



Summer 2016

Capitol Office:

30 East Wing • P.O. Box 202009 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009 • (717) 772-2436

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 • **Email:** csainato@pahouse.net

Volunteer fire and EMS grant program extended in Pa.

As the Democratic chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I supported a bill to extend the Volunteer Fire and Emergency Medical Services Grant Program.

Gov. Tom Wolf signed the bill, which became Act 60 of 2016, extending the Pennsylvania Fire Company and Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program until June 30, 2020. The program provides \$30 million annually to Pennsylvania's volunteer fire and EMS companies and was set to expire on June 30 of this year. Act 60 also added career EMS companies as eligible recipients if they are designated as a municipality's primary EMS provider.

Many of our local volunteer fire and EMS companies rely heavily on these grants to pay for vital equipment, such as turnout gear, apparatus and other items necessary to protect Pennsylvania's citizens. With the extension of this grant program, volunteer firefighters and EMS throughout the commonwealth will be able to continue to provide invaluable services to our communities.

Local fire departments receive state grants

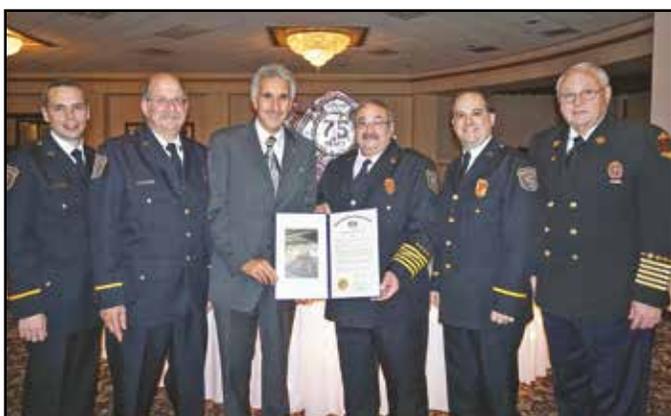
I am pleased to announce that eight fire companies in the 9th Legislative District received more than \$101,000 in state grants from the Pennsylvania Fire Company and Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program.

Volunteers with these fire companies put their lives on the line every day to help protect and serve others; therefore, we must ensure they have everything they need to continue their good work. These grants are a vital source of funding and help them focus on protecting our communities.

The following fire companies received state grants in April:

Hickory Township Volunteer Fire Company	\$11,511
Mahoning Township Volunteer Fire Department	\$12,651
Neshannock Township Volunteer Fire Company	\$13,790
New Castle Fire Department	\$13,790
North Beaver Township Volunteer Fire Department	\$12,878
Shenango Township Volunteer Fire Department	\$12,651
South New Castle Boro Volunteer Fire Department	\$12,651
Union Township Volunteer Firemans Association	\$11,967

Grants can be used toward repairing, building or renovating facilities. The money also can be applied toward the purchase of new equipment, training and certification of staff, or to repay debt related to equipment purchases or facility building and maintenance.



I was honored to present a legislative citation to honor the Neshannock Fire Department for their 75th anniversary.



Visiting with members of the North Beaver Fire Department during the Mt. Jackson Community Day Celebration.

Committee takes closer look at community paramedicine bill

The state House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee held a public hearing in April on legislation designed to expand community paramedicine treatment throughout the commonwealth and better control associated costs to patients.

House Bill 1113 would direct the state Health Department to establish regulations to certify community paramedicine providers, allowing them to more widely treat patients in Pennsylvania. It would also require insurance coverage and medical reimbursement for services.

Community paramedicine pilot programs currently exist in areas

like Erie, Pittsburgh and Altoona, and have become an effective option for patients. For those people dealing with chronic illnesses or who need follow-up medical care – for example, community paramedicine provides an efficient alternative to the emergency room or other arenas.

House Bill 1113 would permit EMS providers to deliver health care in patients' own homes or in other appropriate settings. They would be able to administer services like health assessments, disease monitoring and hospital follow-up care in consultation with patients' health care practitioners.

A recent RAND Corporation study



Testimony received during hearings is used to improve and enhance a bill as it moves through the legislative process.

showed up to 27 percent of all emergency room visits are for non-urgent care that could otherwise be administered in a doctor's office or clinic. We must cut down on these unnecessary health costs and leave our ERs for our most critical patients. Community paramedicine allows us the opportunity to do just that.



Proudly standing with Bessemer VFW Post 267 and the New Castle Honor Guard at the Mahoning Township Veterans Ceremony.



I enjoyed the delicious food at the New Castle Church of God's Community Spaghetti Dinner.

Veterans may sign with state registry

A new online Pennsylvania Veterans Registry is available to help veterans better access valuable benefits, services and programs.

The registry is operated by the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. A person who registers will have his or her information shared with the county Veterans Affairs Office and other relevant state agencies to coordinate services.

In addition, veterans who register can opt in to receive newsletters, news releases and program updates.

The site can be accessed at register.dmva.pa.gov

Bill to expand disability coverage to additional first responders passes House

With my affirmative vote, the House passed a bill that would add first responders who are not currently included to the Enforcement Officer Disability Benefits Law, also referred to as the Heart and Lung Act.

House Bill 2148 would include responders who were overlooked when the original law was drafted. They include firefighters at airports; firefighters employed by the commonwealth, which include members of the Pennsylvania National Guard; EMS personnel who are employed by a city fire department; and state fire marshals.

In many cases, these first responders perform the same duties as those who are currently covered under the Heart and Lung Act and should receive the same coverage.

Persian Gulf bonus program extended

As the Democratic chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I supported legislation, which became Act 50 of 2015, to extend the state's Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Bonus Program through Aug. 31, 2018. The deadline to apply for the bonus was originally set for August 2015.

Anyone who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserve component, or the Pennsylvania National Guard in the first Persian Gulf War between Aug. 2, 1990 and Aug. 31, 1991, may be eligible.

The program pays \$75 per month for qualifying, active-duty service members, up to a \$525 maximum. For those whose death was related to illness or injury received in the line of duty, an additional \$5,000 is available to surviving family. Service members who were declared prisoners of war also may be eligible for an additional \$5,000.

I co-sponsored and voted for the legislation that created this program back in 2006. It is imperative we recognize those military men and women who sacrificed for us and ensure that everyone who qualifies knows about this program and applies.

The deadline to apply for this benefit is now Aug. 31, 2018. For detailed instructions on how to apply, please visit www.persiangulfbonus.pa.gov or contact my district office.

Pennsylvania's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is also asking veterans who may have previously been denied the bonus to reapply. New applications are required to reopen a claim.



Honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice at the Greenwood Cemetery Memorial Day Weekend Ceremony.

Making the transition from military to civilian life easier

For many veterans returning from active duty, the transition back to civilian life may be difficult. These brave men and women deserve a smooth transition, as they ease back into the civilian workforce after their military service ends. Unfortunately,

many have a hard time finding jobs because of the onerous and redundant certification and licensure requirements.

Act 23 of 2015, which I supported, requires certain commonwealth agencies to consider a veteran's military education, training and

experience for the purpose of receiving waivers from professional credential requirements.

Previously, this type of waiver had only been permitted for an EMS provider if he or she had been a medic in the Armed Forces. Now, more

jobs with professional certification and licensing requirements are covered.

By making this commonsense change, we will help to ease the stress on our veterans, as they transition back to civilian life and workforce.

Orally administered cancer treatments now more affordable in Pa.

A bill that I voted for and Gov. Tom Wolf signed into law will put the cost of orally administered chemotherapy treatments within reach of more Pennsylvanians.

The law prohibits insurance companies from placing oral anti-cancer medications on a specialty tier or charging a co-insurance payment for the medication.

Pennsylvanians fighting for their lives should have affordable access to chemotherapy. It should not matter if the treatment recommended by a doctor is ingested or injected.

Intravenous chemotherapy treatments are usually covered under a health plan's medical benefit and require a minimal payment. Orally administered treatments are covered under a health plan's pharmacy benefit. Some insurance companies have placed orally administered treatments on "specialty tiers," requiring those who need the drugs to pay as much as one-third of the cost.

Typically, a person will pay \$1,500 to \$3,000 per prescription for a specialty tier drug, according to a study by the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee. With the median annual household income in Pennsylvania at \$50,000, the course of treatment could be unaffordable to many residents.

The legislative study found that more than 30 percent of people who were prescribed a drug on a specialty tier did not take it, and almost 40 percent said they took on additional credit card debt and had difficulty buying groceries.

According to the study, 90 percent of Medicare Part D prescription plans use specialty tiers, and 23 percent of employer health benefit plans have these tiers.

Pennsylvania now joins at least 34 other states that have enacted oral chemotherapy access laws.



STATE REP. CHRIS SAINATO

30 East Wing
P.O. Box 202009
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009

Inside:

- Volunteer fire and EMS grant program extended in Pa.
- Local fire departments receive state grants
- Bill to expand disability coverage to additional first responders passes House

lpo.ts.0816

Impersonating a vet: IT'S AGAINST THE LAW

Act 32 of 2015 makes it a misdemeanor crime to falsely claim to be a veteran when requesting a veteran's driver's license or ID card.

This has become an issue since Act 176 of 2012 permitted the inclusion of a veteran's designation on state driver's licenses and photo IDs. The purpose of that law was to make it easier for veterans to prove their status without having to carry valuable papers with them at all times.

People convicted of making a false veteran's representation under this new law can face a fine of up to \$2,500 and/or one year in prison.



It was a beautiful day for the Mahoningtown Community Day Opening Ceremony.



It is always great to visit with the members of Moose Lodge #51 during their picnic.