



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Tina
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141ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Davis votes 'no' on tax increases



I voted against the tax increases and fiscal tricks approved in July to implement the 2016-17 state budget.

I had high hopes at the onset of budget talks. There was

a lot of high-sounding talk about returning to fiscal sanity and building a budget with recurring revenue that stops the free fall in the state's structural deficit and credit ratings.

Instead, the legislature, without my support, approved a package that increases the tax load on working families and again raids funds from grant programs.

We've had too many "smoke and mirror" budgets, but the new budget continues to rely on one-time revenue sources or expenditure offsets to balance.

Better, responsible options were available but ignored, including taxing Marcellus Shale natural gas drillers.

Bereft of any effort to eliminate or substantially reduce local school property taxes, the tax scheme approved instead nickels and dimes us to death with:

- A \$1-a-pack increase in the cigarette tax, raising the rate to \$2.60 a pack;
- New taxes on loose leaf and smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes, BUT NOT CIGARS;
- Income tax on lottery winnings over \$600; and
- Imposing the state's 6 percent sales tax on digital downloads, including music, movies, books and apps.

The revenue package repeats the deceptions rampant in previous budgets. Standard & Poor's issued another warning that an unbalanced budget would result in another credit downgrade.

Yet, the tax package borrows \$200 million from next year's budget at a time when Pennsylvania has a structural deficit of more than \$1.2 billion.

While states around us flourish, Pennsylvania remains a fiscal basket case, lagging the nation in job creation.

The majority in the House and Senate concluded that the spending bill and accompanying fiscal code were adequate. However, sometimes conclusions are just an excuse to stop thinking.

Pennsylvania has a budget, but I question the thinking – or lack of it – that went into the final product.

We deserve better.



Rep. Davis listens to emotional testimony and personal accounts during a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing in April that detailed how unregulated recovery houses are harming patients, communities and responsible addiction-service providers.

Davis fighting for recovery house safeguards

In April, I spearheaded a House Democratic Policy Committee public hearing on my legislation that would provide for standards, monitoring and inspection of recovery houses, also known as sober-living facilities.

The hearing featured heart-wrenching testimony from recovery house providers, clients, families of addicts and government officials who decried the dearth of regulation or standards governing the facilities.

My House Bill 1884 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, including an inspection process for certification, background screenings for operators and requirements that service providers provide referrals to certified residences.

Another measure I introduced, H.B. 2156, would establish municipal standards for recovery residences, addressing items such as property maintenance, noise abatement, and supervision of residents and staff.

Both bills are awaiting consideration in House committees.

The wait is agonizing for our communities, which are reeling from too many shoddy and illegitimate recovery houses that detract from neighborhoods and fail to adequately treat addictions.

My bills take aim at fly-by-night operators and take a stand for responsible providers whose services are desperately needed.

It's in everyone's best interest to weed out the facilities that are basically warehouses with little or no oversight and insist upon responsible programs that are not blights on neighborhoods.

Davis seeks funding for emergency responders

I am drafting legislation that would make it easier for volunteer fire companies and nonprofit emergency responders to secure grants funded by revenues from slot machines.

The legislation would authorize volunteer fire companies and nonprofit emergency responders to apply for the grants directly through the county, rather than the township or borough where they are located.

Our emergency responders deserve to be at the top of the list for grants, and my legislation would make the grants more accessible. Too often I have seen these casino impact grants fall victim to political gamesmanship that is not in the best interest of our emergency responders or communities.

Here's a look at other measures I am advancing:

More transparency – My House Bill 1343 would require municipalities to hold public hearings before the sale or acquisition of water and sewer infrastructure.

ANGEL Act – Would authorize ANGEL programs whereby a person could seek police assistance in securing addiction treatment and programs without fear of arrest.

First Responder Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month – Would designate September 2016 as “Code Green: First Responder Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania to raise awareness of first responder suicide and highlight the resources available to confront it.

Timely information sharing (H.B. 2001) – Would provide timely sharing of information regarding convicted sexual offenders to protect victims of child abuse from having to testify after guilt of the offender has been established.

Smartphone Theft Prevention (H.B. 1932) – Would require smartphones sold in Pennsylvania to be equipped with a “kill switch” to render them useless and reduce thefts.

Financial Disclosures in Divorce – Would require both parties in a divorce to provide two years’ of financial records and a list of living expenses within 45 days of a divorce filing to improve transparency and provide fairer settlements.



Legislation being drafted by Rep. Davis would make it easier for volunteer firefighters and nonprofit emergency responders to access crucial state grants.

Davis' proposals, input become law



At last count, I have introduced three dozen pieces of legislation in this two-year session, which won't finish until the end of November.

It's an honor to represent the 141st District of Bucks County, and I believe in working hard to help find solutions to problems that constituents say are important to them.

While I always have been proactive in seeking legislative solutions, often the proposals I have introduced find their way into law via other legislators or avenues.

Below please find capsules of some of the initiatives that I have initiated or spearheaded that have found their way into law or policy:

- The essence of my House Bill 372 – providing breastfeeding mothers with an exemption or postponement from jury duty – was added to a bill in the state Senate and is now law;
- My H.B. 1081, exempting credentialed firefighters and other emergency responders from criminal and child abuse background clearance fees, was implemented as policy by Gov. Tom Wolf;
- My H.B. 635, increasing the cap on Volunteer Loan Assistance Program loans for facilities and new and used apparatus needed by firefighters and ambulance squads, found its way into Republican legislation and was signed into law as Act 129 of 2013;
- My H.B. 1086, the Scrap Material Theft Prevention Act that would help law enforcement track stolen scrap materials, was incorporated into a GOP bill in the Senate and was signed into law as Act 79 of 2014; and
- My H.B. 1901, which would create a criminal offense for posting pictures or videos of someone who is naked or engaging in a sexual act without their consent, became part of House Republican legislation and was signed into law as Act 115 of 2014.



Rep. Davis welcomed Asmita Gurung and Bailey Ziencik as part of the annual GirlGov program at the Capitol. GirlGov, created by teen women for teen women, is designed to provide teen girls with the opportunity to learn about government, civics, advocacy, philanthropy, community involvement, women's history and leadership.

Our veterans deserve a break in income calculations

I'm supporting legislation that would provide for a partial exclusion of veterans' compensation benefits from income calculations.



House Bill 1473 would stipulate that only 50 percent of veterans' compensation benefits can be used to determine a veteran's eligibility for state benefit programs, such as tax and fee exemptions or rebates, including the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

H.B. 1473 also would extend the exclusion to the veteran's unmarried surviving spouse.

The measure awaits consideration in the House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Good news for seniors!

Deadline extended for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

The application deadline for the popular Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been extended to the end of the year.

The extension gives everyone who is eligible further opportunity to apply for the rebate program. I encourage residents to stop by my district offices in Bristol or Penndel to find out if they qualify and for assistance with applying for rebates on 2015 property taxes or rent.

My staff has ample experience helping folks with the application. More information is available by calling my offices at 215-785-3605 or 215-752-6760.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is available to eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older. Homeowners are limited to a \$35,000 maximum annual income, while renters' income may be no more than \$15,000, although applicants may exclude half of Social Security income.

The maximum standard rebate is \$650. The program is supported by the Pennsylvania Lottery and from slots gaming revenue.



Rep. Davis visited the Bristol Township Senior Center in June to help install officers and salute volunteers at the center.

Applications are available online through the state Department of Revenue at www.revenue.pa.gov, or by calling 1-888-222-9190.

Since the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program's 1971 inception, older and disabled adults have received more than \$5.9 billion in property tax and rent relief.

Working to expand seniors' prescription drug coverage

I'm pleased to report that the state House of Representatives has unanimously passed legislation that would expand prescription drug coverage to over 32,000 older Pennsylvanians by increasing income eligibility guidelines for the PACENET program.



It's been more than a dozen years since PACENET income limits have been increased. By updating the income limits, we can ensure access to affordable prescription drugs and help thousands of senior citizens maintain their quality of life.

House Bill 2069 would increase the annual maximum income limits in the PACENET program to \$31,000 for a single person and to \$41,000 for a married couple.

Current maximum annual income limits for the PACENET program, which covers those individuals with incomes exceeding PACE maximums, are \$23,500 for an individual and \$31,500 for a married couple.

The PACE and PACENET programs offer lower-cost prescription medications to qualified residents 65 or older, thanks to roughly \$200 million a year in funding from the Pennsylvania Lottery. Advancing this measure will bring even more life-saving medicines to older Pennsylvanians.

H.B. 2069 is now before the state Senate for consideration.

Expanded wine sales, improved convenience on tap



The state House this spring passed and the governor signed into law legislation that will allow the sale of wine in restaurants and grocery stores and make the sale of wine and liquor more convenient for Pennsylvania consumers.

I voted for the legislation because it will modernize rather than dismantle a state-store system that annually delivers millions of dollars to help balance the state budget and provides nearly 5,000 good-paying jobs to Pennsylvania residents with the potential to create more jobs.

Act 39 of 2016 will give the Liquor Control Board more flexibility to set competitive prices, offer discounts and set state liquor store hours in ways that are better and more convenient for consumers. It also will permit direct shipment of wine by licensed producers to consumers at their homes.

And the measure is projected to increase state revenues by almost \$150 million in the fiscal year that began July 1.

Pennsylvanians could see wine in grocery stores, select restaurants and hotels by Thanksgiving.

Just Drive



Rep. Davis speaks at an ABATE rally at the Capitol this spring to urge an end to distracted driving, especially texting while driving. According to PennDOT, 66 deaths were caused last year by distracted driving, part of more than 300 such deaths in Pennsylvania over the last five years.



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Inside this newsletter:

- Recovery house safeguards
- Good news for seniors
- Better liquor laws on tap

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Save the dates!

Senior Expo on Thursday, Sept. 8

My sixth annual Senior Expo is set for 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 8 at Lower Bucks Hospital, 501 Bath Road, Bristol.

Please join me, my staff, and representatives from state and local agencies for information about services and programs available for older Pennsylvanians.

It's free and features health screenings, exhibitors, door prizes and refreshments.

Please call my offices at 215-785-3605 or 215-752-6760 if you need more information.

Free shred event on Saturday, Sept. 17

My staff and I will be sponsoring a free shred event from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 17, at Ben Franklin Middle School, 6403 Mill Creek Road, Levittown, so you can safely dispose of your confidential documents and protect yourself from identity thieves.

Examples of the confidential information that can be safely destroyed at the event include:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Pension information.



We Can Do It! Celebrating 'Rosie the Riveter'



The state House this spring unanimously approved my resolution designating May 23 as "Rosie the Riveter Day" in Pennsylvania.

The resolution dovetails with a nationwide effort to pay tribute to the millions of women who worked during World War II. However, my involvement was more personal – a constituent who worked as a riveter during World War II approached me about honoring the women who supported the war effort.

I felt honored and humbled to introduce the measure, House Resolution 818.

First appearing in the May 23, 1943, edition of the Saturday Evening Post, "Rosie the Riveter" became an icon of female patriotism and work ethic, leading women from around the nation to identify with Rosie.

The women comprised thousands of workers in Pennsylvania, including the women building ships at the Philadelphia Naval Ship Yard, and assembling thousands of anti-aircraft guns in York, as well as those in Allentown building Mack trucks.

Pennsylvania owes a debt of gratitude to these powerful women, who made the state "The Arsenal of America."

My office can help you!

- Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications.
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation.
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information.
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies.
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications.
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions.
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens.