



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Tina
DAVIS

141ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Fighting the Opioid Epidemic

Last April, I hosted a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing at the Ben Franklin Middle School about certification for recovery residences. I thank the parents, local officials and recovery houses who were represented at the hearing. We collected great information to help communities managing recovery residences and shared more detail about how my proposals can help strengthen the recovery system.



Recovery House Legislation Signed by Gov. Wolf

I am pleased to report that legislation to better regulate recovery houses in Pennsylvania unanimously passed the House and was signed into law in December. Senate Bill 446 gives the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) regulatory authority to license or certify recovery homes that receive public funds or referrals from state, county or federal agencies.

I successfully advocated for changes to Senate Bill 446 that ensure that a residence applying for certification is inspected and monitored by DDAP. The department also will develop and administer a certification program as well as standards for operation for recovery residences that receive state or federal funding.

The changes I advocated for reflect county and community input received at numerous public hearings and from testimony and reports delivered by The Bucks County Association of Township Officials (BCATO).

BCATO helped shine tremendous light on how dangerous and unhealthy many recovery homes can be. Thanks to their critical input, all Pennsylvania communities can benefit from a better-written law.

Davis applauds disaster emergency declaration on the heroin and opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania.

On Jan. 10, Gov. Tom Wolf took the bold step of declaring Pennsylvania's heroin and opioid addiction crisis a statewide disaster emergency. The declaration frees up resources and

allows Pennsylvania officials to temporarily override any rules or regulations they perceive as hampering the state's ability to address the epidemic. Per our state constitution, the declaration will remain in effect for 90 days and can be renewed should the governor choose to do so. The declaration makes Pennsylvania the eighth state to take such a step amid a public health scourge that has devastated communities and led to a spike in overdose deaths.

I believe this declaration appropriately labels Pennsylvania's heroin and opioid epidemic what it is: a disaster. I strongly support the governor's decision to put people first by declaring this epidemic a statewide disaster emergency. This declaration will speed up and expand access to treatment and improve tools for families, first responders and others in order to prevent spikes in deaths related to overdose to as many as over 3,383 – in Pennsylvania alone, according to the DEA – in a single year (2015).

As a state representative, I see firsthand the impact that this epidemic is having on our communities and know that we need to use every resource available to address this emergency. That is why I advocated for Senate Bill 446, improving the quality of recovery houses, and other legislation to address this crisis. The governor's declaration will reinforce this legislation and the important ongoing work being done throughout the commonwealth by first responders, local governments, health care providers, recovery organizations and others.

Honoring and Giving Back to Local Veterans



Davis Hosts Thank You Veterans Dinner

On Nov. 16, my office and I hosted a free dinner to thank local veterans at the Bristol Township Senior Center.

We were honored to have Patrick J. Murphy, who served as the 32nd Under Secretary of the Army until January 2017, as our keynote speaker. Murphy was the first Iraq War veteran elected to U.S. Congress, where he served from 2007 to 2011. He is now the distinguished chair of innovation at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, among other positions.

Programs Helping Veterans

There are a number of veteran programs available through the commonwealth, including:

- 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 throughout the great commonwealth 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.

Applications for Help with Heating Now Accepted

The 2017-18 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program – LIHEAP – is open and accepting applications for heating assistance grants.

LIHEAP offers cash grants of \$200 to \$1,000 that are sent directly to the utility company to defray heating costs for eligible households, and crisis benefits of \$25 to \$500 for households in immediate danger of being without heat, from such emergency situations as broken heating equipment or leaking lines, lack of fuel or utility service termination.

For questions or assistance in applying, please call my district office at (267) 580-2660.

Besides my office, LIHEAP information is available by:

- Contacting local County Assistance offices by phone or in person;
- Calling the LIHEAP Client Helpline at 1-866-857-7095; or
- Applying online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

This season's income guidelines for both LIHEAP cash and crisis grants are \$18,090 for an individual and \$24,360 for couples, and the guidelines increase \$6,270 for each additional person in the household.

For more LIHEAP information, please visit www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/heatingassistanceliheap/.

Davis Proposes Emergency Workers Mental Health Commission

My colleague Rep. Mike Schlossberg and I recently introduced House Bill 955, which would create the Emergency Workers Mental Health Commission if passed.

When an emergency occurs, it is the police, firefighter and emergency medical personnel who rush into the fray to save lives and help others. However, often these heroes are silent when their work has caused a crisis in their own lives. The constant pressure and stress of these essential jobs takes a toll. Without help and the proper coping skills, these heroes can find themselves in a deep depression or rely on alcohol or other drugs to cope. Most tragically, sometimes the stress becomes too much to bear and these heroes take their own lives.

This past year, tragedy struck Bucks County when two young firefighters took their own lives. This is a sad story that is told far too often all across Pennsylvania. In an effort to combat these problems, we have decided to introduce this legislation to help those who help and protect us.

If passed, the Emergency Workers Mental Health Commission would be established under the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and be tasked with creating the following:

- A peer-to-peer counselor support network that can work with emergency workers who are having a crisis
- A toll-free hotline for emergency workers to call and get help
- A website providing information on stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and addiction
- Placing posters in every fire station, ambulance bay and police station notifying emergency workers of the toll-free number and website

All of these services would be available to professional or volunteer firefighters, professional or volunteer emergency medical personnel, and law enforcement officers.

Take Advantage of the 2017 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program Before June 30

Homeowners and renters take note: Some of you may qualify for the 2017 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

The program, which permits some state residents to receive rebates on property taxes or rent paid in 2017, is open to eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older and people with disabilities 18 or older.

Homeowners earning a maximum of \$35,000 annually and renters earning a maximum of \$15,000 annually may receive up to \$650 in rebates, depending on income. In addition, some homeowners may qualify for supplemental rebates that can increase their total rebate to \$975. Half of Social Security benefits are not considered as income when determining eligibility.

It's free to apply, and you can pick up an application in my district office at 4530 New Falls Road, Levittown.

Applications also are available online and from Department of Revenue district offices, local Area Agencies on Aging and many senior centers. For more information, visit <http://www.revenue.pa.gov/GeneralTaxInformation/PropertyTaxRentRebateProgram>.

The deadline to apply is June 30.



REAL ID Deadline Extension Granted

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security granted Pennsylvania an extension, through Oct. 10, 2018, on enforcement of the federal REAL ID law. This means that Pennsylvania residents can enter federal facilities and board commercial aircraft using current Pennsylvania driver's licenses and non-driver's ID cards, neither of which are REAL ID-compliant, through that date.

PennDOT anticipates that REAL ID-compliant licenses will be available in Pennsylvania in the spring of 2019. Until then, PennDOT will continue to request extensions from DHS until REAL ID-compliant licenses and ID cards are available for purchase.

No Pennsylvania resident is required to get a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or ID card — you don't need a REAL ID-compliant license to drive, for instance. But if you choose to get one, you will be able to use it to board a plane and enter federal buildings when DHS ultimately enforces REAL ID requirements.

PennDOT will implement a one-time \$30 fee in addition to the current standard driver's license/photo ID fee for a REAL ID-compliant license or ID card. However, renewing a REAL ID-compliant ID won't cost anything extra.

Please note: If your driver's license expires before REAL ID-compliant licenses are available in Pennsylvania, you will have to pay to renew your license and, if you choose to, pay again to get a REAL ID-compliant license when it's available.

To learn more about the REAL ID Act and its requirements, visit www.penndot.gov/REALID.

Get Your SEPTA Senior Pass at My Office

You can apply for a SEPTA Key Senior Photo ID Card at my office by simply calling for an appointment. We'll help you fill out the application and take your picture. The SEPTA Key Senior Photo ID Card will be mailed to you.

Riders with disabilities who have not previously registered with SEPTA for the Reduced Transit Fare Program for persons with disabilities are urged to do so as soon as possible. Because Reduced Fare Key Cards can be loaded with funds and require verification of medical documentation, **Reduced Fare applications must be submitted in person at SEPTA Headquarters**, 1234 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, or at the Accessible Travel Center (Room 108) in Suburban Station, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday – Friday.



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Save the dates!

District Office Open House Coming April 5

My staff and I are hosting an open house from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday, April 5 at our district office, 4530 New Falls Road in Levittown. This is a great opportunity to meet me and my staff and learn more about the services we provide while enjoying light refreshments.



Primary Election Calendar:

April 16 – Last day to register before Primary Election

May 8 – Last day to apply for an Absentee Ballot

May 11 – Last day Absentee Ballot can be received by County Election Office

May 15 – Primary Election: Polls open 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Online voter registration is at www.register.votesPA.com.

SHREDDING EVENT

Free Shredding event scheduled for May 12

Join me and my staff from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday, May 12 for a FREE document shredding event across the street from our district office, which is located at 4530 New Falls Road in Levittown.

Bring your personal financial documents that are no longer needed and any other unneeded papers with confidential information such as account numbers and signatures.

Please no paper clips; staples are OK. There is a limit of five bags or boxes per person. Please remove all non-paper trash from the boxes and bags.

For more information, call my district office at (267) 580-2660.

Bristol Township Awarded \$505,000 in Grants for Local Parks

Bristol Township was recently awarded over \$500,000 in grants for Policeman's and Cedar Avenue parks.

A grant for \$240,000 was awarded by the state Department of Community and Economic Development to Bristol Township for development of a 3-acre park at 500 Cedar Ave.

The grant comes from the state Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program and will be used to transform land containing an abandoned trailer park into a passive recreational park. Bristol Township also will contribute additional funding for the project.

The grant will be used for site improvements including demolition, soil preparation, landscaping, trails, benches, handicapped-accessible ramps and ornamental fencing.

I helped because I strongly believe that any time the opportunity exists for a community to take a dilapidated eyesore and turn it into a beautiful park and a model of

conservation, we must work together to seize it. I'm proud to have worked on this project alongside Sen. Tommy Tomlinson, who assisted with the application.

Construction is scheduled to begin in July and is expected to be completed by December 2018.

Bristol Township also was awarded a \$265,000 grant by the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to continue work at Policeman's Park.

The money will go toward construction of a spray park and parking area, filtration and recirculation systems, handicap access, signage and other improvements.

Congratulations to Bristol Township for saving taxpayer money and landing these competitive grants! We're all looking forward to the completion of Policeman and Cedar Avenue parks, and these grants are certainly helping us get there.