



Winter 2018

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Sainato bill would exempt surviving military spouses from paying property taxes

I commend members of our military for putting their lives on the line for our country. While they are overseas protecting us, I make it my personal duty as a state representative to take care of their families here at home.

That's why I introduced House Bill 697, which would exempt the surviving spouse of any member of the Armed Forces killed in action, or who died from injuries they received while in active service, from paying property taxes on their home.

Even if the spouse lived outside of Pennsylvania at the time of their loved one's death but lives here now, the exemption would remain in place. It would also stay in effect if he/she decides to move. However, the exclusion would end if the person remarries.

Wives and husbands in these situations have to deal with the heartbreak of losing their partner in life. You can count on me to keep fighting to ease this burden in any way that I can.

New Castle's medical marijuana site to create more than 100 jobs

The City of New Castle has been selected as one of the first 12 medical marijuana growers/processors sites in Pennsylvania. The selection of Holistic Farms, LLC to operate in New Castle will bring good-paying jobs to the area and spur revitalization on Industrial Road, while developing a safe product for Pennsylvanians suffering from serious medical conditions.

Holistic Farms will be turning the 110,000 square foot former sailboat factory into a state-of-the-art and highly regulated medical marijuana growing facility. At full operation, the company plans on hiring up to 150 employees. These jobs will include office, laboratory, cultivation, and security positions, just to name a few. Holistic Farms successfully operates in Maryland, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C.

In 2016, I supported the bipartisan Pennsylvania Medical Marijuana Act to provide citizens with serious medical conditions, including our most vulnerable children, a safer and more effective medication. For years, I have spoken with ailing patients and families from every corner of the state, who were in desperate need of medical marijuana because it was the only medication that would relieve their symptoms.

The law that I supported will be highly regulated and does not permit marijuana smoking or marijuana edibles. It will, however, provide patients suffering from one of the 19 approved conditions a safe and alternative medical marijuana treatment.



A lot of great information was provided during the Disability Options Network Freedom Fair in downtown New Castle.



I visited with local veterans during the Mt. Jackson Community Day.

Steelite awarded \$1.5 million grant to expand Millennium Industrial Park facility

Steelite International USA Inc. was recently awarded a \$1.5 million state grant to allow the company to expand, bringing more jobs to Lawrence County.

I am pleased to have been part of helping to secure funding for this project. The funds will give Steelite, which is a worldwide supplier of innovating ceramics, the chance to expand its North American headquarters at Millennium Industrial Park in Neshannock Township.

The grant was made possible through the Commonwealth's Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program.

With more than 100 employees, and a staple of Millennium Industrial Park, Steelite International is another glowing example of redevelopment in our community. As your state legislator, be assured that I will continue to advocate for these kinds of projects and work to provide job opportunities for the hard-working people of the 9th Legislative District.

Wreaths Across America

In memory of all United States Armed Forces personnel, I joined fellow Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, Rep. Steve Barrar, along with the Gold and Blue Star Mothers, to host a wreath-laying ceremony, in partnership with Wreaths Across America, at the state Capitol on December 11th.

As Democratic Chairman of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I certainly realize the importance of recognizing and remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, and of course, those who are still fighting for us now. The Wreaths Across America ceremony is a recognition of these families and the sacrifices they make to keep those of us here at home, safe.

This nonprofit organization was founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. Its mission, "Remember, Honor, Teach," is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies each December in all 50 state capitols.

Individual wreaths, signifying every branch of the Armed Services, were formally presented by respective representatives of the military, as well as Gold and Blue Star Mothers. The remembrance wreath was also unveiled.

It was a privilege to speak alongside Maj. Gen. Tony Carrelli, the adjutant general of the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and Lt. Col. Sally Hannan, U.S. Army garrison commander at the Carlisle Barracks, as we honored Pennsylvania's veterans and active duty military.



Opt-in for the Veterans Designation on your driver's license

More than 500,000 Pennsylvania Veterans have opted for the Veterans Designation on their driver's license since the program began in 2014. The designation – an American flag with the word VETERAN beneath it – is a patriotic way for veterans to show their pride and convey to others that they served in the United States military.

The Veterans Designation

does not entitle a veteran to any special consideration or discount, but rather identifies the bearer as a veteran. Any other recognition, such as a discount, complementary meal or other token of appreciation, is completely and solely determined by the organization, business or entity providing a service.

Qualified applicants for the Veterans Designation must

have served in the United States Armed Forces and/or the reserve component, and have been discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

There is no fee for the Veterans Designation, however, regular renewal or duplicate fees still apply. Forms for driver's license or ID renewals and duplicates have a box for

applicants to certify that they are a veteran and to have the designation added. Once the Veterans Designation has been added to a driver's license or identification card, it will automatically appear each time it is renewed.

Veterans who are interested can contact my office for application information.



I was honored to join the New Castle Area Honor Guard as we participated in the Veterans Day Ceremony at Glen-Moore Place.



I visited with members of the New Castle NAACP during the Juneteenth Celebration in Downtown New Castle.

Sainato joins PEMA Council in supporting statewide opioid declaration

In my ongoing mission to end the heroin and opioid epidemic, I voted in support of a statewide disaster declaration made in January, to take our addiction fight to the next level.

As Democratic Chairman of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, one of my duties is to serve as a member of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Council. This group is required to approve all statewide disaster declarations within 72 hours of being made. The declaration is the first-of-its-kind for a public health emergency in the commonwealth. It will utilize a command center at PEMA's headquarters to track progress and enhance coordination of health and public safety agencies.

There is no denying the amount of devastation the opioid crisis has

caused throughout the state, and I am sure you know someone who lost their life fighting this battle. Even worse is the struggle their families go through in their absence.

Some of the goals set by the administration to address the issue include enhancing coordination and data collection to bolster state and local response; improving tools for families, first responders and others to save lives; and speeding up and expanding access to treatment.

The declaration comes on the heels of the General Assembly's passage of more than a dozen state laws, which aim to put a stop to drug abuse before it starts. A few of these new laws include prescription limits, better education outreach, as well as efforts to increase the availability of the overdose-reversing drug naloxone and improved treatment options.

Sainato part of commission to address fire and EMS issues

I recently joined my fellow House and Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee Chairmen to discuss pressing issues facing our first responders.

We created and are all part of the Senate Resolution 6 Commission (SR 6), which is a bipartisan, bicameral group that focuses on addressing problems involving emergency services across the commonwealth.

SR 6 is tasked with reviewing and determining what is working and what improvements need to be made to preserve and grow our fire and EMS systems for the future of Pennsylvania. We must also compile a report concentrating on specific concerns shared by fire departments and ambulance corps across the state, such as recruitment, retention, and delivery of services.

As part of this initiative, my colleagues in the General Assembly and I have introduced several bills to complement and build on previous efforts to help Pennsylvania's first responders.

I am proud to offer House Bill 1224, which would provide college loan forgiveness to volunteer firefighters. Other bills being introduced include:

- Offering online training to make the process more convenient;
- Developing a pilot program to offer firefighter training in secondary schools;
- Tax credits for businesses who excuse their employees when they need to respond to emergencies or undergo training; and
- Provide new billing options for fire departments and EMS organizations.

It is an honor be part of this bipartisan effort, as the commission can do a great deal of good for our emergency responders and ultimately help protect our communities.



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Lawrence County receives \$1.2 million to combat homelessness

The Department of Community and Economic Development has awarded two Emergency Solutions Grants totaling \$1,238,821 to Lawrence County in the fight to reduce both veterans and general homelessness.

Homelessness is frequently mislabeled as a problem that is only symptomatic of larger cities. This cannot be further from the truth, as homelessness is an issue that is prevalent in rural regions, including western Pennsylvania. That is why I am encouraged by the awarding of these two grants.

\$400,000 will fund regional veterans' services to house veterans through rapid rehousing initiatives, veterans' homelessness prevention, and street outreach to veterans.

\$838,821 will go toward decreasing general homelessness through similar methods of rapid rehousing, homelessness prevention, and street outreach.

Lawrence County Community Action, an organization which has a long track record of success in our region, will administer these programs. I look forward to working with it to decrease homelessness in western Pennsylvania.

Sainato's perfect attendance reaches 23 years and counting

I have had the honor and privilege of serving as your state representative for the past 23 years. That equals out to more than 8,300 days, and I'm proud to say, I have never missed a legislative session day.

My perfect attendance record is driven by you and the needs of your families. I come to work understanding the importance of quality education, job opportunities, and healthcare for our communities. I realize seniors need a voice in Harrisburg and rely on me for information about state-related programs, guidance on how to best save money, and warnings about the latest scams.

The heroism of our first responders, active military members, and veterans encouraged me to seek the position of Democratic Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. In this role, I am constantly working on bills that repay their bravery and encourage others to join in their mission.

Even though this job takes me hundreds of miles away from home, I made a commitment to you and the rest of the 9th Legislative District. You can count on me to continue to be active in the district, as well as participate in committee meetings and policy hearings around the state.



Music and pastries were enjoyed by all at the annual Christmas in Mahoningtown Celebration.