



State Representative

# Neal P. Goodman

123rd Legislative District

## SUMMER 2016 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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### Hundreds of jobs coming to the 123rd District

Schuylkill County's economy is getting a shot in the arm with Hudson's Bay Company, the parent company of Lord & Taylor and Saks Fifth Avenue, opening a distribution center at Highridge Business Park.

Bringing this Fortune 500 company to the 123rd Legislative District was a team effort. I was happy to work closely with Gov. Tom Wolf, the Governor's Action Team, Frank Zukas from SEDCO, state Sen. David Argall and other elected officials.

The distribution center will house corporate offices, a photo studio and a warehouse. It will initially have about 600 positions – 207 new jobs as well as 390 positions that will move from the company's Wilkes-Barre distribution center. The Wilkes-Barre distribution center will remain open.

Hudson's Bay Company is one of the fastest-growing department store retailers in the world, and its e-commerce fulfillment center will help the company and Schuylkill County to continue moving forward.

Hudson's Bay Company is the oldest company in North America. HBC's leading North American banners include Hudson's Bay, Lord & Taylor, Saks Fifth Avenue, Gilt, and Saks OFF 5TH, along with Find @ Lord & Taylor and Home Outfitters. The company has more than 460 stores and 66,000 employees around the world.



*Gov. Tom Wolf signed my bill into law that extends the Persian Gulf Veterans Bonus Program by three years. The program, which provides a one-time stipend to veterans of the first Gulf War, had expired and eligible veterans would have been shut out without this legislation, Act 50 of 2015. The program provides a bonus of up to \$525. To learn more, visit [www.persiangulfbonus.state.pa.us](http://www.persiangulfbonus.state.pa.us).*

### Family caregiver measure signed into law

About 1.6 million Pennsylvanians, including some right here in Schuylkill County, are caring for their aging parents or other loved ones.

That can be a daunting task, since caring for them can involve managing multiple medications, managing special diets and operating medical equipment.

I was pleased to support legislation – PA CARE, the Caregiver Advise, Record and Enable Act – to help caregivers when a loved one is admitted into a hospital and when they return home.

The law has three important parts. It requires hospitals or rehabilitation facilities to:

- Record the name of the family caregiver when a loved one is admitted into a hospital or rehabilitation facility;
- Notify the family caregiver if the loved one is to be discharged to another facility or back home;
- Provide an explanation and instruction of the medical tasks – such as medication management, injections, and wound care – that the family caregiver will perform at home.

CARE takes effect in April 2017. Meanwhile, AARP, the state Department of Aging, and the state Hospital and Healthsystem – all supporters of the effort – are helping to integrate caregivers into health care facilities' admission and discharge procedures and educate stakeholders statewide about their rights under the new law.

Pennsylvania is the 23rd state to approve CARE legislation. The benefits include helping older loved ones remain at home and controlling health care expenses by reducing costly hospital readmissions and trips to the emergency room.

## New law provides jury duty exemption for those 75 or older

A new law permits people 75 or older to opt out of jury duty. Pennsylvania is now one of 27 states that exempt elderly people from serving on juries.

If you are selected for jury duty and do not wish to serve because you are 75 or older, you may note that in the appropriate section of the jury questionnaire.

## Reduced vehicle registration fees

People 65 or older with an annual income of \$19,200 or less are eligible for a reduction in their vehicle registration fee.

PennDOT charges \$36 annually to register a vehicle, but under the program, a retired older adult can receive their registration for just \$10.

My office can assist you in completing the application or you can visit PennDOT's website at [www.dmv.state.pa.us](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us).

## House passes my bill to fight blight

Most people I know take great pride in maintaining their home and property. However, it takes just a few run-down buildings to tarnish the appearance and perception of a neighborhood and to reduce property values.

That's why I introduced House Bill 1437 to help fight blight. My bill, which won approval in the state House in May, would reduce the time purchasers of problem properties have to address known code violations from 18 months to a year.

The bill, a product of the joint House and Senate Blight Task Force, has gone to the state Senate. I am hopeful the bill will be received favorably and sent to the governor to be signed into law.

## Fire, ambulance companies in the 123rd District to receive nearly \$750,000 in state grants

Our volunteer fire and ambulance companies work hard to raise money to support their life-saving activities.



But they need some help, and many from my legislative district are receiving well-deserved state dollars.

In the 123rd Legislative District, 61 fire and ambulance companies will receive \$749,808 through the Fire Company and Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program. I congratulate all of the grant recipients, and offer my heart-felt thanks for the work they do.

The grant program provides \$30 million per year for essential gear and station upkeep to first responders across the state. The program is scheduled to expire at the end of June, but I and my colleagues in the state House recently voted to extend it another two years. House Bill 1877 is awaiting consideration in the state Senate.



*I was honored and humbled to serve as grand marshal for the 2016 Mahanoy City Memorial Day Parade.*



*I was honored to receive this year's Friend of Education award from the Mahanoy Area and Schuylkill County education associations. With me are other recipients of the Friend of Education award who were honored by their local school district – Melissa Zula from Minersville Area, Joseph Halko from North Schuylkill Area, Frank P. Snyder from Pottsville Area, Ann Marie Keyes from Saint Clair Area, Jill Felty from Schuylkill Haven Area, Robert Yudinsky from Shenandoah Valley Area, Celeste Franko from Tamaqua Area, and Darlene Klinger from Tri-Valley Area. Absent from the photo is Dean Ghergel, who was honored by the Blue Mountain Area School District.*



Several local school groups visited the Capitol in recent months. Shown are two groups from Pottsville Area High School, students from Saint Clair Area School District and students from Trinity Academy.



## Senate committee advances my mentored youth hunting legislation

My legislation that would expand Pennsylvania's mentored youth hunting program to 12- to 17-year-olds has advanced in the state Senate. The legislation, House Bill 1840, was amended into House Bill 1452 by the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.

The committee then voted to report the bill out for possible consideration by the full Senate.

The goal of my legislation is to grow the sport, and I am hopeful the legislation will win approval in both the House and Senate because many members of both chambers share that goal.

Currently, the Pennsylvania Game Commission offers mentored hunting programs, but they are open only to children younger than 12 and those older than 18. It introduces them to hunting through the one-on-one guidance of an experienced hunter without committing to taking the hunter/trapper safety education course or buying a license.

It only makes sense to extend this program to people ages 12 to 17 – a demographic that has many choices about how to use their free time.

I am thankful for the support the Sportsmen's Alliance has provided for my legislation.

The alliance started the Families Afield program in 2005 to advocate for mentored youth hunting legislation and has succeeded in getting it enacted in 39 states.





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## Our fight against the opioid epidemic



It seems as though there's a local news report every day about someone dying from an opioid overdose. It's an epidemic that affects both small towns and cities.

I want to give you an update on what the state is doing to fight this epidemic.

The Narcan Law, Act 139 of 2014, allows law enforcement, firefighters, EMS and other first responders to administer Narcan to someone who overdosed. Narcan is an antidote administered to those who have overdosed on prescription opioids or heroin.

In addition, it allows friends or family members of someone fighting addiction to obtain a Narcan prescription to have it in case it is needed. It also provides immunity to those responding to and reporting overdoses.

Also in 2014, a law was enacted to create a database to track prescription drugs. This is an expansion of an old monitoring program previously operated by the Attorney General for law enforcement. The new database allows doctors to search it before writing prescriptions to new patients, in order to prevent "doctor shopping."

The 2015-16 budget contains \$5 million to combat the heroin and opioid epidemic, and a \$3.5 million increase for the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, a state agency carved from the Pennsylvania Department of Health through a 2010 state law.

Gov. Tom Wolf has called for an additional \$2.5 million for counties to fight the epidemic, as well as \$34 million to open 50 opioid treatment centers.

### Pennsylvania's opioid epidemic at a glance:

- Nearly 2,500 Pennsylvanians died of drug overdoses in 2014.
- Pennsylvania leads the nation in drug overdoses among males ages 12 – 25.
- Pennsylvania is 9th in the country for drug overdoses overall.
- Pennsylvania is 4th in overdose deaths among teenagers.



*Shenandoah High School Student Council recently dedicated a plaque honoring the 49 graduates of the school who served in the Pennsylvania State Police. I am presenting a citation to retired Trooper Bernard Buhosky, a graduate of the Shenandoah Area class of 1948.*

## Veterans may sign with state registry

A new online Pennsylvania Veterans Registry is available to help veterans better access valuable benefits, services and programs available to them.

The registry is operated by the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Everyone who registers will have their information shared with their county Veterans Affairs Office and other relevant state agencies to coordinate services.

In addition, veterans who register can opt-in to receive newsletters, press releases and program updates.

The site can be accessed at <https://register.dmva.pa.gov/>.