



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Tina
DAVIS

141ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Communities in Bucks County are under siege by fly-by-night rental units that often advertise themselves as “recovery” or “sober-living” houses. I’m introducing legislation to deal with the issues.

Fighting for equal, fair pay



I have helped reintroduce equal-pay legislation as part of the bipartisan “Pennsylvania Agenda for Women’s Health” unveiled by the legislature’s Women’s Health Caucus.

Pennsylvania has had an equal-pay law for 55 years, but women are still paid on average 54 to 83 cents for every dollar a man makes, depending on which county they live in.

House Bill 1160 would narrow the definition of factors that can be used to determine pay. Under my bill, the list would be restricted to education, training or experience. Current law enables “any factor other than sex” to be used to justify pay disparities.

H.B. 1160 also would create protections to enable employees to inquire about salaries without fear of termination.

Pennsylvania women desperately need to close the holes in the equal pay law so it actually gets the job done for working women and their families.

Other bills in the Pennsylvania Agenda for Women’s Health include:

- Requiring reasonable workplace accommodations for pregnant women;
- Requiring sanitary conditions for nursing mothers;
- Raising the minimum wage in steps to \$10.10 an hour; and
- Ensuring access to health-care facilities.

Fighting for responsible recovery houses

Legislation in works to protect our communities

I’m spearheading legislation designed to serve Bucks County citizens and the communities where they live.

My soon-to-be-introduced legislation would better regulate “recovery homes” or sober living facilities to safeguard people recovering from drug and alcohol addictions, the communities where they are housed and especially their neighbors.

The legislation would create a State Board of Recovery Residences charged with enacting safeguards and regulations to ensure a safe environment for recovery home clients and their neighbors.

While many community-based recovery facilities provide laudable services to those battling addictions, too many are basically warehouses – flophouses – with little or no oversight of programs. Far too often, neighbors face increased crime and a deterioration of property values from irresponsible programs.

The nine-member board would address the current shortcomings and oversee:

- Development and administration of a certification program for recovery residences;
- Establishment of disciplinary processes;
- Monitoring and inspection of recovery residences and staff to ensure compliance with certification requirements;
- Development of a code of ethics for recovery residence administrators and staff; and
- Establishing application, inspection and annual certification renewal fees.

My second proposal would allow municipalities to more broadly define hotels in their zoning ordinances to weed out fly-by-night rental units that create traffic and safety concerns and lead to a deteriorating quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Owners of these properties have taken advantage of the housing market to snatch up distressed properties, convert them to boarding houses and pack them with as many weekly renters as possible.

The property owners are frequently paid on a cash-only basis, making it difficult for municipalities to enforce minimum-square-footage requirements. The sheer number of tenants being crammed into these units is dangerous not only for the tenants, but also for the communities housing them.

The bill would not mandate a zoning change but simply enable municipalities to adopt a zoning ordinance that classifies as a hotel any residential rental property that has lease or rental terms of less than one month and to restrict their location accordingly.

Sgt. George Stuckey honored

Bath Road segment named for slain Bristol Township officer

I helped spearhead legislation that honors George Stuckey, the Bristol Township detective who was the first police officer in Bucks County to be killed in the line of duty, while stopping suspected bank robbers.



Stuckey

Act 3 of 2015 designated a segment of Bath Road – state Route 2049 – in Bristol Township as the Sergeant George Stuckey Memorial Road.

The honor could not be more deserved. The seven-year veteran of the Bristol Township Police Force left a safe, secure job to become a police officer because he felt he was not contributing enough to society.

In March 1972, Detective Stuckey was shot to death along Bath Road.

The region was stunned by the loss of the 33-year-old officer, who left behind a widow and two children. His funeral was the largest ever in Bucks County, attended by 2,000 police officers. Thousands of citizens lined the highway leading to his services to pay their respects.

Neither the pain nor his stature among law enforcement has diminished since he gave his life for the community.

Detective Stuckey's heroism and sacrifice will forever be remembered.

Putting muscle in the do-not-call list

Do you find telemarketing calls to your home or cell phone intrusive and annoying?

If so, you can stop most of these calls by placing your phone number on Pennsylvania's do-not-call list. You can visit the Pennsylvania Attorney General's website, www.attorneygeneral.gov, and click on the do-not-call list icon. You may also register by calling 1-888-777-3406.

I want to make it easier for you to stop unwanted calls, and that's why I am supporting House Bill 820. The bill would make three improvements to the Telemarketer Registration Act:

- It would give you the ability to remain on Pennsylvania's telemarketing do-not-call list as long as you wish. Current state law maintains a do-not-call list for five years. At the end of each five-year period, people who want to have their number on the do-not-call list must re-register.
- It would ban telemarketing calls on legal holidays.
- It would require telemarketers using an automated calling system to provide an opt-out provision within the first few seconds of each call, and a toll-free call-back number for calls that go to voice mail.

The bill has passed the House of Representatives. If the Senate passes it, then the bill would go to the governor and he could sign it into law.

The do-not-call list does not stop calls from businesses to existing customers or to people who have done business with the company in the previous 12 months.

It also does not stop debt collection calls, calls from tax-exempt charitable or fraternal organizations, calls from veterans' organizations and calls made on behalf of political groups or candidates.

Compromise needed for overdue state budget

At this writing, Pennsylvania remained without a complete budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

With a Democratic governor and Republican majorities in the House and Senate, some discord could be expected. However, a seven-month-plus impasse is unacceptable.

Throughout the process, I have pleaded for compromise.

But Pennsylvania needs to break away from policies that have led to the structural deficit, underfunding of schools and programs crucial to vulnerable citizens, higher property taxes and multiple credit rating downgrades.

None of the budget options considered so far deserves acclaim. A better budget for all can be achieved with property tax relief and a severance tax on Marcellus Shale gas drilling companies.

The severance tax I have proposed would restore fairness to our property taxpayers, responsibility to our schools and sanity to our state budget and pension plans, by making Pennsylvania's \$11 billion Marcellus Shale natural gas and oil industry pay its fair share.

Pennsylvania is blessed with natural gas reserves, but its taxpayers should benefit rather than be victimized by its extraction. Instead, Pennsylvania is the only major natural gas-producing state not to tax production at the wellhead.

The budget also needs to focus on property tax relief, and stop avoiding the issue that has harmed too many Pennsylvanians.

Property tax relief and a severance tax should be priorities before consideration is given to increasing the state's sales and personal income taxes.

Those are my thoughts, but it's time to approve a compromise budget that can build the better future that Pennsylvania deserves.

We need to get this done!



Davis



My fifth annual Senior Health Expo in September again proved to be a success, bringing friends and acquaintances together while also linking residents to important programs, health screenings and flu shots. Exhibitors and volunteers helped make for a great event at the Bristol Township Senior Center.



My Nov. 12 Salute to Veterans dinner at Ben Franklin Middle School in Levittown was an unbridled success. It was a joy to honor veterans and their families, who so richly deserve to bask in appreciation and enjoy a great meal. I also was able to present a plaque honoring American Legion Post 960 of Levittown and its auxiliary for their many years of service to area veterans.



I held a news conference at Newportville Fire Company station with volunteer first responders from the region to rally support for my legislation that would ease financial burdens placed on our volunteers. Our efforts paid off, and state fees were waived for mandated clearances and background checks for volunteers working with children, including volunteer firefighters and emergency service personnel.

Election-reform measure is critical

Bipartisan panel would draw districts

PRINTER'S NO. 2386

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1637 Session of 2015

INTRODUCED BY DAVIS, SIMS, THOMAS, POZZI, O'BRIEN, DRISCOLL, KINNEY, MERT, BIZIARRO, SCHELOSSBERG, YOUNGBLOOD, McNEILL, SWYDER, KIM, GIBSON, FRASIER, COCCIANI, RAJUL, SCHWARTZ, BRADY, STUBBS, ELLICK, WILSON, SANTAPAURO, U. CORA, WILSON AND N. ZELER, OCTOBER 19, 2015

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, OCTOBER 19, 2015

A JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing integrated amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, deleting provisions relating to the Legislative Reapportionment Commission and providing for the Independent Redistricting Commission.

I have introduced legislation that would reform how election maps are prepared in Pennsylvania.

The reason is simple – voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around.

House Bill 1637 would amend the state constitution to enable a bipartisan panel, rather than the legislature, to draw that state's electoral districts, similar to a measure approved in Arizona and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The panel would be responsible for devising commonsense and compact districts. The fairer districts would replace the current mishmash of impenetrable fiefdoms.

H.B. 1637 would put voters – and not political advantage – at the forefront when electoral districts are revised.

The new system is needed for when district maps are redrawn after the 2020 census. To change the process, the legislature must pass legislation changing the state constitution in two consecutive sessions, and voters then must approve the proposal via referendum.

Working to preserve seniors' rebates

I'm pleased to report that the House of Representatives has passed legislation that would help senior citizens maintain eligibility in Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

House Bill 406 would double the death benefit exemption to \$10,000 when calculating income eligibility for the program, and would improve the incomes of seniors living on fixed incomes and being harmed by escalating property taxes.

Without this change, any death benefit above the current \$5,000 cap is counted toward the survivor's income.

The bill would increase the cap for the first time since 1971, when an adult funeral cost about \$980. Funeral costs today average more than \$6,500, which does not include the burial site or monument.

I was gratified to vote for legislation, now before the Senate, which would help more Pennsylvanians secure property tax relief.

Applications for this year's **Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program** are now **available**, and my offices can help obtain the application and provide FREE assistance in filing for a rebate.

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older.





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Inside this newsletter:

- 'Recovery house' legislation
- Election-reform measure
- Fighting for equal, fair pay for women

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Save the date!

SHREDDING EVENT

April 23

Get protection from identity theft

District residents are invited to participate in the FREE shredding event I'm sponsoring from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 23, at the Benjamin Franklin Middle School, 6403 Mill Creek Road, Levittown.

The shredding event will be held rain or shine for personal documents, with a maximum of five boxes or large trash bags.

No businesses, please.

No tax money will be spent for this event. Please call my office at 215-785-3605 if you need more information.

Safe disposal will be available for personal financial documents that are no longer needed and any papers with confidential information, including:

- ✓ Documents containing Social Security, credit card and bank account numbers;
- ✓ Credit card applications;
- ✓ Canceled or unused checks;
- ✓ Insurance and income tax records;
- ✓ Bank and credit card statements; and
- ✓ Pension information.



Don't miss out! Sign up for email updates

I want to alert you to House rules that limit when I can contact you leading up to an election. Unless you specifically opt in to continue receiving my emails, I'm prohibited from sending you legislative email updates for 60 days before the 2016 primary and general elections.

Opting in will allow you to continue to receive notices about important issues that matter to you, including:

- Updates on legislation;
- News and events in the district; and
- Other relevant government-related information.

You can sign up to receive my email alerts – and opt in to continue to receive them before elections – by visiting my website at www.pahouse.com/Davis, clicking "Stay Connected" and filling out the form.

You can also stay updated on social media. Just "like" my legislative Facebook page: www.facebook.com/RepTinaDavis. I'm also on Twitter: @RepTinaDavis.



I was joined by the Bucks County delegation and House Speaker Mike Turzai in welcoming the 2015 PIAA Boys Class AA championship basketball team, the Conwell-Egan Eagles, to Harrisburg, where they were recognized in the House chamber. The Eagles captured the school's first-ever state championship and the first boys' basketball PIAA title in lower Bucks County since 1975.