



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Scott Conklin

WINTER 2018
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77TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Conklin receives 2017 Champions for Children award

Last year, I was among the recipients of the 2017 Champions for Children award from the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, in honor of my commitment to improve public policies and increase state investments that benefit the commonwealth's children.

As the Democratic chairman of the House Children and Youth Committee, I was privileged to be one of 60 lawmakers to receive the award, along with Gov. Tom Wolf.



State Supreme Court rules 2011 redistricting map is unconstitutional

In January, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled 5-2 that the state's Congressional Redistricting Act of 2011 violates the Pennsylvania Constitution. The court ordered that the maps be redrawn prior to the 2018 elections, beginning with the primaries scheduled for May 15.

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and others filed a lawsuit against the commonwealth, arguing that the state's congressional redistricting that took place in 2011 was done in order to maximize the number of Republicans elected within certain districts after the 2010 census.

I have long advocated and will always believe that it is the voters who should elect the officials who will represent them. The Supreme Court said it would draw and use its own plan in this year's election if the General Assembly did not pass a new plan by Feb. 9 or if Gov. Tom Wolf did not approve the plan by Feb. 15.

In a bill that I've introduced, H.B. 2020, which would amend the Pennsylvania Election Code, the Congressional Redistricting Commission would be established each year following a decennial census, and it would be required to adhere to redistricting principles created by state and federal law and court precedents.

I want there to be fair and equal representation among legislators, rather than having political parties drawing maps, as is currently done. Partisanship should be left out of the authority to draw congressional districts.

On Tuesday, Jan. 30, I attended a Redistricting Forum at the State College Municipal Building to talk about gerrymandering. Gov. Tom Wolf and State College Borough Mayor Donald Hahn were also among the attendees. The panel and participants provided some great input on ways we can all move forward by working together. Wolf held listening sessions on the topic in State College, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Rep. Scott Conklin chatted with State College Borough Mayor Donald Hahn during a Redistricting Forum on Tuesday, Jan. 30 at the State College Municipal Building. The event was one of three listening sessions Gov. Tom Wolf held regarding the redistricting maps.



Thanks to all who participated in the 'Pathways to Pardons' event

In August, Lt. Gov. Mike Stack and I co-hosted a "Pathways to Pardons" event at the State College Municipal Building. The event brought together various experts from drug and alcohol treatment, to probation and parole, to those who could help with criminal record expungement.

It is imperative that we help those who have made a mistake to clear minor criminal convictions from their records so that they may obtain gainful employment and other opportunities. Stack created the program to bring together experts and the public to ask questions and get answers about their past criminal convictions.

Legislation on Comprehensive Higher Education Study

Last summer, I joined other General Assembly members in supporting legislation regarding a sustainability study on higher education. House Resolution 331 asks the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a feasibility study to analyze the long-term viability of our public institutions of higher education.

The bill was introduced by Rep. Michael Hanna, D-Clinton/Centre, and Rep. James Roebuck, D-Philadelphia. Under it, the public colleges that would be studied include the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, the state's community colleges, the Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, the Rural Regional College of Northern Pennsylvania, the Allegheny College of Maryland and four state-related universities.

I supported this resolution because it would study the affordability of college over the next five years, look for ways to reduce costs, and assess contributions and infrastructure needs, among other things. Our colleges are not exempt from constructive assessment. Communication is key to making college affordable and attainable. The resolution has been referred to the House Education Committee.

Moving forward with the Plan for PA

Plan for PA is what House Democrats and I have been working on in Harrisburg and in our respective districts. Through employment, education and fair taxes, we're making our constituents a priority all throughout the commonwealth.

All of these things are important to me and as the Democratic chairman of Children and Youth Committee, I believe that ensuring our children attend quality schools is imperative in preparing them for a better quality life and future. Learning, whether just beginning, matriculating through college, or attending workforce training, all helps support children and families.

Good jobs help people provide better for their families, help to pay off student debt, buy homes and create better stability. Better taxing principles help people pay taxes they can afford, reduce property taxes and help to eliminate tax loopholes for big corporations.

By putting people first, we're protecting the quality of life among Pennsylvanians, helping them work until retirement, allowing them to manage their own health care, making sure they have financial security and giving them the overall power and assistance they need to lead a stable life.

To find out more about our Plan for PA, visit plan4pa.pahouse.com.

Applications available for 2017 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

For Pennsylvanians who are eligible, applications are now available to begin claiming rebates on property taxes or rent paid in 2017.



Applying for a rebate is free and forms are available at locations including the Department of Revenue district offices, local area agencies on aging, senior centers and state legislators' offices. The deadline to apply is June 30, 2018. Rebates will begin as soon as July 1.

Applicants must reapply for rebates every year because rebates are based on income and property taxes or rent paid in each year. The rebate program benefits residents in the commonwealth who are 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or under. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded.

For more information about the program, visit the Department of Revenue's website, at <http://www.revenue.pa.gov/GeneralTaxInformation/PropertyTaxRentRebateProgram/Pages/Request-an-Application.aspx> or call 1 (888) 222-9190.

RESOLUTIONS HONORING PENN STATE

Last summer, resolutions that I introduced honoring Penn State's Big Ten champion teams during the 2016-17 academic year were approved by the House.

The teams recognized in the resolutions included football, wrestling, men's ice hockey, field hockey, women's soccer, women's indoor track and field, men's outdoor track and field, and men's volleyball. The teams were acknowledged in Harrisburg during "BIG Champs on the Hill Day."

Again, I want to congratulate the eight teams on winning conference championships. I am proud of the students, athletes, parents, educators and community members within the district I serve. Congratulations!



On Saturday, Jan. 20, I participated in the Central PA Women's March in State College to bring awareness to the issues that affect women living in central Pennsylvania and against positions taken by President Donald Trump.



It was my pleasure to meet Sadie Smith, a student at Philipsburg Osceola Senior High School, 502 Philips St., in Philipsburg. Sadie shadowed me during "A Day at the Capitol" on Wednesday, Jan. 24. She is an extraordinary young woman with a bright future and I wish her the best of luck in all of her endeavors.

Thank you!

I am honored and humbled by the trust you have placed in me by bestowing me with the Reader's Choice Awards 2017 Best Public Servant/Politician Award.

Thank you for this accolade. It is truly a privilege to serve as your state representative. I would like to especially thank the readers of The Philipsburg Journal, a newspaper that provides news throughout the Moshannon Valley.



I would like to congratulate the Schlow Centre Region Library, which is located at 211 S. Allen St., in State College, for celebrating its 60th birthday last year. The library was recognized with a citation from the House, which I sponsored. The library started out in the basement of the Fraser School and became a true public library in 1957 when Mr. Charles Schlow renovated a space for the library on one of his properties.



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On Tuesday, Feb. 6, Gov. Tom Wolf delivered his proposed 2018-19 budget address to the General Assembly. Wolf emphasized the need for more money in education, special education, pre-k, and the State System of Higher Education. I applaud Wolf's budget, especially because increased investments made in our children lead to better educational outcomes, a better job workforce and economic development.



MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Issues with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Inquiries about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Issues with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program problems or questions
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Information about federal, state and local government agencies

Any state government-related matter!