

Sainato

Senior Report



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Pennsylvania Lottery to remain in our hands

I am pleased to inform you that we have succeeded in our efforts to prevent the governor from selling the management of the Pennsylvania Lottery to a British firm. Like many of you whom I spoke with, I oppose any proposal to privatize the Pennsylvania Lottery.

The push to privatize our lottery was unnecessary because it is already well run. Finishing the 2012-13 fiscal year with nearly \$3.7 billion in sales, the lottery saw another record-breaking year with more than \$1 billion in net profits that were used to fund programs for Pennsylvania's senior citizens.

Pennsylvania is the only state that designates all of its lottery proceeds to programs that benefit older residents. Allowing the privatization contract to expire ensures that our lottery continues to support these worthwhile programs.

Our lottery has exceeded expectations since it debuted in 1972 with a 50-cent ticket featuring weekly drawings and a grand prize of \$1 million. It generated \$57.7 million in net revenue by the end of the first fiscal year, nearly double the original projection of \$30 million.

It continued to grow with the introduction of the first instant game in 1975, the addition of the first lotto-style game in 1982, and the debut of its longest running game, Cash 5, in 1992 and the addition of multi-state Powerball in 2002.



I helped honor the Stars and Stripes at the Elks Lodge #69 Flag Day Ceremony.
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Protecting PACE/PACENET eligibility for seniors

Thousands of Pennsylvania senior citizens will keep their prescription drug coverage under legislation that I voted for.

The new law will maintain 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 would have lost their prescription drug coverage because their relatively small cost-of-living increase caused them to go over the income limit. This could have ended up costing them hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year in prescription benefits.

The law 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 lets 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.



Lottery benefits for the 2012-13 fiscal year for Lawrence County – \$10 million



Congratulations to Holy Trinity Polish National Catholic Church on its 100th anniversary.



I attended Christ the King Church's Fall Festival in Hillsville.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate application deadline extended

By now, you should have received your rebate check if you applied to the Property Tax/Rent Rebate program. If you haven't applied, you still have time.

The state extended the deadline to apply to the program until the end of this year.

The program provides qualifying senior citizens

and other Pennsylvania residents with rebates based on the property taxes or rent they paid the previous year.

The program is open to Pennsylvania residents 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people 18 or older who have a disability. The income limit to qualify is

\$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters. Applicants must count all sources of income toward the limit, but only half of any Social Security, Supplemental Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier 1 benefits toward their total income.

The maximum property tax or rent rebate for most

qualifying Pennsylvania residents is \$650. Forms and assistance are available from my district office.

Remember: There is no charge to apply for this program. If you receive an offer to help you file an application for a fee, please ignore it. My office can help you file for FREE.

Sainato votes for enhancements to rebate program

Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is a valuable program for hundreds of thousands of our residents.

I supported several enhancements to the program by voting for legislation that would:

- Permanently extend the program's deadline to Dec. 31. The program's regular deadline is June 30, but the state regularly extends the deadline until the end of the year. This would make the extension permanent.
- Double the amount of death benefits that may be exempted when considering income for program eligibility. Current law exempts the first \$5,000 of death benefits. The bill would increase that amount to \$10,000.
- Allow an executor to apply for the rebate on behalf of a deceased applicant if the individual was eligible for the program on the date he or she died. Currently, deceased

applicants must have lived the entire year for which their claim is filed.

Since the program's inception in 1971, more than \$5 billion has been distributed to older adults and adults with disabilities. The legislation is currently being considered by the Senate.

I am also supporting legislation to allow certain federal employees who are ineligible for Social Security to exclude half of their Civil Service Retirement System pension when applying for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program already allows people who receive Railroad Retirement Tier I or Social Security benefits to exclude half of that income in determining eligibility for the program. But federal employees, who, because of their hiring date, are ineligible for Social Security, were inadvertently excluded. This is an unfair omission that should be corrected.

Unwanted calls? Register with Pa.'s Do Not Call list

The best way to limit unwanted telephone solicitation calls is to enroll in the Pennsylvania "Do Not Call" list. Once you are on this list, telemarketers are prohibited from calling you unless the call is for an exempted purpose.

To register your phone number on the state "Do Not Call" list, call the Office of Attorney General, Bureau

of Consumer Protection Toll-Free Helpline at 1-888-777-3406 or visit www.attorneygeneral.gov.

I recently voted for legislation that would bolster Pennsylvania's "Do Not Call" law, the Telemarketer Registration Act.

House Bill 129 would make two improvements:

- It would remove the five-year time limit a subscriber is permitted to remain on the Do-Not-Call list without having to re-register. A subscriber would only be removed from the list upon their request; and
- It would bar telemarketing on legal holidays.

The bill is awaiting consideration in the state Senate.

Protect yourself from fire

Did you know that more than 1,200 Americans 65 or older die as a result of fire every year, and another 3,000 seniors are injured by fire?

I want you to stay safe, and so does the Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner.

Here is some helpful advice from the fire commissioner.

Prevention

- **Cooking** – Never leave the stove unattended while cooking. Wear tight-fitting clothing when cooking over an open flame, and keep towels and potholders away from the flame. If food or grease catches fire, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the heat. Do not try to use water to extinguish a grease fire. When deep-frying, never fill the pan more than one-third full of oil or fat.

- **Electrical Safety** – Electric blankets should conform to the appropriate standards and have overheating protection. Do not wash blankets repeatedly as this can damage their electrical circuitry. If an appliance begins to smell suspicious or emit smoke, unplug it immediately. Replace all frayed or broken electrical cords.

- **Space Heaters** – Give space heaters space. Keep heaters at least three feet from any combustible material, including people.

- **Heating** – Have your heating systems and chimneys checked and cleaned annually by a professional. Never store fuel for heating equipment in the home. Keep fuel outside or in a detached storage area or shed.

- **Fireplaces** – Open fireplaces can be hazardous; they should be covered with tempered glass doors and guarded by a raised hearth 9 to 18 inches high.

Preparation

- **Install Smoke Alarms** – The single most important step you can take to save your life during a fire is to install a smoke alarm. In addition, have a fire extinguisher and learn how to use it.

- **Live Near an Exit** – If you live in an apartment building, try to get an apartment on the ground floor. If this is not possible, know where the exit stairwell is located. If you live in a multistory house, try to sleep on the ground floor. Make sure a phone is next to your bed, within arm's reach.



New Jerusalem Church cooked delicious barbeque ribs at New Castle's Fireworks Festival.



I enjoyed my time at St. Vitus' Church bazaar and the company of many parishioners and visitors.



It was good to visit with many of the volunteers whose hard work made the Pulaski Township Fall Festival a success.



The desserts were tempting at the New Covenant Evangelical Presbyterian Church's community day.



STATE REP. CHRIS SAINATO

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I attended the annual sportsmen's dinner held at First Baptist Church.



The Bessemer Croatian Club had a float during Bessemer Community Day.

Two bills of concern to me

Two bills are making waves in the General Assembly and could pose problems for many Pennsylvanians.

One could eliminate telephone land lines and another could allow the state to auction off the company that generates your electricity.

House Bill 1608 would end price controls that have kept land line phone bills cheaper than wireless phone bills. More troubling, a provision in the bill would allow phone companies to abandon parts of the state, leaving phone service to more expensive wireless companies.

Senate Bill 1121 would do away with default electric service, requiring everyone in Pennsylvania to choose a new electricity provider. If you failed to choose a new provider, the state would auction your account to retail suppliers. These companies would pay the state a \$100-per-customer acquisition fee.

More than 3.5 million Pennsylvanians would be impacted by this bill.

Please know that I am keeping a close, watchful eye on both of these proposals and will do all that I can to protect the interests of Pennsylvania's seniors and consumers.

Toll-free numbers

American Heart Association 1-800-AHA-USA1
 Americans with Disabilities Act
 Information Line 1-800-514-0301
 Cancer Information Service 1-800-4-CANCER
 Consumer Protection Hotline..... 1-800-441-2555
 Medicaid 1-800-692-7462
 Medicare EXACT..... 1-800-633-4227
 National Alzheimer's Association..... 1-800-272-3900
 Pa. Crime Stoppers 1-800-4PA-TIPS
 PACE Card Holder Service..... 1-800-225-PACE

Property Tax and Rent Rebate Unit.... 1-888-222-9190
 Public Utility Commission
 Bureau of Consumer Services..... 1-800-692-7380
 Radon Testing Hotline (DEP)..... 1-800-237-2366
 Recycling (DEP) 1-800-346-4242
 Social Security Information..... 1-800-772-1213
 TTY (for hearing impaired)..... 1-800-325-0778
 State Health Line 1-877-PA-HEALTH
 Veterans' Information..... 1-800-54-PA-VET
 Voter Registration Information..... 1-877-VOTES-PA