



State Representative Harry A. **READSHAW** 36TH DISTRICT **report**



Winter 2018

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Neighborhood Assistance Program Invests In Local Community Projects

The 36th Legislative District was among many across the state to receive financial assistance following the governor's approval of \$17.9 million in funding through the Department of Community and Economic Development's Neighborhood Assistance Program.

The Brashear Association, located in Pittsburgh, will receive \$228,000. The funds will prevent nearly 15,000 foreclosures, help create and retain over 30 jobs, and allow up to 4,000 residents to receive food subsidies as part of a self-sufficiency program.

The Mount Washington Community Development Corp. in Pittsburgh will receive \$80,000. The acquired funds will go toward rehabilitation and redevelopment of three properties located within targeted areas for affordable homeownership; the hiring and training of at-risk adults who will work on rehab and restoration projects in Emerald View Park; job placement assistance for up to 12 at-risk adults who will work one-on-one with an employment specialist for a minimum of 20 weeks; the clearing of one illegal dumpsite; and much more.

This corporation has always had the beautification and restoration of Allegheny County at heart, so I'm more than confident they will do wonders with these funds.

Lastly, I'd like to highlight the \$200,000 awarded to Hilltop Alliance, which is a collaborative organization comprised of community-based organizations from 11 South Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Hilltop Alliance will allocate the awarded funds to resolve code violations in 10 to 20 properties; facilitate renovations in five to 10 properties; renovate and resell – to homeowners – two to four properties; leverage at least 200 percent matching funds for acquisition, renovation, rehabilitation, and partnership investment; direct and administer at least \$100,000 in leveraged investment in the Allentown neighborhood; and plenty more.

The Neighborhood Assistance Program provides tax credits to enable businesses and community organizations to invest in projects that serve distressed areas or support conservation efforts. You can learn more about NAP at www.dced.pa.gov/programs/neighborhood-assistance-program-nap/.



Rep. Bill Kortz, Baldwin Mayor David Depretis, Baldwin Police Chief Michael Scott and Rep. Harry Readshaw

“Congratulations to Baldwin Police Chief Michael Scott, as he was sworn in as the new president of the Police Chief’s Association of Western Pennsylvania.”

Pittsburgh Water And Sewer Authority To Pay, Replace Lead Service Lines

In reporting some good news, the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority will pay to replace lead service lines.

I am pleased to see that areas where children and pregnant women live will take priority and the newly adopted policy will pay for the replacement of both public and privately owned portions of the water lines.

Last year, PWSA said it would stop partial line replacement, a practice that could ultimately expose people to unsafe levels of lead in our communities. Although it might become costly and stretch timelines further for lines to get fixed, I applaud the PWSA's policy.

Additionally, customers who can document that they paid for private lead line replacements after July 2016 could be reimbursed, but the sum has not been established.

Clean Water Assistance Fund

The Allegheny County Sanitary Authority has created the Clean Water Assistance fund to help its customers pay their sewage treatment bills.

This fund is available to homeowners and renters who have accounts in their own name, and eligibility is based off family income limits set by the federal government.

Under the program, a \$30 credit will be applied every three months to the account of an eligible customer; the credit will appear automatically every three months, regardless of how the customer is billed (monthly, bimonthly or quarterly).

Dollar Energy Fund serves as the program administrator.

A breakdown of household income guidelines is in the chart.

ALCOSAN also is developing its long-term blueprint for improving the quality of

the region's waterways, which is essential for the region's economic future, its long-term health and the vibrancy of western Pennsylvania as a whole.

I urge all residents to check regularly on ALCOSAN's Clean Water Plan at <https://3riversproud.com>. You can contact the Dollar Energy Fund at 1 (800) 375-1388.

Household Size	Income Limit
1	\$18,090
2	\$24,360
3	\$30,630
4	\$36,900
5	\$43,170
6	\$49,440
7	\$55,710
8	\$61,980

Ten Local Organizations To Raise Awareness On Lead Exposure

Nearly 90 percent of residences in Allegheny County were built prior to 1978, the year lead paint was banned. That, along with the elevated levels of lead found in the water and soil across the Pittsburgh area, means our risk of lead exposure is no laughing matter.

This known fact has prompted the Allegheny County Health Department to award nearly \$44,000 in grants to help the Environmental Occupational & Public Health Consultants Inc. and nine other Pittsburgh-area organizations raise awareness about the risks of lead exposure.

The EOH, whose sole mission is to serve, train and perform research in vital areas of environmental health, received \$4,500 to continue its efforts to spread the word on the dangers of lead poisoning.

Recipients of the grant money will hold workshops and meetings, and go door-to-door to share information about how to prevent and reduce lead exposure from multiple sources.

These activities will take place from February to July, and they will focus on the most at-risk neighborhoods, specifically areas where children younger than 5 live. Lead, a neurotoxin that impairs brain development, poses the greatest risk to children younger than 6 and pregnant women.

Education about the county's newly enacted rule that requires all children to undergo blood lead testing at ages 1 and 2 also will be provided. The health department will collect that data from county schools in October.

How To Prepare For Obtaining A Real ID-Compliant Driver's License

PennDOT recently announced what's needed for obtaining a Real ID-compliant driver's license and there are things you can do to be ready for obtaining one when they become available in spring 2019.

The good news is that the federal government granted Pennsylvania an extension through Oct. 10, 2018, which means your current, regular ID will still be accepted through that date when entering federal buildings or boarding a domestic commercial flight, and PennDOT expects further extensions until the state's Real ID will be available.

Once the extension expires, you can use a U.S. passport as official documentation, but if you want a new license, there are a few steps you can take now to be prepared.

In order to receive a Real ID-compliant driver's license, you'll need the original, certified documents that reflect your proof of identity, Social Security number and state residency. Examples of those items are listed below:

- U.S. passport
- Birth certificate with a raised seal
- Original Social Security card
- Current, unexpired Pennsylvania driver's license or ID card
- W-2 form or tax records

To obtain a Real ID, you'll be required to pay a one-time fee of \$30 plus the cost of your license renewal. A Real ID will not be required to operate a vehicle or vote.

Thanks For Supporting Megan's Law Updates:

I'd like to send a special thanks to all my fellow lawmakers for their support in the passage of a measure that ensures sex offenders remain under Megan's Law.

As lawmakers, our top priority is keeping the communities in the commonwealth safe. The adoption and implementation of

this bill will guarantee that up to 17,000 sex offenders are not removed from the state sexual offender registry.

Lastly, I'd like to commend the teamwork and commitment of the Governor's Office, the Pennsylvania State Police, the Sexual Offenders Assessment Board,

the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, the Pennsylvania Victim Advocate, and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole. Their commitment and drive was essential to the advancement of this legislation.

Beware Of Emerging Medicare Scams:

Starting in 2018, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services will remove Social Security numbers from Medicare cards. Social Security numbers will be replaced with randomly generated numbers.

However, with this change is the emergence of scams. **If you receive a call from an alleged Medicare representative who states that they need to verify your identity or claim that you owe a fee for your card – hang up immediately. It's a scam.**

It's important to note that Medicare representatives never call you or come to your home.

Additionally, never pay a fee for services offered; there is no such thing as a "one-time fee" or "processing fee," or any other fee.

From April 1, 2018 through Dec. 31, 2019, Medicare will mail out new cards that no longer contain Social Security numbers to ensure identity protection.

There is no charge for the card and your benefits will remain the same. For more information regarding the aforementioned scams, call the PA-SMP at 1-800-356-3606.



Borough Manager Rick Hopkinson, left, Councilwoman Barbara Keener, and Rep. Harry Readshaw.

"Congratulations to Mt. Oliver Borough as they celebrate their 125th anniversary."

Skimmer Alert:

While we're on the topic of scams, I'd like to take this time to remind you about the dangers of skimmers.

Skimmers are malicious card readers that unlawfully gather data from a credit or debit card's magnetic strip. More often than not, skimmers are attached to a real payment terminal and allow a scammer to steal personal financial and account information. For example, gas pumps are a prime target.

Skimmers can be placed externally over the real card reader or internally (harder to detect) if the thief has a key to get inside the machines.

Warning signs of a possible skimming device:

- Poorly lit pumps farthest from the station/closest to the street
- Little to no video surveillance
- No tamper-resistant tape on the pumps
- Out-of-date pump inspections

When to report a possible skimming device:

- Inspect the card reader – compare to other pumps. If it looks different, report it

- Wiggle it – if it's loose, report it

- Look for broken or missing tamper-resistant tape

Potential victims should:

- File report with local/state police
- Contact their bank and credit card company about compromised cards
- Monitor their credit at AnnualCreditReport.com or by calling 1-877-322-8228

Around the District:



Mike Woshner of Carrick discussing issues.



Rep. Harry Readshaw enjoys meeting with constituents across the district. You may contact him by phone at (412) 881-4208 or email at HReadsha@pahouse.net.

Check Out Some Useful Veterans Programs

I'd like to highlight a number of veteran programs available through the commonwealth.

The **Military Family Relief Assistance Program** provides financial assistance, in the form of grants, to eligible service members and their families who have a direct and immediate financial need as a result of circumstances beyond their control. The amount of a grant is based on documented financial need up to a maximum of \$3,500.

A program beneficial to wounded veterans is the **Amputee and Paralyzed Veterans Pension program**. This program is specifically designed to provide eligible amputee and paralyzed veterans a pension of \$150 per month.

Also available to veterans and their families is the **Educational Gratuities Program**, which provides financial assistance to children of honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities and served during a period of war or armed conflict. Children of veterans who die or died in service during a period of war or armed conflict also are eligible for this program.

These are only three of many programs available to veterans through the great state of Pennsylvania. To determine your eligibility for the above programs, or to learn more about the veteran programs available to you or a loved one, visit www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs. You'll be able to find all the information you need.



Pushing For Equal Pay

The average Pennsylvania woman earns only 79 cents for every dollar a man earns, according to the National Partnership for Women and Families. Shocking as it may sound, this figure is reflective of the national average. However, the commonwealth has one of the biggest wage gaps compared to neighboring states, and the gap grows depending on race and geographical location.

For example:

■ The wage gap in Pittsburgh is 73 cents to every dollar a man makes, totaling about \$13,407 per year. If this gap were to close, a woman would be able to pay for 11 months of mortgage and utility bills or 20 months of rent. Additionally, 30 percent of households headed by women in Pittsburgh have incomes that fall below the poverty line.

■ On average, African-American women in the United States are paid 64 cents and Latinas are paid 55 cents to the dollar when holding a full-time, year-round job compared to white, non-Hispanic men.

■ The commonwealth has one of the largest pay gaps in the Northeast. In 2015, Bloomberg surveyed 50 U.S. cities with the highest levels of income inequality; Pittsburgh was ranked No. 21.

By working to enact policies that promote pay gap closure, we could address the crucial issues of poverty, childcare and affordable housing for many women and their families, especially for women of color who are disproportionately affected.



Rep. Harry Readshaw presents WWII medallions to veterans at Norbert's Nursing Home.

Disability In The Commonwealth:

According to the 2016 American Community Survey Five-Year estimates, one in seven Pennsylvanians were reported to have had a disability from 2012 to 2016, totaling just over 1.7 million people. The rate of people with disabilities in the commonwealth is 13.7 percent of the state's population, surpassing the national rate of 12.5 percent. Those numbers suggest that Pennsylvania had the fifth-largest population of people with a disability and ranked No. 17 in the nation for its percentage of population with a disability.

Addressing A Growing Health Problem: Obesity

It's reported that more than 2.2 billion adults and children across the world suffer from health problems related to being overweight or obese. The latest numbers come from a new study published in The New England Journal of Medicine, which suggests that roughly one-third of the world's population has a weight problem, with 10 percent of the population classified as obese. Moreover, the study reports that the highest level of obesity among children and young adults was in the U.S. The climbing obesity rates could result in increases in diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, and other health problems.

Drug-Related Deaths On The Rise Across The Commonwealth

According to the Pennsylvania State Coroners Association, 4,884 drug-related deaths occurred in the state in 2016, a substantial increase from the 2015 total of 3,505.

Drug deaths represent approximately 10 percent of the drug abuse overdose issue in the commonwealth. Until we have the full cooperation and reports on drug overdoses where people survive from hospitals, EMS, law enforcement and all who prescribe and administer Narcan, we're simply putting a bandage on the issue with no long-term solution in sight.

The coroner's association is doing its part by including in its 2016 report overall statistics on drug deaths by county – as well as data on the number of prescriptions written, by county; the number of emergency department visits for overdoses; and the number of cases involving babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.

Opioid Overdoses And Medicaid

A University of Pittsburgh study found that 60 percent of state Medicaid patients who overdosed on opioids and 40 percent who overdosed on heroin filled an opioid prescription within six months of their overdose.



Update On Medical Marijuana Program:

Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana Program, signed into law on April 17, 2016, became effective on May 17, 2016, and is expected to be fully implemented sometime in 2018.

Pennsylvania is still on track to meet that deadline, with a number of dispensaries across the state approved for the cultivation of medical marijuana. The first dispensary opened Jan. 17 in the Lehigh Valley.

While the bill itself was controversial across the board, House and Senate members from both sides of the aisle worked to push this bill to the governor's desk and give residents who would benefit from medical marijuana the relief they need.

As of late December 2017, it's reported that over 10,000 patients have registered for the state program, with nearly 2,000 patients certified by a physician to participate.

Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana Program allows for the use of medical marijuana products for individuals diagnosed with one of the following severe, debilitating, or life-threatening medical conditions:

- Cancer
- HIV/AIDS
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Epilepsy
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis
- Huntington's disease
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Glaucoma
- Sickle cell anemia
- Autism
- Damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord
- Seizures
- Terminal illness
- Severe chronic or intractable pain

It's important to note that the state's Medical Marijuana Act limits medical marijuana to be distributed in the forms of a pill, oil, topical cream, vaporization or nebulization, tincture, and liquid. The Medical Marijuana Act does not allow for the dry leaf or plant form of marijuana.

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Buster The Dog

While Harry was sitting in his favorite chair, eating a chocolate Ding Dong, Maggie yelped to let him know it was her turn to have one. He very firmly told me that dogs are not allowed to eat anything with chocolate because it is very dangerous to our health and could cause death.

Harry knew I was very disappointed and upset, so he tried to change the subject and get me excited about a change that would help my animal friends. He said,

“Pennsylvania moved up to No. 24, instead of its No. 44 standing in 2016, by strengthening its animal protection laws more than any other state last year, according to the Animal Legal Defense Fund.” He added that since August, there are now harsher penalties for animal cruelty. Then Harry said, “That’s not all. We moved from No. 18 to No. 15 in the latest Humane State Rankings.”

As I yawned, Harry said, “I thought you would be thrilled that we are doing more to protect your cousins and friends. Libre’s Law, as it’s known, includes a new felony provision for first-time offenders for committing aggravated animal cruelty, torture, tethering a dog outside for more than nine hours a day without shade and water – and if it’s above 90 degrees or below 32 degrees, the outdoors time limit is 30 minutes.”

I was glad to hear that violators found guilty of animal abuse and other provisions could face 90 days to seven years in jail and fines up to \$15,000. Libre’s Law also grants civil immunity to veterinarians and technicians who report suspected animal abuse, and requires convicted animal abusers to forfeit abused animals to a shelter.

But, I still wanted a Ding Dong while Harry ate his second one. So to pacify me, he gave me three dog treats. I just hope you all remember your animal friends with both good treats and treatment.

