

Rep. Chris

Sainato

Spring 2014



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Getting tough on those who neglect their pets

Winter can be a beautiful time of year. However, it can also be a dangerous one, as we have seen this winter with the brutally cold temperatures across the commonwealth. With the hope of preventing animals from being left out in extreme temperatures and weather, I have introduced House Bill 2046, which would increase the penalties for animal cruelty and make it a first-degree misdemeanor, should an animal die as a result of cruelty or neglect.

My legislation also states that if a person intentionally kills or causes serious physical injury to a companion animal, they commit "aggravated cruelty" to an animal. Anyone convicted of this offense will be charged with a first-degree misdemeanor. In addition to my legislation, I am also the co-sponsor of several proposals that help protect our most constant companions and prevent animal cruelty.

As much of the country continues to endure snow, sleet and ice, it's important to remember that four-legged friends require special care when the temperature drops.

Here are some tips for taking care of our pets in extreme cold:

Keep a cap on playtime

Even if your pet loves to run through the snow, extended exposure to the cold can be damaging to a pet's health. It is recommended not to leave pets outside when the temperature drops below freezing. Like humans, pets can also suffer from hypothermia and frostbite.

Extremities such as ear tips, paws and the end of the tail are particularly susceptible to cold injuries. Therefore, you should limit the time your pet spends in the cold. To determine how long is too long, keep a close eye on your dog to make sure they look comfortable.

Depending on the breed, some dogs can weather the cold longer than others. For example, breeds such as Huskies fare much better in cold weather than Chihuahuas.

Don't cut them too close

Dogs with longer coats are warmer in winter, so shaving a dog's coat down to the skin is not recommended. It is best to wait until spring for shorter pet haircuts.

Protect those paws

When a pet comes inside after being out in the snow or ice, owners should wipe off their pets' paws, legs and abdomen thoroughly to protect from ice and de-icing chemicals. Pet booties can help protect your pet from these conditions.

Additionally, if a dog is comfortable in clothing, you should

dress them in a sweater or coat with a high collar that covers them from their tail to stomach to prevent losing body heat.

In the dog house

If you have an outside pet, their house should be off the ground with a bed, warm blanket or pillow, or lined with straw as insulation. The house should be large enough for the pet to stand and turn around comfortably, but not much larger, or their body won't be able to heat the area.

Watch out for frozen water

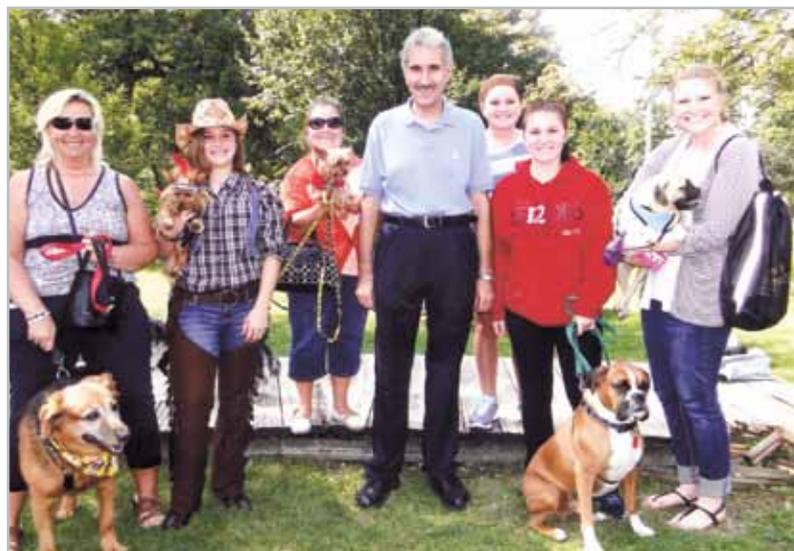
Water bowls left outside can become frozen and your pet won't be able to stay hydrated. Pets can also damage their paws trying to break through icy surfaces.

Check your pet's water frequently or purchase a heater for the water bowl. It's also not a bad idea to consult with your vet about increasing nutrition during the winter, as more calories are burned in cold weather.

Manually check your automobile

Even if your pet has a warm, safe space, keep in mind that other neighborhood animals may seek refuge in unexpected places.

When the temperatures drop, pets look for ways to keep warm. Cats, specifically, may climb onto vehicle engines to seek warmth during cold weather. Always knock on or check under the hood before starting a vehicle and honk the horn to startle any animals that may have squeezed underneath for shelter.



I enjoyed attending Promises For Pets' Canines in the Cascades festival. The organization helps to address the issues of homeless, unwanted, neglected and abused dogs and cats.

Sainato maintains record of perfect attendance

It's quite an honor to serve a region that has always recognized the importance of a day's work. With that comes a responsibility to represent the area in a manner that reflects our strong work ethic.

I hope my record of perfect attendance when the House is in session since I first took office in 1995 does that. I have always taken the responsibility of being an elected voice of the people of the 9th Legislative District seriously.

During my time in office, I have voted on tens of thousands of pieces of legislation on the issues that affect every person in Pennsylvania, ranging from state budgets to education programs to senior citizens' programs. During the first 13 months of the 2013-14 legislative session, I have cast more than 1,100 votes.

I have also introduced many bills to help the people of Lawrence County.

I hope my accomplishments in Harrisburg – rising through the ranks to become Democratic chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee – shows that hard work results in success.

The job keeps me away from home for hundreds of days every year, but when I was sworn in, I took an oath of office and vowed to serve the people of my district with honor and respect.



I joined with the Neshannock Lions Club during the 4th of July Community Day at Pearson Park.



Bessemer Borough is a great community, and I was proud to join the community's 100th anniversary celebration.

Research before choosing a new electric supplier

As a result of the Pennsylvania Electric Generation Customer Choice & Competition Act, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2011, many electric suppliers have begun doing business in the state. You may have received calls or mail from these companies, soliciting your business.

Choosing a new power company should not be done until you have conducted all of the necessary research, which is available **for free** from the state Public Utility Commission and state Consumer Advocate.

I urge consumers to educate themselves, to know the options they have, so they can get the most out of their utility dollars. Alternative suppliers offer various discounts,

bonuses and special rates for senior citizens and veterans, but it is up to the consumer to find out what provider can give them the best deal.

Consumers can learn more about their rights and options at the PA Power Switch website operated by the PUC at www.papowerswitch.com and the Consumer Advocate's website at www.oca.state.pa.us.



Battling blight

Throughout my years of service in the House, I have supported numerous proposals to battle blight in our communities.

In 2010, I voted for House Bill 900, which became Act 90 of that year. This act gives municipalities the ability to initiate an action in court to appoint a third party to take possession of a blighted property for the purposes of rehabilitating the property and bringing it into compliance with local maintenance codes when an owner fails to do so.

I voted for another blight fighting proposal in 2012, Act 153, which became the Land Bank Act. The Land

Bank Act allows local governments to take control of blighted properties and cancel tax liens and bank foreclosures so the land can be sold to responsible owners or developers willing to improve hard-luck neighborhoods.

This session, I have co-sponsored several pieces of legislation that would provide municipalities with the tools to help revitalize their communities, such as House Bill 700, which provides Main Street programs with a 5-year extension if it is determined to be beneficial to the success of the project. This bill is in the House Local Government Committee, where it awaits consideration.

I also recently signed on as a co-sponsor of legislation that would establish tax incentives for owners of factory or mill buildings to rehabilitate these buildings, businesses located in the buildings, and lenders making loans to the businesses. It is my hope that this will help to promote the redevelopment and reuse of the vacant buildings in our communities.

While the legislation has not yet been introduced, I will continue to support and advocate for proposals, such as these, that are so important to revitalizing and enhancing our downtown commercial areas.

The New Castle Playhouse hosted its 23rd annual banjo concert featuring the Pittsburgh Banjo Club. Everyone enjoyed the music and the hot dog reception.



I was proud to participate in the Shenango Community Educational Foundation's first 5K Run/Walk.

Check legislative action online

The General Assembly's website has recently been updated. You can find real-time information on how legislators voted, along with information about bills, upcoming session and statutes.

The website also allows you to subscribe to receive free updates on bills, session activity, and committee activity. It can be accessed at www.legis.state.pa.us.



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I opposed increases to the gasoline tax, driver fees

Late last year, Gov. Tom Corbett signed a \$2.4 billion gasoline tax and fee increase into law.

I voted no on this legislation because it is one of the largest tax increases in recent history and raises over 150 different driver-related fees.

According to the Allegheny Institute for Public Policy, the new law raised gasoline taxes by about 13 cents this year. The tax will increase by almost 39 cents per gallon by 2016, and possibly more. That's because gas tax increases are tied to the wholesale cost of a gallon of gasoline.

If future gasoline prices escalate rapidly, so will the tax. Pennsylvania's gasoline tax most likely will be the highest in the country. In regards to diesel fuel, Pennsylvania's tax is already the 6th highest among the 50 states and would double by 2017.

I also opposed the law because it includes nearly \$500 million per year for Pennsylvania's two largest mass transit systems, SEPTA and the Port Authority of Allegheny County.

Additional costs in the transportation law

- ✓ Photo ID cards from \$5 to \$19
- ✓ Accident reports from \$5 to \$22
- ✓ Certificate of title from \$22.50 to \$50
- ✓ Vanity plates from \$20 to \$76
- ✓ Annual ambulance registration from \$54 to \$77
- ✓ Traffic violations under Section 3111 from \$25 to \$150
- ✓ Incremental increases for four-year driver's license renewal and registration fees for cars and motorcycles.



The food, music and dancing were terrific at the Italian Festival at Cascade Park.



Everyone is Polish during the annual Lawrence County Polish Day, which was held at Cascade Park.

