

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

P.O. BOX 202166

HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2166

lpo.jil.0718

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

JULY 2018

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

DISTRICT OFFICE:

1001 East Darby Road
Havertown, PA 19083
(610) 789-3900
Fax: (215) 560-4197

EMAIL: greg@gregvitali.com

CAPITOL OFFICE:

38B East Wing
P.O. Box 202166
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2166
(717) 787-7647
Fax: (717) 705-2089

WEBSITE: www.gregvitali.com



New Law May Help Protect Stoneleigh

Legislation was recently enacted to make it more difficult for certain governmental entities, including school districts, to take land under a conservation easement by eminent domain. The new law requires local orphans' court approval before conserved lands can be taken under eminent domain. The court can only approve claims after sufficient evidence has been presented that shows no other site is suitable.

This law was enacted as a direct response to Lower Merion School District's consideration of taking all or a portion of Stoneleigh Gardens, a 42-acre parcel preserved by a conservation easement, by eminent domain.

Recently, Lower Merion School District entered into an agreement of sale for a parcel next to Stoneleigh for the site of a new middle school. Seven acres of Stoneleigh are still being considered by LMSD for athletic fields. LMSD

has stated that acquiring a portion of Stoneleigh is a last resort.

Stoneleigh Gardens, located next to Villanova University, was gifted by the Haas family to Natural Lands Trust in 2016 for conservation. After two years of planning, Stoneleigh opened to the public on May 12.



Stoneleigh Mansion

PennDOT Launches REAL ID Website

PennDOT has launched a website with information on REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and identification cards. Residents interested in information on the REAL ID program and required documents can visit www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID/.

A REAL ID-compliant license or ID card will soon be necessary if you wish to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a federal facility and you do not already have a REAL ID, such as a U.S. Passport or Military ID. PennDOT will begin issuing REAL ID-compliant licenses and ID cards in spring 2019.

To better prepare for REAL ID, Pennsylvania residents who obtained their first license or ID card after September 2003 may now use the website's pre-verification portal to confirm that their required documents are already on file. If you are pre-verified after your record is reviewed by PennDOT staff, you will

be able to apply for a REAL ID online in spring 2019.

Residents who obtained their first license or ID card before September 2003 will need to personally visit a licensing facility or REAL ID Center and provide documentation, starting on Sept. 1, 2018. You are advised to begin preparing documentation now, especially if you will need to obtain a birth certificate or non-laminated Social Security card.

Pennsylvania driver's licenses and ID cards can still be used for all identification purposes, including domestic air travel and federal facility access, through at least Oct. 10, 2018, and most likely until after PennDOT is ready to issue REAL ID-compliant licenses in spring 2019.

My office can help you obtain a birth certificate and answer any questions you might have.

Civics Test Bill Signed into Law; Keystone Exams Delayed

A new law will require Pennsylvania students to take a test either in middle school or high school to assess their civic knowledge. The state Department of Education has until the 2020-21 school year to implement the requirement.

Students who receive perfect scores will receive a certificate from the state Department of Education, though passing the test will not be required to graduate.

I voted against the bill. Educational professionals and parents have informed me that students are already subject to excessive testing.

Implementation of the Keystone Exams as a high school

graduation requirement was delayed another year as part of budget-related legislation passed in June.

Passing the exams will not be required to graduate until the 2020-2021 school year.

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course tests designed to assess proficiency in several subject areas. They were implemented in the 2012-2013 school year for juniors and seniors as a component of Pennsylvania's system of high school graduation requirements.

I supported this delay. Educational professionals from our school districts have advised against using the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement.

PA Lottery Introduces Online Games

Authorized by legislation passed last fall, the Pennsylvania lottery has introduced online lottery games.

iLottery games are interactive games played on a computer, tablet, or mobile device.

Players 18 years or older can visit www.pailottery.com to try out demo versions of the new games for free, sign up for an account, and link their debit card or bank account.

Responsible player features are available that will allow players to configure time, deposit, and spend limits on their account, as well as providing for self-imposed "cool-off" periods of 30 days, one year, or five years.

I voted against the gambling expansion bill that authorized iLottery because I feel that it is bad public policy to raise public funds on addictive behavior.

College Avenue Bridge Reopened; Work to Begin on Ardmore Bridge Next Spring

The new College Avenue Bridge over SEPTA railroad tracks and Cobbs Creek was opened on June 7.

Improvements included widening the bridge and the College Avenue and Haverford Road intersection, installing new traffic signals, and adding left turn lanes on College Avenue.

The Ardmore Avenue Bridge, built in 1927, is expected to close for replacement in spring 2019. The project will also include new ADA-compliant curb ramps for SEPTA station access. Final engineering design and the bid package are currently being completed. The new bridge is expected to reopen in spring 2020.

PA Medical Marijuana Program Updated

This spring, the Secretary of Health approved several updates to Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana Program.

Medical marijuana can now be dispensed in dry leaf or plant form for administration by vaporization. This change will ease the cost on consumers and allow for faster receipt of benefits.

Neurodegenerative diseases, remission therapy, terminal illness, dyskinetic and spastic movement disorders and opioid-use disorder have been added to the list of medical conditions that qualify for the program.

Patients who wish to obtain medical marijuana must:

1. Visit the Patients and Caregivers Registry online at padohmmp.custhelp.com/app/login and create a patient profile.
2. Obtain a physician's certification that you suffer from one of the qualifying medical conditions. To find

an approved physician, go to <https://bit.ly/2J7TvFS>.

3. Return to the Patient and Caregivers Registry online and pay for a medical marijuana ID card (\$50).
4. Obtain medical marijuana from an approved dispensary in Pennsylvania.

Dispensaries that have opened in the area include:

- TerraVida Holistic Centers in Malvern – (484) 328-3442
- Ilera Healthcare in Plymouth Meeting – (484) 531-4420
- Keystone Shops in King of Prussia – (484) 581-7189

Questions about the Medical Marijuana Program can be emailed to RA-DHMedMarijuana@pa.gov. More information is also available on the Department of Health website at www.medicalmarijuana.pa.gov.

Clean Slate Act Signed into Law

Pennsylvania last month became the first state to sign into law a measure that will automatically clean the criminal records of people with minor infractions under certain circumstances.

Under the Clean Slate Act, summary offenses and misdemeanors of the second and third degree – such as marijuana possession, shoplifting, and underage drinking – will be automatically sealed for individuals who have been conviction-free for 10 years. Previously, individuals would have to petition a court to do so.

Individuals who might be applying for a job or completing a standard background check are not required to disclose sealed criminal records unless a criminal justice agency requests it. Under the change, individuals whose records become sealed or expunged may respond to requests over their criminal history,

such as employment and housing applications, as though the infractions never occurred.

Individuals also will be allowed to petition the court to seal convictions of misdemeanors of the first degree if they are conviction free for 10 years and have paid all court-ordered financial debts. Arrests without convictions will now automatically be sealed after 3 years.

The Clean Slate Act will not apply to certain repeat offenders, or to crimes relating to violent offenses, firearms, sexual offenses, child endangerment, corruption of minors, or cruelty to animals.

The intent of the act is to assist people who have paid their debts for small infractions by eliminating obstacles to entering the workforce and obtaining housing.

New Law Will Protect Newborns of Addicted Mothers

Recently enacted legislation, taking effect in October, will alter the way the state handles babies born to mothers battling addiction. The new law will bring Pennsylvania into compliance with legislation enacted in 2016 by the federal government under the amended Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

The new law requires hospitals to report any newborns affected by their mother's drug use to the Department of Human Services. DHS will then assess if a referral to a county's child protective agency is necessary. The agency must then decide if the baby needs protective custody or if it can return home with

its mother. If a newborn is sent home, the agency must develop a "plan of safe care." The plan will need to include substance-abuse treatment options for parents and caregivers.

Previous law had made it necessary for newborns to show physical symptoms of withdrawal in order for a hospital to refer them to DHS. The new law expands that practice to include newborns who do not show physical symptoms.

To encourage addicted mothers to seek medical care, a healthcare provider's notification to DHS will not constitute a report of child abuse.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Deadline Extended to Dec. 31

The application deadline for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been extended from June 30 to Dec. 31, 2018.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program provides a state rebate on 2017 property taxes or rent to income-eligible residents who are 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older. To be eligible, your household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter.

When applying, you only have to count half of your Social Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I

benefits toward your total income.

You can obtain an application in my office or download the form online by going to www.revenue.pa.gov, scrolling to "Tax Information" on the top of the page, and then clicking on "Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program."

If you have already applied for a rebate this year, you can check its status by going to www.doreservices.state.pa.us/PITServices/WheresMy/Rebate. The Department of Revenue began sending out payments on July 1st.

My office can help you apply.

Upcoming Hazardous Household Waste Collections

There will be household hazardous waste collections in southeastern Pennsylvania in 2018. All events will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine.

- **Sunday, September 16**
Penn State University Brandywine Campus
25 Yearsly Mill Road (Pa. Route 352)
Media
- **Saturday, September 22**
Spring-Ford 9th Grade Center
400 South Lewis Road
Royersford
- **Saturday, October 6**
Upper Chichester Municipal Building
8500 Furey Road
Upper Chichester

- **Sunday, October 21**
Lower Merion Transfer Station
1300 N. Woodbine Ave.
Penn Valley

Household hazardous waste includes household products labeled poisonous, toxic, flammable, caustic, corrosive, reactive or explosive. Items containing Freon and electronic waste will not be accepted.

For more information about collections in Delaware County, call the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority at (610) 892-9627 or visit www.co.delaware.pa.us/SWA.

For more information about collections in Montgomery County, call the Montgomery County recycling hotline at (610) 278-3618 or visit www.montcopa.org/recycling.

Free Notary Service at District Office

You can have most official documents notarized for free in my district office. Please call ahead to make sure the notary is in the office and can accommodate your type of document.

Examples of documents that my office is not able to notarize include car titles, wills, powers of attorney (financial and advance directives for health care), and the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9.

Notary work is done most weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in person, in the presence of the notary, and provide proof of identity such as a valid driver's license, photo ID card, or passport. Please let my staff know if witnesses are needed, in addition to the notary, for your documents. My office has a limit of five notarizations per person.

My office is on the second floor. If you are unable to climb stairs, please let us know when you call, and we can arrange to have the notary meet you on the ground floor.

Receive Newsletters Electronically

I am sending newsletters via email to reduce postage costs and save paper.

If you want receive only an electronic copy, go to my website, www.gregvitali.com, and click on "Sign up to receive your newsletters here" on the bottom right of the page.

Join My Email Update List

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates from me about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. If you would like to be added to that list, please email my office at RepVitali@pahouse.net.

Follow Me on Social Media

You can follow me on Facebook at [Facebook.com/RepVitali](https://www.facebook.com/RepVitali). There you will find updates from Harrisburg, district news and other important state-related information.

You also can follow me on Twitter [@GregVitali](https://twitter.com/GregVitali).