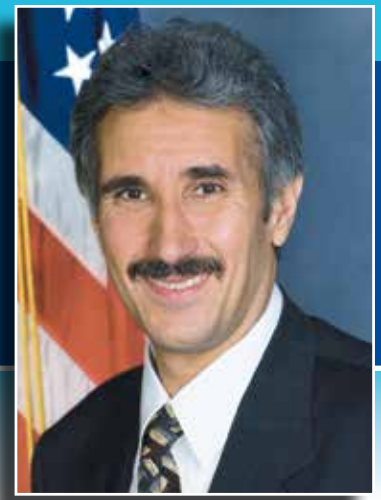


Rep. Chris

Sainato

Senior Report



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Sainato supports bill to better protect seniors from financial abuse

I am disgusted when I hear about seniors getting scammed out of their savings. The deceit has to stop, and as your state representative, I am standing behind legislation that would better protect their bank accounts from consumer fraud.

House Bill 1339 would add a definition to the state's Older Adults Protective Services Act for "financial abuse" to address situations where intentional acts of deception involving financial transactions – such as lottery, email and mail schemes – occur.

According to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, the

commonwealth ranks third for the highest percentage of individuals 65 years and older. With the fastest-growing part of that population being 85 years and beyond, this group tends to be favored targets for identity, telemarketing and sweepstakes fraud.

You can count on me to keep fighting back against these thieves and make sure they're held accountable for their crimes.

If you want to report fraud, you may call the PA Attorney General's Elder Abuse Helpline toll free at 1-866-623-2137. Well trained staff will provide help.



It was a pleasure to walk with the good folks of Challenges at their annual Walk for Fitness at Cascade Park.

Watch out for PA Lottery scams

The Pennsylvania Lottery is once again warning consumers to watch out for emails, phone calls, or text and social media messages from scammers posing as lottery employees.

One of the most recent reported telephone scams mentions the Mega Millions® game while recent email and Facebook scams mention Powerball®.

Scammers will pose as "claim agents" or "claim officers," sometimes offering a "badge number" or similar fake information in an attempt to sound legitimate. Online, they will pretend to be a lottery employee or even pose as someone on your list of friends.

In many cases, the imposter will claim you won a prize, and in order to get it,

you need to give them money, a credit card number or bank information.

It's most likely a scam if:

- You are told to buy a pre-paid debit card in order to pay an up-front "processing fee" or taxes – this is a major hallmark of a scam;
- You are asked for financial information such as credit card or bank routing numbers;
- The supposed prize is in pounds, euros, or anything other than dollars;
- An email contains poor grammar or misspellings;
- A call sounds as if it could be coming from outside of the United States;
- You are instructed to keep the news

of your supposed "win" a secret; and

- You are told to call a certain phone number to "verify" the prize. Instead of calling it, look up the lottery's published number, call and ask to speak with security.

If you feel you have been targeted by these scams, please call the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 1-800-366-4484.

Complaints also may be filed with the Federal Trade Commission through the website, www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

You can also get more information and report scams to the state Office of Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection at 1-800-441-2555.

Sainato pushes legislation to waive state ID fee

One of my top priorities in Harrisburg is finding ways to save you money by cutting unneeded expenses from your budget. My efforts are especially crucial for seniors forced to live on a fixed income.

To help ease the economic burden, I co-sponsored House Bill 974 that would waive part of the renewal fee for state identification cards for anyone who received their initial one for free.

Currently, older Pennsylvanians who surrender their driver's license receive an ID card at no cost. However, when it expires, they are left having to pay a renewal fee.

This legislation would eliminate that fee, with the exception of the photograph, which would be charged by PennDOT.

The bill is currently in the House Transportation Committee.



Sampling the delicious baked goods is one of my favorite things to do at the St. Vitus Festival.



I stopped by for some popcorn at the First Assembly of God's booth during the New Castle Community YMCA's Healthy Kids Day.

Sainato fights to ease burden for grandparents raising grandchildren in light of the growing opioid epidemic

I am committed to my fight against the opioid epidemic, the scope of which has triggered a disaster emergency in the state. The ongoing crisis is not only taking lives at an alarming rate, but has resulted in a growing number of grandparents taking care of their grandchildren.

Now, I'm standing behind legislation that is crucial in helping children of addicts and making it easier for grandparents to step in and take on a parental role.

The numbers don't lie. In Pennsylvania, there are approximately 90,000 grandparents raising more than 235,000 grandchildren because the children's parents are unable or unwilling to do so, often times because of drug or alcohol dependency issues.

While grandparents are quick to take responsibility of their loved ones, they are also left dealing with a gray area in our legal system. Under current law, they are not eligible for many of the benefits and assistance given to traditional parents or foster parents, which can lead to struggles for grandparents as providers.

For this reason, I co-sponsored House Bill 1539 that would still protect the rights of the parents, while, at the same time, provide a way for grandparents to obtain temporary guardianship and the legal right to make basic, parental decisions, including enrolling a child in school or taking them to the doctor.

I understand the needs of children are constant and can be

overwhelming, but placing them in the foster care system can be costly, both emotionally and financially.

This bill would allow grandparents to be loving, supporting caregivers without having to contend with unnecessary legal and monetary struggles.

If you or someone you know is battling a prescription drug or heroin addiction, there is help. Call the state's helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for information about treatment resources. Your call is completely confidential. The hotline is staffed by trained professionals and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also visit www.dhs.pa.gov for more information about available treatment services.

How to save and stay safe this winter

Apply for LIHEAP

During the winter months, staying warm can get expensive, but just because the temperature drops doesn't mean your heating bill needs to rise.

One way to make this time of the year more affordable is through the state's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. LIHEAP helps low-income families pay their heating bills by offering:

- Cash grants to help with heating bills, which are sent directly to utility companies or fuel providers; and
- Crisis grants to help with heating

emergencies, such as a furnace failure or unexpected fuel shortage.

How do you know if you're eligible? Qualifying household income limits vary according to family size.

After your application is reviewed, you will receive a written notice explaining your eligibility and the amount of assistance you will receive. Payments are generally sent directly to a utility company or fuel dealer and are credited to your account. Please allow 30 days for a response.

LIHEAP applications are being accepted until April 6. You can apply online, on paper or in person. If

Qualifying household income limits vary according to family size.

Household Size	Income Limits Cash/Crisis Program
1	\$18,090
2	\$24,360
3	\$30,630
4	\$36,900

Each Additional Person ADD \$6,270

you need help with the application process, please stop by my office at the Z-Penn Building at 20 S. Mercer St. in New Castle or call us at (724) 656-1112.



I was honored to take part in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

Don't forget your senior discount!

Retail stores and restaurants aren't the only places offering valuable discounts to seniors these days!

The commonwealth provides discounts to seniors on a variety of state services, ranging from driver services to recreational activities. Here is one that you should take advantage of:

Reduced-cost automobile registrations

PennDOT offers retired Pennsylvanians earning less than \$19,200 annually a reduced yearly automobile registration rate of \$10, compared to the normal \$37. When determining eligibility, the income of the person to whom the vehicle is registered will be used. For vehicles registered to married couples, only one person's income will be utilized. Be sure to stop by my district office for additional information.



Free help with Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

If you qualify, you can receive a rebate of up to \$650 on the property taxes or rent you paid in 2017.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is open to homeowners and renters who are 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; or anyone 18 or older with a disability. Your household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter, and you only have to count half of your Social Security benefits toward your total income when applying.

You may call my office at (724) 656-1112 or stop by at the Z-Penn Building at 20 S. Mercer St. in New Castle for application information and for FREE help with applying.





STATE REP. CHRIS SAINATO

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Do you have difficulty paying for your prescriptions?

Pennsylvania's PACE program can help

PACE, PACENET and PACE plus Medicare are Pennsylvania's prescription assistance programs for senior citizens. The programs offer low-cost prescription medication to eligible Pennsylvania residents who meet the income qualifications.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for PACE and PACENET, you must be:

- 65 or older
- A Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days before applying
- NOT enrolled in the Department of Human Services' Medicaid prescription benefit

What are the income qualifications?

■ PACE and PACENET eligibility is determined by your previous calendar year's income

PACE

- For a single person, total income must be \$14,500 or less
- For a married couple, combined total income must be \$17,700 or less

PACENET

- For a single person, total income can be between \$14,500 and \$23,500
- For a married couple, combined total income can be between \$17,700 and \$31,500

What is PACE Plus Medicare?

Under PACE Plus Medicare, PACE/PACENET coverage is supplemented by federal Medicare Part D prescription coverage and offers older Pennsylvanians the best benefits of both programs. Older adults continue to receive the same prescription benefits while, in many cases, saving more money.

My office can provide you with more information about PACE, PACENET and PACE Plus Medicare, and help you with the application process. Please contact my office at (724) 656-1112 about these programs.



It's always a pleasure to see all of the smiling faces at the Memories Car Cruise in Downtown New Castle.



I visited with The Red Coat Band during the Italian Festival at Cascade Park.