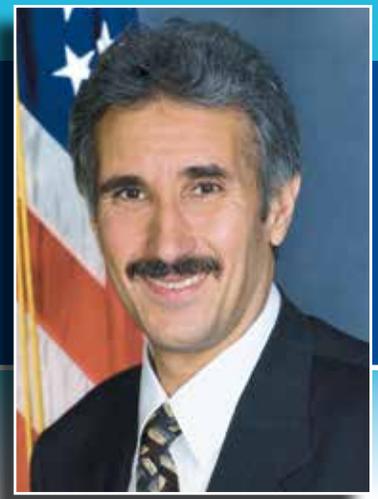


Rep. Chris

# Sainato

## Senior Report



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District Office: Z-Penn Building • 20 S. Mercer St. • New Castle, PA 16101 • (724) 656-1112 • Toll free: 1-800-866-2215

Website: [www.pahouse.com/sainato](http://www.pahouse.com/sainato) • Email: [csainato@pahouse.net](mailto:csainato@pahouse.net)

## Help available with Property Tax/Rent Rebates

Department of Revenue Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program applications for the 2015 tax year are now available at my district office – **and my staff is ready to help you file yours for free!**

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income cap is \$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters. Please note that you only have to count 50 percent of Social Security benefits. You can receive up to \$650, if eligible.

Claimants must reapply for

rebates every year because rebates are based on annual income and property taxes or rent paid annually.

### Please take note of two changes to the program:

- Social Security cost-of-living adjustments no longer disqualify those applying for a rebate; and
- Claims filed on behalf of claimants who lived at least one day during the claim year and meet all other eligibility criteria will be paid.

The oft-extended deadline to apply for a rebate on property taxes or rent

paid in 2015 is June 30, 2016, and the rebates normally are distributed beginning on July 1. So, the sooner you file, the sooner you will receive your money!

Please ignore offers to assist with filing the application for a fee. My office offers help at no charge, and the Revenue Department does not charge a fee to process your application.

You can visit my office at 20 S. Mercer St., New Castle or call 724-656-1112.

Applications also are available online at [www.revenue.pa.gov](http://www.revenue.pa.gov) or by calling 1-888-222-9190.

## Working to preserve seniors' rebates

I'm pleased to report that the House of Representatives 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, thereby improving the income of seniors living on a fixed income 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. House Bill 406 awaits consideration in the state Senate.

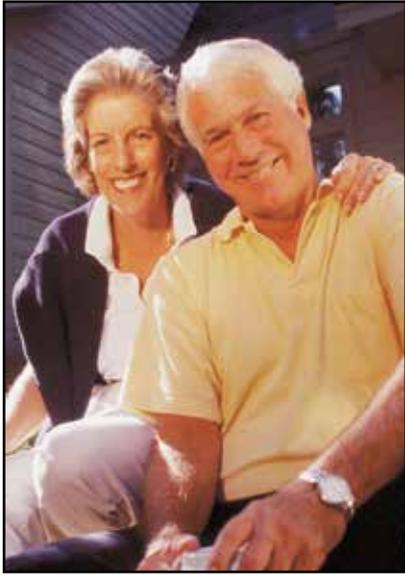


*It was a pleasure to meet with the ladies of St. Camillus Parish at their annual Fall Bazaar.*



*I visited the Bessemer Presbyterian Church's booth at Bessemer Community Day.*

# Protecting PACE/PACENET for seniors



PACE and PACENET, the state's prescription-drug programs for older Pennsylvanians are both valuable and popular. The programs ensure that lower income older residents get the life-saving medications they need at a price they can afford.

We're always looking for ways to maintain and improve

the programs. Since PACE was created in 1984 and PACENET in 1996, we periodically have reauthorized the programs, expanded income eligibility and excluded Social Security cost-of-living adjustments. We even modified PACENET's deductible and adapted the program when Medicare's prescription benefit — Part D — was created. All of this was done to prevent thousands from losing their coverage and to make even more people eligible for the programs.

The last couple of years are no different. PACE and PACENET are extremely valuable, and I have been supportive of any legislation that improves these prescription benefits. Because of my recent affirmative votes, Social Security Medicare Part B premiums are now excluded from income considerations. This change has the same effect of increasing the income limits by

that amount. For most Medicare beneficiaries, that's about \$1,258 per person a year.

Another recent change I supported includes excluding any Social Security cost-of-living adjustments from income when applying for the programs. For years, tens of thousands of seniors were close to being pushed out of their prescription drug coverage because their relatively small cost-of-living increase pushed them over the income limit. In the past, we enacted temporary moratoriums to keep that from happening. Now, the Social Security COLA exclusion is permanent.

Additionally, I have supported two other proposals to improve these programs. The first would exclude veteran compensation from the income guidelines, and the second would exclude the money received from cashing in savings bonds from being counted as income when applying. Both of these bills passed the House and are under consideration in the Senate.

My staff and I can answer any questions you have about these programs, and we also can help you apply.

## Who's eligible?

### Pennsylvania residents 65 or older

**PACE** — With a total income of \$14,500 or less for singles and \$17,700 for married couples. Prescriptions are \$6 for generics and \$9 for name-brand.

**PACENET** — With a total income between \$14,500 and \$23,500 for singles and \$17,700 and \$31,500 if married. After a \$34 monthly deductible, prescriptions are \$8 for generics and \$15 for name-brand.

## PennDOT's Yellow Dot Program

PennDOT's Yellow Dot Program helps people immediately after a traffic accident when they may not be able to communicate their needs to police and first responders.

Under the Yellow Dot Program, you fill out a form with your emergency contact information, medical history and medical contact information, and put this information, along with a photo of yourself, in your vehicle's glove compartment. A Yellow Dot sticker goes on your back window. This sticker will alert first responders to check your glove compartment for your information in an emergency.

You can contact my office for more information or to obtain Yellow Dot materials.

## 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.

For more information about this new law, contact the Lawrence County jury coordinator at 724-656-1933 or online at <http://co.lawrence.pa.us/courts/jury-services/>.

## FREE booklet of benefits and rights for older Pennsylvanians

Pennsylvania offers plenty of benefits and services to senior citizens. From employment opportunities and health care, to transportation, recreation and leisure, the "Benefits and Rights for Older Pennsylvanians" booklet covers them all.

To receive this comprehensive listing of state programs and services for senior citizens in the Keystone State, please contact my constituent service office.

## Beware of IRS scams

Please be aware of fraud artists in a phone and email scam in which they claim to be from the Internal Revenue Service and ask for personal financial information.

Please be aware that the IRS will NOT initiate first contact with you about taxes owed through a phone call or email.

Always be wary of unsolicited phone calls in which an individual claims to be representing a business or government entity and aggressively demands payment. The IRS will always send official correspondence through the mail to make its first contact with you.

### ADDITIONALLY, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO KNOW THAT THE IRS:

- Never asks for credit card, debit card or prepaid card information over the telephone.
- Never insists that taxpayers use a specific payment method to pay tax obligations.
- Never requests immediate payment over the telephone and will not take enforcement action immediately after a phone conversation.

### OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE SCAMS INCLUDE:

- Scammers use fake names and IRS badge numbers. They generally use common names and surnames to identify themselves.
- Scammers may be able to recite the last four digits of a victim's Social Security number.
- Scammers spoof the IRS toll-free number on caller ID to make it appear that it's the IRS calling.
- Scammers sometimes send bogus IRS emails to some victims to support their bogus calls.
- Victims hear background noise of other calls being conducted to mimic a call site.

If you feel you have been targeted by this scam, please call the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 1-800-366-4484.

Complaints also may be filed with the Federal Trade Commission through the website, [www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov](http://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov).

You can also get more information and report scams to the state Office of Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection at 1-800-441-2555.

## Better protection from telemarketer scams

The state's Do Not Call list prevents many telemarketers from calling you, if you're signed up. There are some exceptions to who may call you, including nonprofit organizations and businesses with whom you have an established relationship. However, violations do happen.

The Attorney General's Office is required to notify the General Assembly of any investigations and enforcement it takes against telemarketers who violate the law. I have supported a bill that would require the attorney general to make those reports monthly to the Department of Aging if any of the violations involve a consumer who is 60 or older.

The idea behind this bill is to help ensure that the Department of Aging can coordinate with local area agencies on aging to identify and prevent potential patterns of scams, sweepstakes fraud and other methods of financial exploitation. Financial exploitation is the fastest-growing category of elder abuse in the state. This bill would provide greater protections.

### Are you on the Do Not Call List?

You can find out by calling 1-888-777-3406 or visiting [www.attorneygeneral.gov](http://www.attorneygeneral.gov). You also may call my office and we can help you find out and sign up.

If you are on the Do Not Call List and you receive an unsolicited call from a telemarketer, you may file a complaint with the Bureau of Consumer Protection at 1-800-441-2555.

## 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).



*I was honored to participate in the Challenges Fit Walk.*



*Everyone had a great time at the Eintracht Society's Oktoberfest.*



**STATE REP. CHRIS SAINATO**

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## Inside:

- Help available with Property Tax/ Rent Rebates
- Protecting PACE/PACENET for seniors
- Beware of IRS scams
- Reduced vehicle registration fees

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## My office is here to also help you with ...

- Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Unemployment compensation problems
- Birth certificate applications
- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, welfare)
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information, student aid information, etc.
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Complaints about road conditions
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- Local government officials' problems with state agencies

***Any issue with state government!***

## Applications for handicap placards or handicap license plates

My office can assist you in obtaining a handicap placard or license plate from PennDOT. To receive a placard, which hangs on the rearview mirror and can be used in any vehicle for which the applicant is a passenger, or a handicap plate, you must complete an application, have it certified by your doctor and have your signature notarized.



***It was a great day to meet with folks who attended the Sperdute Farm Fall Festival.***



***I enjoyed good food and great company at the St. Paul's Baptist Church Community Picnic.***