

State Representative Harry A.

# READSHAW 36TH DISTRICT report



Summer 2017

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## Bills to combat sexual assaults and domestic violence moving through both chambers of the legislature

A number of bills are in the works that will help us fight sexual assaults and domestic violence. I wanted to give you a brief summary of some of the most important ones.

**H.B. 612** would eliminate the statutes of limitations for both criminal and civil complaints for victims of child sexual abuse and would also open a two-year window for those whose statutes of limitations have already expired.

**H.B. 631** would require a minimum three-year probationary period following any jail time for a Tier III sex offender.

**H.B. 489** would enhance penalties for indecent exposure against children, including mandatory jail time if youth under age 16 are present during the commission of the crime.

All three of these bills are currently under review in the House Judiciary Committee.

**S.B. 500** would direct a law enforcement official to accompany a plaintiff to their residence during the delivery of a protection order if requested.

**S.B. 501** would require those forced to relinquish firearms due to an abuse case to turn them over to a specified law enforcement official, not just a third party.

**S.B. 502** would make it easier to extend a protection order under a number of circumstances.

**S.B. 554** would provide safe harbor from prosecution for minors who are victims of sex trafficking.

All four of these bills are currently under consideration in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

**S.B. 449** would clarify that magisterial district judges may use an assessment tool to determine if a defendant poses a serious risk in a domestic violence case.

**S.B. 461** would expand the number of crimes where those convicted would be required to submit DNA samples to the database.

These two bills are awaiting Senate votes.

I support all of these bills and will consider any legislation that protects these victims.

## Readshaw working to combat heroin/opioid epidemic on behalf of commonwealth's youth

Combating the heroin and opioid epidemic afflicting our communities has become a legislative priority for me. With Pennsylvania's more than 3,500 overdose-related deaths in 2015, our legislature, our health experts, and our communities need to continue to work together to fight this crisis.

Earlier efforts to address our growing overdose crisis came when Pennsylvania Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine signed a standing order to allow the life-saving medication naloxone (also known as Narcan) to be purchased over the counter without a prescription. This drug can reverse overdoses for a short period to provide time to get a person to a hospital.

Last fall, Gov. Tom Wolf announced that the Department of Health provided 128 public high schools in the state with naloxone.

That is why I have supported legislation being introduced by state Rep. Kevin Boyle that would provide naloxone to all public schools in the commonwealth. We need to make sure we prevent needless deaths caused by the prevalence and proliferation of opioids, particularly among our most vulnerable residents.

If you or someone in your family is dealing with drug or alcohol addiction, you can download a brochure from Allegheny County listing local resources at: <http://bit.ly/AlleghenyIntervention>.

Additionally, if you or anyone you know is suffering from opioid addiction or knows someone who is, please call our office at 412-881-4208 so we can direct you to available resources for those who need help.

## Local legislators discuss opioid abuse



*Rep. Readshaw sits to the right of state Rep. Dan Deasy and state Sen. Wayne Fontana during a Community Awareness Town Hall meeting in Mount Washington to discuss heroin and other opiate drug abuse in Allegheny County.*

# Around the community

## PA 2-1-1 assists Pennsylvania veterans

Pennsylvania 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember phone number and web resource that connects you to help with health and human services questions and emergencies.

Calling 2-1-1 can direct veterans to help with food assistance, health services and other benefits.

When you contact 2-1-1, a trained resource navigator can discuss your issues and offer impartial and confidential advice and referrals throughout the state, to resources both public and private.

We are very fortunate that the Southwest 2-1-1 call center has a veteran on staff. Having a veteran who may have experienced the same issues previously can make the answers even more valuable.

For many of Pennsylvania's 800,000 veterans, transitioning from a military life to a civilian life can reveal unexpected issues, including depression and PTSD.

More than 5 percent of our veterans are living in poverty and 5.6 percent of our veterans are unemployed. 2-1-1 can direct veterans to employment training programs, tax preparation assistance and help paying for utilities.

Last year, more than 8,000 veterans received referrals through the 2-1-1 system.

If you are a veteran or a family member of a veteran with questions, you can start by calling 2-1-1 or visiting the local website <http://PA211sw.org>.

## Brentwood banners honor those killed in action



*Brentwood has unveiled new street banners recognizing three local residents who were killed in military service: Clark Peden, Thomas Mitchell and Robert Wagner. Joining Rep. Readshaw at the dedication were, from left, Mayor Dennis Troy, Councilman A.J. Doyle and Council President John Frombach.*



*Rep. Readshaw presents a citation recognizing the 90th birthday of John O'Keefe. O'Keefe was born on March 4, 1927 and served the community as a member of the Pittsburgh police force, rising to the rank of sergeant and serving as president of his Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No. 1. He is the father of four and also has three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Congratulations, John – and thank you for your service to our community.*

## National Police Week resolution unanimously adopted by House

My colleagues and I unanimously approved H.R. 16, which recognized the week of May 14-20 as "National Police Week" in Pennsylvania. May 15 was highlighted as "Peace Officer's Memorial Day" in the commonwealth. Remember to thank your local police when you see them working to protect all of us!

## Budget Funding Opioid Treatment

Tragically, 10 people die every day in Pennsylvania from drug overdoses. I support the governor's efforts to combat heroin and opioid addiction by expanding access to treatment and supportive programs.

The governor's proposed 2017-18 budget includes \$13.4 million in new investments, as well as continued supports. The proposal would expand access to naloxone to first responders and law enforcement, and fund specialized drug courts to divert offenders into more effective treatment and recovery.

The governor's budget plan continues to support Centers of Excellence across the state that help coordinate treatment for people suffering from substance addiction.

A number of key laws aimed at fighting opioid abuse were enacted last year, including:

**Act 123** - Authorizes state and federal agencies and health care facilities to serve as drop-off locations for unused, unwanted and unexpired drugs;

**Act 124** - Requires prescribers to register with the Pennsylvania Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and check the database each time they prescribe opioids or certain other drugs to patients;

**Act 125** - Limits opioid prescriptions for minors and in hospital emergency rooms; and

**Act 126** - Requires continuing education for current doctors and training for new health care professionals on safe opioid prescribing and addiction treatment.

## Pepper spray bill signed into law

Legislation requiring that all state corrections officers be equipped with pepper spray was signed into law in late November by Gov. Tom Wolf.

Pennsylvania's corrections officers are now being equipped and trained to use the nonlethal and inexpensive pepper spray to protect themselves and deter prison assaults

Those on the front line deserve the best protections we can provide, and pepper spray is a proven and valued deterrent. The spray costs as little as \$15 to \$20 a canister.

## Gov. Wolf to sign bill limiting police videos

In late June, the Senate voted 49-1 in favor of a bill that would exempt police cameras and audio recordings from the state's Right-to-Know law. The bill previously passed the House, and the governor indicated that he would sign the bill. Once it becomes law, police could deny a release request of body or dash cam audio and video if certain subjects in the recording can't be obscured, such as confidential informants, crime victims or evidence needed in an investigation.

## Veterans: Stolen Valor bill becomes law

A new law makes it illegal for a person to benefit financially from lying about military service or military decorations.

The governor recently signed the "Stolen Valor" bill into law. The bill unanimously passed both the House and the Senate.

Possible violations of the new law include lying to receive veterans or related benefits, such as health care, or claiming veteran status on a job application or government contract bid.

Violating the law could lead to a charge of a third-degree misdemeanor.

## Be wary of utility imposters

With the warmer weather upon us, the Keystone Alliance to Stop Utility Imposters – a coalition of local water, gas and electric utilities – along with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association and Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association, want to remind you to be on the lookout for criminals impersonating utility workers to gain access and rob homeowners.

Throughout the region and across Pennsylvania, thieves have been posing as utility workers. Once inside the home, the imposters typically divert the resident's attention by sending him or her to another floor while they or an accomplice rob the home. They often target senior citizens who are home alone during the day. Impersonators are not easy to spot and often buy uniforms so they "look official" and charm seniors into letting them into their homes, often with a claim of an emergency.

Before letting any worker into your house, always check for a company-issued photo ID. It is extremely rare for a utility employee to show up at a customer's home without an appointment. However, if someone comes to your door claiming to be from the local utility and you are not expecting them, do not let them inside without proper photo identification. If you have any doubts, call the 800 number on your utility bill. If you have any suspicions about the person's identity, call 9-1-1 immediately. The 9-1-1 operator will be able to verify if there is any legitimate emergency work being done in the area.

These criminals are often from out of the area and travel to a neighborhood to pull a number of jobs in a day. Police say it is difficult to catch these thieves since they "seemed so nice and looked so official." Please warn your elderly family members, neighbors and friends not to let anyone that they are not expecting into their homes, especially someone claiming to be from a utility company or a contractor doing work in the area.

You should also be aware of utility phone scams as well. Thieves target customers with a false claim the customer is behind on their bill and will have service shut off if an immediate payment is not made with a pre-paid debit or credit card. Again, if you have any questions about a utility bill, hang up and call the number on your utility bill.

## Officer Down alert system wins unanimous House support

I am urging Senate passage of a bill that would create the Officer Down system. Just like the Amber Alert system for children, Officer Down would use media broadcasts and messaging signs along highways to help locate the vehicle and individual suspected in an assault on a law enforcement officer.

I am encouraged by the fact that the House of Representatives passed this bill, H.B. 31, in early February. The next step is passage by the Senate before it can be signed into law. This bill would provide a tremendous tool to aid in the apprehension of those suspected of causing serious injury or death to a law enforcement officer.

### HOW IT WOULD WORK:

Under the measure, the Pennsylvania State Police would establish and maintain the PA Officer Down Advisory. It would be activated in the event:

- A law enforcement officer is killed or seriously injured by an offender;
- The offender poses a serious risk or threat to the public and other law enforcement;
- The offender's vehicle, vehicle tag or partial tag is available for broadcast; and
- The law enforcement agency recommends activation of the system.



# Concussion prevention and management program draws 115 participants

In March, I teamed with state Rep. Bill Kortz and the Baldwin Football Boosters in sponsoring a free concussion education event. The program was funded by a grant from the state Department of Health and featured speakers from the Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers Association and the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

Concussions in sports have always been an issue. However, medical advances have highlighted the dangers of concussions, which were brought to the forefront by the plight of Pittsburgh Steelers Hall of Fame center 'Iron Mike' Webster, who suffered from dementia, depression and amnesia after his career. After he died at age 50, an autopsy revealed he was suffering from chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, which has since been discovered in the brains of more than 90 former NFL players.

Brain diseases like Webster's may be the result of cumulative damage, so it is critical that we are aware of the dangers to our youth and protect them as much as possible.



Joining Rep. Readshaw at the concussion seminar were: (from left) Brandon Gillie, UPMC doctor; A.J. Cubbison, Baldwin Whitehall athletic trainer; Tonya McKenzie, Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Society; and Jennifer Halaszynski, representing state Rep. Bill Kortz.

## Readshaw co-sponsors bill to close DUI law loophole

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

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 drunken 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. This 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.

H.B. 276, which introduced by Rep. Gerald Mullery, awaits action by the House Transportation Committee.



### Vehicle recall legislation

Beginning in 2008, the largest automotive recall in history was initiated, centering on the defective Takata Corp. airbags found in 42 million vehicles in the U.S. Since the recall was announced, at least 11 people in the United States have died from injuries suffered as a result of defective airbags, and hundreds more around the world have been injured.

U.S. car dealers have an obligation to inform car owners of the recalls, but private car sales, owners moving and other changes can make reaching current owners very difficult. In a further attempt to ensure that recall information reaches the proper owners, legislation has been introduced that would require inspection agents to perform a recall search at the time of annual inspection and to notify the owner of any outstanding recalls. An outstanding recall issue, however, would not cause a vehicle to fail its inspection.

To see if your vehicle has any outstanding recalls, visit <https://vincl.safercar.gov/vin>.

## New rules for car seats

Last August, a new law took effect requiring all children younger than 2 to ride in a rear-facing car seat. Facing the rear is the safest position for young children and most manufacturers recommend that position already. The law required a warning be given for the first year – and that year expires on August 11.

Children under 2 but too large or too heavy for the rear-facing car seat are not required to face the rear, but they are still covered by other car seat regulations.

## Annual registration stickers for cars now discontinued

PennDOT has updated the annual vehicle registration process, which means you can now update your registration online and print out your owner's card. As part of that change, the annual small registration sticker that you would place on your license plate has been discontinued. This will save the state up to \$3 million per year in mailing costs.

You are still required to keep your registration updated and valid; you will just no longer have the small sticker to remind you.

If you don't want to process the registration online, my office staff can still assist you.

You can learn more at [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov).

## Did You Know?

You don't have to stick with one electricity supplier, or settle for an offer someone sells door-to-door. There's a much simpler way to shop for your electricity and compare rates from the state's Public Utility Commission.

Much like travel sites that allow you to compare prices and shop for the best deals, [www.papowerswitch.com](http://www.papowerswitch.com) is fast and simple to use. All you need to do is enter your ZIP code and all of the available suppliers and their rates are provided along with details about the plans and options to sign up and/or switch.



## Free notary service at my district office

You can have most official documents notarized for free in my district office. Please call ahead to make sure the notary is in the office and can accommodate your type of document. The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in person, in the presence of the notary, and provide proof of identity such as a valid driver's license, photo ID card, or passport.

Please let my staff know if witnesses are needed, in addition to the notary, for your documents.

## Volunteer background check update

There has been a lot of confusion about how the child protective services laws are affecting schools, organizations and, especially, their volunteers.

Below is a brief summary of the regulations, as well as the necessary links for the required clearances:

If you are a new volunteer, you must have your clearances before you begin. Volunteers and employees who work with children need up to three separate clearances:

- Pennsylvania State Police criminal report

The police report can be ordered online at <https://epatch.state.pa.us>.

- Child Abuse History Clearance

The clearance can be ordered from the Department of Human Services at <http://bit.ly/ClearanceForm>.

Volunteers will have their state application fees waived.

An FBI fingerprint criminal history report is also required if the volunteer position is paid and the volunteer has lived outside of Pennsylvania some time during the previous 10 years. The FBI application can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/FBIPrints>.

Unfortunately, the state has no control over the cost of the FBI check, which is currently \$27.50.

More information is available at the website [www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov).

## PUC offers guide on filing complaints

If you ever run into an issue with a utility and need to file a complaint, it can be tricky. The Public Utility Commission has resources that can assist you.

The Consumer Complaint Procedures Guide provides information on the complaint process, including the differences between formal and informal complaints.

You can also review or download the quick reference sheet, "Know the PUC Complaint Process and Your Options."

Both guides are available at <http://bit.ly/PUCComplaints>.

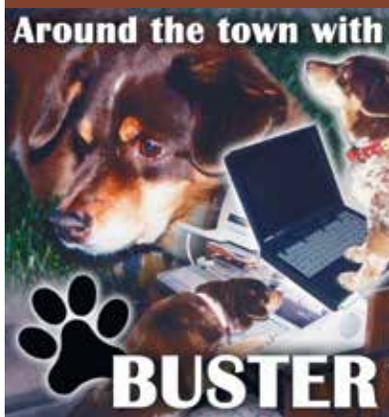
You can also search for other complaints filed against utilities by clicking on the consumer info header at [www.puc.pa.gov](http://www.puc.pa.gov).

My office staff can also assist you with any specific problems you may have with a utility company.



*Rep. Readshaw presents a citation to Robert D. Burke as the Brentwood VFW Post 1810 2017 Man of the Year. A Vietnam veteran, he served in the 18th Engineer Brigade, 46th Engineer Battalion. Burke has been active in a variety of local veterans groups and events.*

lpo.kl.0717



Dogs are howling about legislation and here are a few bills that they have been barking for:

**S.B. 636** would make leaving a dog or cat in a hot car a summary offense and would also grant police officers and other first responders greater authority to remove the animals if they are in danger from the heat.

**S.B. 54** would update the puppy Lemon Law, providing new owners more protection for a dog that had an unknown congenital disorder at the time of purchase.

**S.B. 469** would provide business tax credits up to \$100,000 per business that donates to animal shelters.

All three of these Senate bills are awaiting consideration in the full Senate.

**S.B. 480** would raise both the minimum and maximum fines for those convicted

of animal abuse for a pet owned by their spouse or partner with a protection order against them.

This bill is under consideration in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

**H.B. 853** would raise the minimum fine for a summary count of animal cruelty to \$250.

**H.B. 854** would require a more rigorous screening process for those applying for the position of Humane Society Police officer.

Both of the House bills are currently under review in the House Judiciary Committee.

Harry is also a co-sponsor of H.B. 1044, a bill that would extend the holding period for a lost/runaway unlicensed dog from 48 to 96 hours. This would give an owner more time to recognize an animal is missing before it can be euthanized or turned over to a shelter. This bill is currently under consideration in the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

Well, I gotta go and see about a treat from Harry since I researched this legislation for him!



## Readshaw co-sponsors bill banning sale of ivory and rhino horn in Pa.

H.B. 248 would ban the purchase or importing of ivory or rhinoceros horns. More than 35,000 elephants are killed each year for their ivory tusks. Rhinoceros horns are also very popular among poachers – and terrorism groups seem to be major players in the sales of these items.

This ban would NOT affect the sale of ivory used in musical instruments or in antiques.

The bill is currently under consideration in the House Judiciary Committee.

