



Capitol UPDATE

State Representative
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WORKING FOR YOU

PA STATE BUDGET DELIVERS FOR ALLENTOWN

Ensuring a bright future for our children is a moral responsibility we have as a society. Each child deserves access to world-class education and I am committed to fighting for it every day I am in office.

The 2018-19 budget delivers much needed resources to the Allentown School District. Earlier in the year, the district's leadership projected a \$28 million deficit but was able to reduce that number through diligence and hard work.

Sen. Pat Browne, Rep. Peter Schweyer and I were able to secure additional state resources to eliminate the rest of that budget deficit, providing a \$10 million supplement in the state budget.

Bipartisan cooperation has to be more than a catchphrase. It needs to be a way of governing. Sen. Browne, Rep. Schweyer and I put aside labels and did what was right for the community.

Gun Violence: Time to Say "NO MORE!"

It seems each year the rash of gun violence across the country gets worse as mass shootings in schools, churches and public places continue to make headlines. People often ask, "How many kids have to die before we do something?" I am committed to every measure that helps to answer: "No more!"

Thankfully, there has been a change in tone because Americans are mad and they expect action to curtail gun violence in our communities. In Harrisburg, measures intended to take guns out of the hands of violent abusers came out of the Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support.

I welcome all of these developments to ensure public safety and look forward to the opportunity to make progress on these issues in the fall. I also firmly believe we need to further enact policies that address gun violence where it is affected by mental health. On several occasions, I have supported efforts to increase funding available for mental health services while watching efforts in Washington — including attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act — undercut federal commitments to supporting those mental health services. It simply is not enough — or accurate — to say mental health is a threat to community safety: we have to actually pay for the services!



Standing with activists in the call to end gun violence in our communities.

Progress on Mental Health

Mental health continues to be an area of focus for me. A recent report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed suicide rates have increased by more than 34% since 1999 in Pennsylvania. We have a lot of work to do to ensure mental health services are in place to protect human life from the devastating effects of neglected mental health. Here are a couple of measures I've pushed in the last few months:



#StrongMomStrongBaby

At the start of the session, Rep. Tarah Toohil (R) and I re-introduced legislation to add postpartum depression to the list of conditions that would make early intervention services available for children. We called the legislation, #StrongMomStrongBaby. In June, that legislation passed the House 196-0. The legislation was referred to a Senate committee where it must be passed in order for Gov. Tom Wolf to sign it into law. This legislation would allow 8,000 more children in Pennsylvania to access existing early intervention services. Families deserve to know support is available when mom needs it most.

Suicide Prevention Fences

In June, Gov. Wolf signed legislation that included language I introduced to require PennDOT to consider protective fencing during the design process on bridges in locations where there is a known suicide problem. The fencing envisioned in this amendment was a key part of the 8th Street Bridge renovation in Allentown. The bridge has a sad history of being the place where a number of people have attempted or completed suicide by jumping off the bridge. Since the fencing was installed, that hasn't happened and I have no doubt it has saved lives. Simply by reducing a person's access to lethal means to complete suicide, a person has the opportunity to escape crisis and find help.

Bringing Harrisburg to Allentown

Red Means Stop: This is What Democracy Looks Like

In 2017, Amber Clark came to my office with an observation: too many motorists ignore the stop sign mounted on school buses. She came armed with a petition signed by hundreds of people asking for Pennsylvania to take steps to make rides to school safer. Amber had done some research on what other states have done to make it easier to enforce the law requiring other drivers to stop when that stop sign is deployed and lights are flashing.



Working with Sen. Pat Browne, PennDOT, law enforcement and school officials, we were able to introduce legislation that would make it easier to catch drivers. Since then, Amber and her daughter Olivia have continued to do advocacy work to build public support for this legislation, helping it to advance in the Senate.

Amber and Olivia help to illustrate an important lesson: Democracy still works for those who take responsibility for the common good.

Pathways to Pardons

Working with Reps. Schweyer and McNeill, I hosted a Pathways to Pardons forum with support from the lieutenant governor's office. They covered a variety of important topics to help people get answers to questions they have about the pardon process in Pennsylvania. For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons online: www.bop.pa.gov.

Muslim Association of the Lehigh Valley Open House

In April, I attended the spring open house with the Muslim Association of the Lehigh Valley at the Islamic Center. This is absolutely one of my favorite events of the year. Here is Ayla, my daughter, experiencing henna for the first time. This is a wonderful event, and I really appreciate having the opportunity to learn about different cultures.



Holocaust Memorial Service



In April, Gov. Tom Wolf hosted the annual Holocaust Remembrance event and invited me to participate. I lit a candle on behalf of my grandparents, Harry and Helen Herzberg, both Holocaust survivors. Events like these are tragically necessary in order to ensure that we live the philosophy of Never Again. Now, more than ever, those events are vitally important for lifting up our value of true religious freedom.

Honoring Our Veterans

License Plates



You don't need to be a veteran to show your support of veterans by purchasing the "Honoring our Veterans" license plate. This plate is available for motorcycles, passenger cars and light trucks up to 10,000 lbs. My office has the application for this special plate and can submit it and payment to PennDOT to ensure proper processing. Give us a call at 610-821-5577 or bring your vehicle registration information to my office at 2030 W. Tilghman St. in Allentown.

The price of the "Honoring Our Veterans" license plate is currently \$36 and \$15 from the sale of each license plate goes to the Veterans' Trust Fund to assist and support Pennsylvania's veterans and their families. Learn more about the Veterans' Trust Fund at www.vtf.pa.gov.

Veterans Registry



Pennsylvania is always looking for ways to better serve our veterans. One way to find information about services for veterans is through the Pennsylvania Veterans Registry. This online portal links veterans, family members, and employers of veterans to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to more easily find information on state programs, services, and benefits for veterans. Registrants can also opt to receive newsletters and updates on current programs. To register, visit: <https://register.dmva.pa.gov>.

Veterans and Spouses Burial Information

Veterans and their spouses may be eligible for interment in one of the three open national veterans cemeteries maintained by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The three cemeteries in Pennsylvania are: National Cemetery of the Alleghenies, Indiantown Gap National Cemetery and Washington Crossing National Cemetery.

Burial benefits are available to eligible veterans and include a gravesite, a government headstone, a flag and a Presidential Memorial Certificate.

My office has information about eligibility for interment and contact information for each of the three national cemeteries in Pennsylvania.



American Flag Collections

Throughout the year, my office collects American flags to be turned over to a community group for proper retirement. This year, people delivered more than 200 flags to my office. Those flags were retired by the Lehigh County Office of Veterans Affairs as part of a Flag Day ceremony. We will continue to collect flags year-round. You can bring them to my office at 2030 W. Tilghman St. in Allentown.



No longer Using a License Plate?

A lot of people don't know what to do with a license plate when selling a car. Bring it to my office!

It is important to know unused license plates may continue to be your responsibility even after transferring the title. This means you may be responsible for anything that happens with that license plate, including things like parking tickets or tolls.

When selling a car, if you don't plan to reuse the license plate, the safest thing to do is to retain possession of the license plate and return it to PennDOT through my Allentown office. We'll ensure safe delivery to PennDOT at no expense to you. If you have any questions about a plate you still hold, please give my office a call at 610-821-5577.



Visitors to the Capitol

The Pennsylvania Capitol is a magnificent building. If you or your organization is interested in visiting the Capitol, give my office a call to make arrangements. Here are a few of the people I had the opportunity to welcome to the Capitol this spring.



Ritter Elementary

In April, I was able to welcome students from Ritter Elementary School!



Parkland High School Students

It was my pleasure to welcome Parkland High School students Andria Ahrens and Abigail Gordon. They spent the day learning about the General Assembly.



Jewish Day School

As you can see, a big group of students from the Jewish Day School of the Lehigh Valley came to visit.



Trexler Middle School

Students from Trexler Middle School were in the Capitol for the PA Association of Educational Communications and Technology Day. They made quite an impression with their demonstrations. Allentown is proud!



Government Jobs Fair

Boys & Girls Club Gym
Cumberland Gardens
501 E. Susquehanna St.
Allentown, PA 18103

September 6, 2018 4 PM—7 PM

Co-Hosted w/ Rep. Schweyer and Rep. McNeill
Bring copies of your up-to-date resume!

Learn about job and career opportunities through government agencies serving Allentown.

In Our Schools



Rides to School

Every year, the Allentown Fire Department recognizes Allentown students who excel in the areas of academics, citizenship, behavior, attendance and leadership with a ride on a fire truck to school. As a reward, students are picked up at home and taken to school where they are greeted by their classmates. Allentown has some wonderful students and it was great to see some of them get the recognition they deserve.



Dieruff Student Awards

Each year, Dieruff High School celebrates the best and brightest students at the annual Troika Awards Ceremony. Joining Rep. Peter Schwyer and me is Stefan Quinones, winner of the scholarship for a student interested in public service.

Muhlenberg Elementary

I had the pleasure of participating in Muhlenberg Elementary School's Career Day. It's always fun to answer questions students have about jobs in the community.



Visit to Sheridan

I definitely enjoyed a fun time at Sheridan Elementary School meeting with 5th-graders to talk about state government. The students were incredibly well-prepared and asked some really impressive questions.



News For Seniors

PTRR Deadline Extended

In 2017, across Pennsylvania, approximately 548,000 people claimed over \$262 million in rebates on rent and property taxes. Gov. Tom Wolf extended the deadline for this program from June 30 to Dec. 31, 2018.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is open to:

- Eligible seniors 65 or older;
- Widows and widowers 50 or older; and
- People with permanent disabilities 18 or older.

To qualify, applicants must earn less than \$35,000 per year (for homeowners) or \$15,000 per year (for renters) – and only HALF of Social Security or railroad retirement benefits count toward eligibility. Residents of assisted living facilities may be eligible if they reside in a facility which pays property taxes and meet the income limits for renters. If you're eligible – or you know someone who might be – my office can help you file the application and answer questions. Just stop by 2030 W. Tilghman St. in Allentown, or call 610-821-5577 and I will mail you the information.



2018 Senior Fair

On May 18, Rep. Peter Schwyer and I hosted our annual Senior Fair. The event included a variety of government and nonprofit agencies helping aging adults to live active lives. Thank you to all the vendors for providing such great information and the East Side Youth Center for hosting us again.



Medicare Open Enrollment

Do you know everything you need to know about your Medicare coverage? If you join a private Medicare or prescription plan, your details could change and it could cost you. Medicare open enrollment begins Oct. 15 and ends Dec. 7. My office hosts a specially trained Apprise Counselor to help you understand your benefits. When open enrollment begins, this person will be available on Tuesdays from Oct. 16 to Dec. 4. Give my office a call at 610-821-5577 to schedule your appointment. While this seems like it's far away, don't delay in making an appointment as there are limited spots available and they go fast.



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In Our Community

Special Olympics Kick Off

Every year, a group of dedicated volunteers host the Lehigh County Special Olympics Track and Field events. It was a true pleasure to attend and participate in the kick off.



Chief Rusty Held

For more 35 years, Russel “Rusty” Held has served the Woodlawn Fire Department, including 21 years as chief of the department. Throughout the years, Rusty has made himself available at all hours of the day and night, often at great personal risk, to protect the lives and property of those in his community. Like the many volunteer firefighters across the Commonwealth, he is a sterling example of duty, sacrifice and citizenship. It was a true honor to present a citation to Rusty on behalf of the House of Representatives to thank him for giving so much to our community.

Sheriff Scams



This spring, a constituent posted something in a Facebook

group about a call she received, supposedly from the Lehigh County Sheriff's Office. She was told she had failed to appear for jury duty and was to pay a fine or be arrested. This was certainly a scam and the Lehigh County sheriff has put out statements encouraging anybody who gets calls from somebody claiming to be from the sheriff's office to call 610-782-3175.