



# Neal P. Goodman

## WINTER 2015 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**DISTRICT OFFICES: 39 W. Centre St. • P.O. Box 66 • Mahanoy City, PA 17948 • (570) 773-3075 • Toll-Free: (866) 861-1311  
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## Goodman retains leadership role in state House

*Rep. Goodman takes the oath of office Jan. 6 during a ceremony at the state Capitol.*

During the 2015-16 legislative session, I will again be part of the House Democratic leadership team. I am grateful that my colleagues re-elected me caucus administrator – the sixth-highest ranking position in the caucus. As a member of the House Democratic leadership team, I'm able to give my constituents an even stronger voice in Harrisburg.

My legislative priorities will remain job creation, school property tax elimination for homeowners, improving Pennsylvania's economy, finding ways to improve the quality of life in Schuylkill County, helping veterans and preserving the environment.

I am honored to serve as your voice in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for a seventh term.

## Redistricting reshapes the 123rd Legislative District

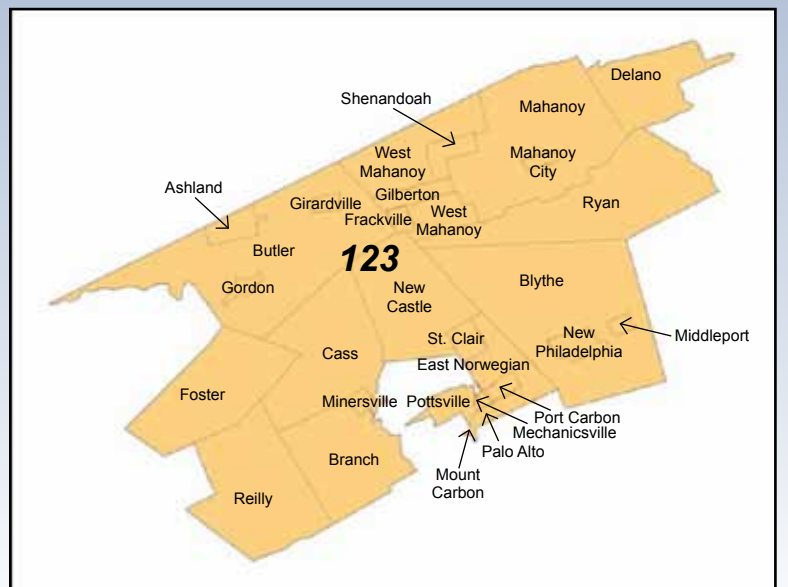
Every 10 years, the boundaries of state legislative districts are redrawn so you are better represented in Harrisburg.

As a result of the most recent redistricting plan that took effect Dec. 1, 2014, Wards 1, 2 and 3 in Pottsville, the Lavelle section of Butler Township, Mechanicsville and Mount Carbon are now part of the 123rd Legislative District, which I represent.

I encourage all of my constituents – both those new to the district and those who have been part of the district – to contact my office if we can be of assistance with any state-related issue or concern.

My constituent service offices are located at 39 W. Centre St. in Mahanoy City and 18 N. Second St. in Saint Clair. Please call the Mahanoy City office at 570-773-3075 or the Saint Clair office at 570-429-1222 before you stop in so my staff can let you know if they need any additional information to better help you.

You can also reach me through my email,  
[RepGoodman@pahouse.net](mailto:RepGoodman@pahouse.net).





*Rep. Goodman attended Gov. Tom Wolf's news conference at D.H.H. Lengel Middle School in Pottsville to hear his plan for a severance tax to support education. Pictured, left to right, are: Rep. Goodman, Schuylkill County Commissioner Gary Hess, Gov. Wolf, and Pottsville Area School District Superintendent Jeffrey S. Zwiebel, Ed.D.*



# ‘Made in PA’ program can help our economy

If you found similar products on a shelf, and one was made in Texas and the other in Pennsylvania, which would you buy?

I would purchase the product made here. I’m sure we all want to do what we can to ensure our friends, neighbors and fellow Pennsylvanians have jobs.

With that thought in mind, I have reintroduced legislation that would establish a “Made in PA” program.

H.B. 180 would permit the use of a “Made in PA” trademark on products manufactured or produced in Pennsylvania. It also would establish a database on the Department of Community and Economic Development website to help buyers identify products, locations and sources of made-in-Pennsylvania products.

As you may know, we have the “PA Preferred” program run by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to promote food and agricultural products grown, produced or processed in the state. My legislation would build on that successful program.

I am pleased that 88 of my fellow state representatives have signed on as co-sponsors of my bill. The legislation also is supported by the chairmen of the House Manufacturing Caucus, the Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturers and Employers Association, the Pennsylvania Manufacturers’ Association and the AFL-CIO, and I’m thankful for their backing.

# Goodman joins Wolf in Pottsville

Pennsylvania is the only major gas-producing state that does not impose a severance tax, even though a majority of Pennsylvanians support such a tax.

I was proud to recently join Gov. Tom Wolf at D.H.H. Lengel Middle School in Pottsville during his call for a modest tax on natural gas drilling to support Pennsylvania schools.

Under Wolf’s Pennsylvania Education Reinvestment Act, the state would enact a 5-percent tax on the value of the gas extracted, plus 4.7 cents for every thousand cubic feet of natural gas extracted. The governor’s proposal is modeled on West Virginia’s drilling tax.

This tax would raise needed revenue for our schools. Pennsylvania ranks 45th in the nation in percentage of funding the state provides for public education. We need to do more for our schools and we need to ensure drillers pay their fair share. I applaud Gov. Wolf for beginning this important conversation.

# State grants aid fire and ambulance companies, improve quality of life in Schuylkill County

In recent months, fire and ambulance companies and local governments in my legislative district received more than \$3.7 million in state grants and low-interest loans.

I’m pleased that 64 volunteer fire and ambulance companies in my district received state grant funding through the Fire Company/Volunteer Ambulance Company grant program totaling nearly \$800,000.

These grants will help our volunteers continue their life-saving work.

In addition, municipalities throughout the 123rd District received grants for projects ranging from housing rehabilitation to community parks. Municipalities receiving grants are:

- Port Carbon – a \$120,258 Growing Greener II grant to develop a watershed plan;
- Girardville – a \$500,000 Keystone Communities/Public Improvement grant for a housing rehabilitation program;
- Saint Clair – a \$345,000 DCED HOME grant for a housing rehabilitation program;
- Ashland – a \$1.675 million PENNVEST loan to repair a high-hazard dam;
- Mahanoy City – a \$140,000 grant from the Commonwealth Financing Authority and Keystone Communities to develop a park;
- Shenandoah – a \$75,000 Department of Community and Economic Development Grant to develop a five-year financial plan;
- Cass Township – a \$40,000 Community Conservation Partnerships Program grant to develop a rail trail;
- East Norwegian Township – a \$40,000 Community Conservation Partnerships Program grant for Schoentown Sporting Complex; and
- Reilly Township – a \$40,000 Community Conservation Partnerships Program grant for development of Branchdale and Newtown parks.





# Consumer's Corner

## H.B. 385 would protect recipients of gift cards

I'm sure many of you received a gift card during the holidays or for another special occasion, and I want to make sure you can redeem the card for its full value.

I have introduced legislation that would ban inactivity fees and expiration dates that deplete the value of gift cards over time.

A 2009 federal law called the CARD Act provides consumers with some gift card protections, including limits on expiration dates and fees. Store- and bank-issued cards cannot expire less than five years from the date of purchase or when money was last loaded onto the card. Inactivity fees are banned unless the card is not used for 12 months.

My legislation would offer additional protections already afforded in 38 other states that have banned all expiration dates and inactivity fees.

State Sen. Rob Teplitz, D-Dauphin/Perry, has introduced the same legislation in his chamber.

# Are you on the Do Not Call list?

You can avoid most of those annoying telemarketing calls by registering with the Pennsylvania Do Not Call list.

You can enroll online at the PA Attorney General's website. The process is quick and easy. If you prefer to enroll by telephone, you can call the Do Not Call hotline toll-free at 1-888-777-3406.



Pennsylvania started its Do Not Call list in 2002. A million Pennsylvanians registered in a two-week period that year, and millions more have registered the past few years.

I was pleased to support a law enacted last year that strengthened Pennsylvania's Do Not Call law. The law removed the five-year time limit a subscriber is permitted to remain on the Do Not Call list without having to re-register. A subscriber is only to be removed from the list upon their request.

The law also bars telemarketing on legal holidays.

If you continue to receive unwanted telemarketing phone calls, complaints can be filed with the Bureau of Consumer Protection in the state Attorney General's Office by calling 1-800-441-2555.

Please keep in mind that existing law does not prevent telemarketers from calling those with whom they had an established business relationship within 12 months preceding the call, or telemarketers calling on behalf of charities, political parties or candidates.



*A state marker in Shenandoah notes that Schuylkill County has the highest concentration of people of Lithuanian descent in Pennsylvania. Feb. 16 is a special date for people of Lithuanian descent. On that date in 1918, Lithuania broke free from Germany. Every year, I introduce a resolution in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives that designates Feb. 16 "Lithuanian Independence Day" in Pennsylvania. The state House unanimously adopted that resolution, H.R. 52, on Feb 10.*



## Veterans' corner

### Pa. benefits should not disqualify veterans from state programs

Benefits have been authorized by the Pennsylvania Legislature to thank and honor Pennsylvania veterans for their service and sacrifice on behalf of our country. Unfortunately, these benefits sometimes result in disqualifying veterans for other state programs because they put them over the income eligibility limit.

I want to ensure that benefits veterans receive from Pennsylvania, such as service-connected disability payments and pensions, do not disqualify them from participating in the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate program, PACE or PACENET programs, and other programs.

I have introduced H.B.s 493, 494 and 497 to address this unintended consequence.



*It was a pleasure to meet Mahlon Fink, a veteran who fought in 1945 at the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II.*



State Representative  
**Neal P. Goodman**

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## My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Birth certificate applications
- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Consumer complaints
- Complaints about road conditions
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Disability plates and placards
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions

*Any other question or issue with state government!*

## Senior’s corner

### Protecting PACE/PACENET eligibility for seniors

Thousands of Pennsylvania senior citizens will keep their prescription-drug coverage under legislation I supported.

The new law maintains eligibility for Pennsylvania seniors in PACE and PACENET if their Social Security cost-of-living adjustment pushes them over the income eligibility limit through 2015.

Without this legislative fix, more than 40,000 seniors could have lost their prescription drug coverage because their relatively small cost-of-living increase pushed them over the income limit.

Act 12 also lets applicants exclude the cost of their Medicare Part B premiums from being counted as income. Those premiums, which cover certain doctors’ services, outpatient care, medical supplies and preventive services, are automatically deducted from a person’s Social Security before the check is direct-deposited. This change helps an additional 8,200 seniors qualify for PACE or PACENET.

If you are 65 or older and you need help paying for your prescriptions, please contact my office to learn more about PACE and PACENET.

## Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

Applications are now available to apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with permanent disabilities 18 or older may qualify for the program. I will be hosting workshops in March and April throughout the district to help you apply for this program. **Watch your mail for information about the dates and locations.**

You can also visit the Department of Revenue’s website at [www.revenue.pa.gov](http://www.revenue.pa.gov) for more information.

