



YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE
PATTY KIM
 103RD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET WOULD BENEFIT PA SENIORS

In early March, Gov. Tom Wolf released his proposed state budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year. His plan uses a tax shift to provide \$3.8 billion in school property tax relief beginning in October 2016. It also includes provisions to reduce the possibility of future property tax hikes. The governor's plan represents a property tax cut of more than \$1,000 for the average homeowner, while reducing average statewide homeowner property taxes by more than 50 percent. This would also mean that nearly one-third of senior households – or 270,000 of them – would pay zero school property taxes.

Additionally, the budget plan prioritizes funding in the Department of Human Services' budget to help senior citizens, children, low-income families, and Pennsylvanians with intellectual and physical disabilities. Highlights include:

- Closing the health care coverage gap. Wolf is expanding Medicaid by consolidating it into a single program. This change will close the coverage gap for hundreds of thousands of working adults and reduce state General Fund costs by more than \$500 million next year. The consolidation plan will streamline delivery of health care services to alleviate confusion, remove unnecessary red tape to ensure that no individual experiences loss of coverage and move

toward better health outcomes by expanding coverage for over 500,000 Pennsylvanians.

- Expanding services for older Pennsylvanians. The Wolf administration wants to allow seniors to age with dignity. The budget directs an additional \$31 million to DHS to enable additional older Pennsylvanians to obtain care in their home this year. With this expansion, the commonwealth will hit a major marker – more than 50 percent of residents receiving long-term care will do so in a home or community setting. Not only is this expansion respecting residents' preference on where to receive care, but it is also a fiscally responsible move for the commonwealth and offsets \$162 million in long-term care costs.

- Improving the quality of child care programs. The budget includes \$17.8 million in increased federal funding to provide child care assistance to an additional 3,600 children; \$13.4 million in additional funds for the Rising STARS initiative, which creates incentives to provide higher-quality child care for our most at-risk children; and \$3.9 million in federal funds for an additional 60 staff for child care inspections, as a result of reauthorization requirements of the Child Care and Development Block Grant program.

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 Angel Fox in my office at (717) 986-1673.



In November, I was proud to host a veteran's recognition ceremony to honor the military service of veterans living in Harrisburg, Steelton, Highspire, Paxtang and Swatara Township. I really enjoyed meeting many of our local heroes.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PATTY KIM

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 103rd Legislative District

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PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE PROGRAM NOW OPEN

The state is currently accepting applications for eligible senior citizens and others wishing to apply for a rebate on their 2014 property taxes or rent.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is open to residents 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with a disability 18 or older. To qualify, homeowners must have a household income of \$35,000 or less; renters qualify if their household income is \$15,000 or less. Applicants only have to count half of their Social Security, Supplemental Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I benefits toward the income limit.

The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners can boost the total to \$975.

Applications are available online at www.revenue.state.pa.us or by calling 1-888-222-9190. Residents can visit my Steelton office or call Angel Fox in my office at (717) 986-1673. My staff is available to process your application and answer any questions.

The deadline to apply is Dec. 31, but rebates will be distributed beginning July 1.

PROTECTING PACE/PACENET ELIGIBILITY FOR SENIORS

Under recent legislative changes, thousands of Pennsylvania senior citizens will keep their prescription drug coverage.

The new law maintains 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 could have lost their prescription drug coverage because their relatively small cost-of-living increase pushed them over the income limit.

Applicants can also 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 helps 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.



Around Christmas, my staff and I cooked and served a turkey meal and gave gifts to area citizens in need. This was such a blessed event for everyone involved, especially during the holiday season.

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Kinship caregivers – grandparents and other relatives raising children younger than 18 – face a variety of emotional, legal and financial challenges. The National Family Caregiver Support Program helps to relieve the caregiver burden by offering qualified primary caregivers up to \$200 per month in reimbursements for approved out-of-pocket expenses. Under special circumstances, the potential exists to receive up to \$500 per month in approved reimbursements. If you qualify, the program also provides up to \$2,000 in

pre-approved reimbursements to modify the home or purchase assistive devices or technologies.

To be eligible, one must be 55 or older and be the primary caregiver for children younger than 18 who are relatives and whose parents do not live in the home. Contact the Dauphin County Area Agency on Aging at (717) 780-6130 for additional information on eligibility and to apply for the program. You may also visit the Aging Department website at www.aging.state.pa.us for more information about programs to help kinship caregivers.



INITIATIVE WILL IMPROVE HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED CARE SERVICES FOR SENIORS



Gov. Tom Wolf unveiled a package of legislative and budgetary actions to provide choice and protections for seniors as they age. This is great news for seniors who want to stay in their homes. This initiative comprises the following combination of budget, legislative and executive actions:

Expand services for older Pennsylvanians and reduce long-term care costs. The proposed budget would expand home- and community-based long-term care programming by allowing more than 5,500 additional individuals to obtain care in their home this year. With this expansion, more than 50 percent of residents receiving long-term care will do so in a home or community setting. Every month a resident receives care in the community as opposed to a nursing facility, the commonwealth saves \$2,457.

Phase in Medicaid managed long-term care. The state will pursue implementation of managed long-term care through engaging stakeholders to ensure the system is person-centered, breaks down barriers and fills in gaps that currently exist in the system. This initiative, recommended by the Pennsylvania Long-Term Care Commission, will result in a more strategic care delivery system and improved health outcomes for seniors.

Improve long-term living waiver enrollment and service plan development process. The current process of enrollment into the commonwealth's Medicaid-sponsored home- and community-based care services is a paper process that has numerous areas of duplication and inefficiencies, delaying services to consumers. The state is developing a work plan to automate and streamline this process, so services get delivered in a timely manner and unnecessary nursing home stays are prevented.

Home modifications through selective contracting. A major barrier to individuals remaining in their homes is accessibility. Under home- and community-

based services waivers, enrolled consumers are eligible for modifications to their homes to prevent admissions to nursing homes, allowing individuals to age in place. Unfortunately, current program barriers occasionally make it difficult for timely modifications, forcing consumers into nursing care while they await these modifications. The state proposes establishing a coordinated program to manage such home modifications, through a contracting model that would establish a team of specialists to allow for more timely services, improved quality and greater accountability.

Implement online homecare registry. According to PHI PolicyWorks, Pennsylvania's direct care workforce in 2013 consisted of 194,670 employees. Between 2012 and 2022, the direct care workforce is projected to grow by 33 percent. The state is working to develop an online tool to make it easier for workers to find stable employment opportunities and for consumers to find competent care.

Ensure seniors have choices about where to age. Ensuring that the home care sector is able to attract qualified and competent caregivers so seniors have the option to age at home or in a community-based setting is a top priority. Governor Wolf signed Executive Order 2015-05 to form the Governor's Advisory Group on Participant-Directed Home Care and direct the Secretary of the Department of Human Services to regularly meet and discuss issues of mutual concern with a representative for direct-care workers. These actions will ensure that home care workers have a voice in shaping the future of their industry in Pennsylvania and seniors have choices about where to receive care.



I had a great time with my young friends who helped me pass out candy at the St. Patrick's Day parade in Harrisburg.





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UPCOMING EVENTS

LUNCHEON TO HONOR GRANDPARENTS

I am hosting a Grandparents Day luncheon on Monday, September 14, Hours and Location TBD to honor grandparents living in the Harrisburg area. I am also seeking nominations for grandparents who deserve special recognition for the great job they do raising their grandchild or grandchildren.

If you would like to nominate someone to be honored at my luncheon, please contact Angel Fox in my office at (717) 986-1673.

LEGAL CLINIC

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 | 4 P.M. - 6 P.M.

United Methodist Neighborhood Center

1801 N. 3rd Street, Harrisburg 17102

Widener University School of Law and I have partnered to provide a free legal clinic to assist my constituents with legal matters, including: landlord/tenant issues, consumer transactions, bankruptcy, family law, wills and minor custody cases.

SENIOR HEALTH

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2
Hours and Location TBD

Fair

This event will focus on the health and welfare of seniors. It will include FREE health screenings, raffle giveaways, fitness demonstrations and health information from dozens of vendors. My staff and I will also be on hand to assist with state-related concerns.

MY OFFICE CAN 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 PUC
- Consumer complaints
- Complaints about road conditions
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Disability plates and placards
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- Local government officials' problems with state agencies

Any question about state government!

For more information, on any of these events call my constituent service office at (717) 986-1673.