



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Gerald Mullery

Summer 2017

119th Legislative District

Capitol Office: 120 Irvis Office Building • P.O. Box 202119 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2119 • (717) 783-4893

District Office: 156 South Market St. • Nanticoke, PA 18634 • (570) 740-7031

Satellite Office: 407 Centre St. • Freeland, PA 18224 • (570) 636-3500

Committees: Education • Game & Fisheries • Health • Judiciary

www.pahouse.com/Mullery • [Twitter@RepJerryMullery](https://twitter.com/RepJerryMullery) • www.facebook.com/RepMullery

SCI-RETREAT FIGHTS HARD TO STAY OPEN

As I'm sure many of you are aware, SCI-Retreat remains open and functional after being put on a short list for potential closure earlier this year by the Wolf administration.

Gov. Tom Wolf's announcement that the prison would stay open was welcomed news for all Northeastern Pennsylvania, especially for the corrections officers, prison employees and their families who would have been affected by a closure.

I would like to thank the countless partners who made certain the impact of potential closure was relayed to the administration and Pennsylvania Department of Corrections: Senators John Yudichak and Lisa Baker, my colleagues in the House, Newport Township officials, Luzerne County officials, PSCOA and all of the SCI-Retreat employees and their families, and our federal Senate and Congressional delegation.

I am extremely thankful to the governor for his decision in this matter. When I spoke with him, I outlined the impact

that closure of SCI-Retreat would have on our region. He was completely engaged in our conversation and very receptive to our position.

It was clear he placed significant weight in the local impact when making this difficult decision.

I would also like to thank the thousands of you who signed my online petition asking to keep the prison open. I personally delivered them to the governor and I think your outpouring of support also weighed in the decision. Together, we all worked hard to keep the prison open.



\$2.25 MILLION IN LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT FUNDS AWARDED

Local governments and various organizations in Luzerne County were awarded more than \$2.25 million in grants that will help to implement various projects.

These economic and community development projects are vital to people living in Luzerne County because they help to provide a better quality of life for families. I'm pleased the state will provide the necessary financial support to help fund the projects.

Grant recipients include:

- \$490,000 to Hanover Township for multiple projects, including \$240,000 for the Lower South Valley Council of Governments to buy road restoration equipment;
- \$250,000 to Hazle Township for the Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority for sewer overflow concerns;
- \$23,825 for the Association of the Blind organization to buy a van;
- \$300,000 to Larksville Borough for paving projects and ADA ramps on Greenwave Boulevard;
- \$478,198 to Nanticoke city for the Main Street revitalization program;
- \$39,500 to Nuangola Borough for the Nuangola Lake Pavilion Renovation Project;
- \$291,000 to Plymouth Borough for the Beverly Drive and Smith Rowe Stormwater Management project;
- \$26,775 to Plymouth Township to buy a backhoe;
- \$33,939 for Rice Township for the Ice Lakes dam retrofit project;
- \$183,725 to West Hazleton Borough for Fawn Drive reconstruction; and
- \$140,000 to Wright Township for paving in Walden Park.

The grants are funded by the Local Share Account, which received gaming money generated by casinos, including Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs. The gaming funds provided by the casinos are also distributed statewide and provide a property tax reduction for primary property owners in Pennsylvania.

WATER, SEWER PROJECTS RECEIVE \$450,000 IN STATE GRANTS

In March, a total of \$450,000 in state water and sewer funding was awarded in the 119th District. This funding is great news for our area because the water treatment and sewer projects are designed to benefit our region and enhance safety.

The projects are as follows:

- A \$250,000 grant was awarded to the Newport Township Authority to upgrade three existing pump stations which convey sewerage to the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority for treatment and discharge. All three stations were constructed 35 years ago and are in need of repairs. The upgrade will replace motor control centers, flow meters, lighting and upgrades to the heating systems in all three pump stations. In addition, two pumps in station one will be replaced.
- A \$200,000 grant is for Nanticoke city to replace the sewer main on West Main Street. The city is planning to replace the sewer main on West Main Street from the intersection of West Main and West Church streets. The sewer main is over 100 years old and has deteriorated beyond repair.

The funding was awarded by the Commonwealth Financing Authority, which was established in 2004 as an independent agency of the Department of Community and Economic Development to administer Pennsylvania's economic stimulus packages. The CFA holds fiduciary responsibility over the funding of programs and investments in Pennsylvania's economic growth. The CFA consists of seven board members: four legislative appointees and the secretaries of DCED, the Office of the Budget and Department of Banking.



There was a packed house at the Mountaintop on the Move gun safety seminar, where I manned a table with information about various state programs.

ONLINE DOE LICENSE APPLICATION PROCESS PROPOSED

In March, the House Game and Fisheries Committee approved my legislation (H.B. 275) that would allow hunters to apply for doe licenses online. It awaits a full House vote.



It's time to upgrade our antiquated system and provide sports enthusiasts with a more convenient and efficient way of applying for and receiving hunting licenses. Currently, hunters apply for antlerless deer licenses by sending an application to a county treasurer or similar official.

Many counties do not always have the financial resources or staff to process license applications in a timely manner. In this day and age, there is no reason why a Pennsylvania resident should not be able to get an antlerless license online.

The current system is managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. That state agency is responsible for determining the number of antlerless licenses to be given out, while the actual distribution of permits is the responsibility of each county Treasurer's Office. While applying for a doe license, hunters across the state fill out a form, write a check and submit it to the county treasurer in their hometown.

We have a lot of hunters who were excluded from participating in hunting in the past because of the antiquated and understaffed application process and I don't want to see that happen again.

I am cautiously optimistic that my legislation will make it through the full House with an overwhelmingly positive vote and then on to the Senate.

MULLERY LOOKS TO CLOSE LOOPHOLE IN DUI LAW

All victims of DUI accidents would be fully compensated for their injuries and damage to their property, under legislation that I have reintroduced.

Currently, a victim of a DUI accident can receive full tort coverage only if the driver is convicted of DUI or accepts Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition. However, if the drunk driver dies as a result of the accident, even if his or her blood shows he or she was driving under the influence, the victim does not receive full tort coverage.

While we work to reduce the number of alcohol-related crashes and deaths, it is vital that we simultaneously protect the victims of these accidents. My legislation would help all victims of DUI accidents by closing this unfair loophole.

The Pennsylvania DUI Association's latest report shows that in 2014 there were 10,550 alcohol-related crashes resulting in 333 fatalities. Of those fatalities, 72 percent were the vehicle drivers. Passengers and pedestrians were far more likely to be injured, rather than killed, in the crash. On average, 20 people are injured in an alcohol-related traffic crash every day in Pennsylvania.

The bill (H.B. 276) awaits action by the House Transportation Committee.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR KIDS HAVING SUMMER FUN

It's almost that time again. Soon children will rid themselves of heavy backpacks, books and daily routines in exchange for sunshine, swimming, bike riding, family vacations and friendly fun. I would like to remind motorists to be aware of their surroundings and drive cautiously during the summer months. Drivers will probably see more foot and bike traffic in residential areas, parks and neighborhoods in part because of the longer daylight hours.

Here are some tips to keep everyone safe:

- Drivers should look out for children playing between cars as they can dart out onto the road.
- Looking both ways in traffic is another good tip. Make sure you are looking for pedestrians, children and cyclists.
- Children are advised to play in safe areas such as gated yards and areas where there is less of a chance they can wander out on the street or be confronted by strangers. Parents and children need to consciously notice unscrupulous people who may have a history of child abduction. Children can have fun and play near their homes so parents can keep watch on them.
- If children are riding bicycles, it's always a good idea for them to wear their helmets. This can be an effective way to limit head injuries should an accident occur. According to the National Head Trauma Safety Administration, bike helmets are 85 to 88 percent effective in preventing head and brain injuries in all types of bike accidents.
- Another summer fun activity is swimming. A good idea is for children to wear life jackets and for parents to monitor their children's whereabouts in the water.
- If children are hiking, you may want to consider making emergency plans, carrying enough water and become familiar with your path before walking so children can safely return.
- Children may want to explore their summertime surroundings on all-terrain vehicles. Children who operate heavy recreational vehicles at excessive speeds can often times cause collisions. Children should learn how to safely operate the vehicle to reduce the risk of injury or even death.

Overall, parents should consider extra safety measures during the summer months because young children are more prone to move around and could need constant monitoring during summer activities. Summertime is fun time and a great season to explore the outdoors and to take advantage of all recreational activities have to offer us.



I was proud to present a House citation to Justin Skoniecki for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. His community service requirement involved constructing bike racks throughout the city of Nanticoke. The future is bright for this young man.

MULLERY ELECTED VICE CHAIRMAN OF NORTHEAST DELEGATION

Earlier this session, my colleagues elected me vice chairman of the Northeast Delegation for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Democratic Caucus for the 2017-18 legislative session.

I look forward to continuing to work on the issues that affect citizens throughout northeastern Pennsylvania. Members of the delegation work well together and I remain committed to fight for your needs and concerns.

The Northeast Democratic Delegation consists of House members from Berks, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton and Schuylkill counties.



It was my pleasure to take part in the Lower South Valley Council of Governments groundbreaking in Newport Township. Special thanks to Sen. John Yudichak and all of the local community leaders for their help with this project.

I enjoyed celebrating the Kennedy Early Childhood Center groundbreaking with students, administrators, and community leaders. Construction will create a full campus for the Greater Nanticoke Area School District on Kosciuszko Street.





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lpo.kl.0517

APPLY NOW TO RECEIVE PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE

The deadline to file a 2016 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program application is June 30, although the deadline is often extended, and my office is here to help!

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates can boost rebates up to \$975.

My offices can help with the applications. Please don't assume you are not eligible! Half of Social Security income is discounted, and claimants are not disqualified from rebates solely because of Social Security cost-of-living adjustments.

To find out if you qualify or if you need FREE assistance with filling out your application, please call or visit my offices.



It was an honor to present Mr. Paul Sakowski of Mountain Top with a House Citation congratulating him on his 100th birthday.

My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Unemployment compensation problems
- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, welfare)
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Complaints about state road conditions
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Local government officials' problems with state agencies

Any problem with your state government!



CARRYING ON A TRADITION

Growing up in Nanticoke, I think every kid wanted to see their name on Attorney Delaney's Main Street sign. The good counselor's sign stopped giving us updates when he became ill and passed. It's time to carry on his tradition. If you know a "Star" worthy of recognition, contact my office.