267: Mental Health Bed Registry

1 in 4  
Americans is estimated to have a mental health issue



35.7%

of PA adults considered their mental health "poor"

PA has an estimated:

110

HOSPITALS & CLINICS WITH INPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH BEDS

4,880

BEDS AVAILABLE IN THESE FACILITIES

36,000

AVERAGE ADMISSIONS EACH YEAR

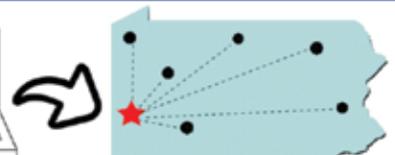


A person who needs mental health care can stay in an emergency room for a limited time, but if no bed opens up-- they can be sent back home



## Mental Health Bed Registry

creates an online, real-time, state-wide database so that hospital staff can locate an inpatient bed as quickly as someone would make a hotel reservation



- HB 2267 has 31 co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle
- HB 2267 has been referred to the House Human Services Committee

## HR 697: ABLE Act

People with disabilities may receive federal assistance as

long as they have less than **\$2000** in assets.



This forces individuals to **IMPOVERISH** themselves. They **CANNOT** save money to meet expenses that are excluded or inadequately covered by federal programs.

Under the ABLE Act, individuals could use funds for:

- |                     |           |                      |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Medical care        | Education | Assistive Technology |
| Employment training | Housing   | Transportation       |

Distributions made from this account would not qualify as income

- HR 697 has 20 co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle
- HR 697 unanimously passed the House Human Services Committee on 6/25/14

# Government Gift Reform

Shortly after my election, I joined the bipartisan, bicameral Government Reform Caucus. This unique group gets together regularly to share ideas about how to increase government accountability and change the culture in Harrisburg. Gift reform has been a common topic in our conversations.

Legislators in our state are currently allowed to take gifts. Assuming that gift is under \$250 in aggregate for the year, it does not have to be reported. Pennsylvania is one of only ten states without any gift limitations, compared to ten states that ban legislative gifts entirely. As I have previously discussed, I am a co-sponsor of House Bill 1667 which would ban virtually all gifts. Unfortunately this bill, along with many other reform bills, has yet to receive a hearing in committee.

The Government Reform Caucus offered a compromise in House Bill 1872 that at the very least lowers the reporting threshold for gifts. Under this bill, gifts of \$50 (not \$250) and hospitality of \$100 (not \$650) would be reportable. This bill does not go as far I would prefer, but it is a step in the right direction. It was our hope that by offering this compromise we could get a committee hearing – and thankfully we did.

## Working with Local Municipalities and School Boards

This year my office has been busy assisting local governments in our current 42nd District and building working relationships with those coming into the district. We are helping them reach goals they set rather than dictate to them what they should do.

In celebration of School Director Appreciation Month, my office held a breakfast and invited directors from all over our area. This afforded me the opportunity to give an update as to what we are doing in Harrisburg related to public education, but more importantly, it allowed me to hear directly from them about the issues most affecting their schools. Education is a priority for me and I was very interested to listen to their thoughts. Senator Smith was also able to join us for the discussion.

My office also hosted a meeting with the township managers from our district. One of the areas of collaboration we discussed was supporting efforts to secure state grants. This has led to joint efforts to bring resources for local development projects back to our district from the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, and several county offices.

Another big value of these meetings that we learned was just getting colleagues in the same room to talk about shared interests and new ideas. These types of communication opportunities are something I plan to continue.

Hopefully this bill will come up for a vote soon.

I am currently working on a companion bill that would require lobbyists to disclose the value of all gifts on their invitations so that elected officials clearly know the value of a gift before accepting it. While I still prefer House Bill 1667, I will continue to push for progress on all reform fronts. This includes efforts such as reducing the size of the legislature, nonpartisan redistricting, and a constitutional convention to ensure that our government reflects today's values in its operation.



*Standing with my colleagues, I'm proud to support public education funding.*



*Joined by local municipal managers, I hosted a discussion on how state legislation is affecting our local municipalities.*



*I met with members of local school districts to discuss how state policies impact our local districts.*

Save the date!

October 2, 2014  
3 P.M. TO 7 P.M.

State Rep. Dan Miller's



**FUTURE FAIR**

Career • Entrepreneurship • Technical Training • Funding

**A program for planning your future in Western PA**

- How much school loan debt is too much given my career prospects? ■ What jobs will be in demand in the next 5-10 years? ■ **Post-secondary Education Options** ■ How can I be my own boss? ■ What opportunities can supplement my schooling with real world experience? ■ **Entrepreneurial and workforce resources** ■ What local programs can help me get a good-paying job today? ■ What resources are available for start-ups? ■ **Funding your education or business** ■ How can I discover my passion without blowing my budget? ■ How can I make my invention a reality?

**Hosted at Seton-La Salle High School**

1000 McNeilly Road • Pittsburgh, PA 15234

In partnership with Mt. Lebanon, Keystone Oaks & Bethel Park school districts

More information may be found at [www.pahouse.com/Miller](http://www.pahouse.com/Miller)

## WHAT IS A FUTURE FAIR?

As a legislator, I am very concerned about the future success of our young people and our economy. Unfortunately, young people today face both rising educational costs and debt, and a job market that can be misaligned with some traditional four-year degrees. A Future Fair is a necessary supplement to traditional college fairs or career fairs that will help high school students and their families make informed decisions about post-secondary options.

For this event, I am bringing together educational, business, and government resources that I believe will broaden the horizon of what is possible. Avoid getting a four-year degree that leads to your parents' couch! Instead, come learn about job market prospects, training programs that can lead to quality jobs, and what success will mean for this generation.

## Reapportionment Reminder

Starting in December of this year, the 42nd District will no longer include Bethel Park, Green Tree, Rosslyn, Thornburg, or the majority of Scott (except a few districts in the 6th, 7th, and 9th wards.) The 42nd District will add Dormont, Castle Shannon, the southwest corner of Brookline, and Baldwin Township. The entirety of Mt. Lebanon remains in the district.



**New 42nd District**



*This past Memorial Day I was proud to march with my fellow Mt. Lebanon firefighters through Brookline, Dormont and into Mt. Lebanon. From there I stopped in at Scott's celebration and here in Castle Shannon.*