

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

MARCH 2019

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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My Office Can Help Seniors Obtain SEPTA Key Cards

Seniors who present a SEPTA Key Senior ID Card ride for free on all SEPTA service lines within Pennsylvania.

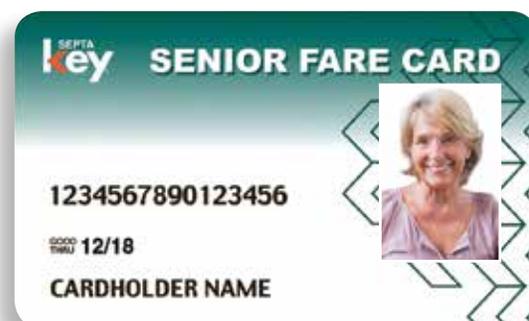
My district office can help complete applications and take photos for seniors who need a card. Bring with you a form of identification with a date of birth on it, such as a Pennsylvania driver's license or non-driver ID, U.S. Passport, or birth certificate.

Seniors without SEPTA Key ID Cards but who have a valid Pennsylvania driver's license or non-driver ID card issued before July 2017 can still ride for free.

Seniors also can obtain an ID card at SEPTA Headquarters at 1234 Market Street in Philadelphia from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the SEPTA Accessible Travel Center at Suburban Station in Center City from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

More information about the SEPTA Key Senior ID Card is available at <http://www.septa.org/fares/discount/seniors-ride-free-info.html>.

Seniors who travel to and from New Jersey and Delaware also are eligible for a half-fare discount.



Register Now for REAL ID Driver's License or ID card

After August 1, a REAL ID-compliant license or ID card, or a U.S. Passport or Military ID, will be necessary if you wish to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a secure federal facility. A REAL ID compliant driver's license has enhanced security features required by federal legislation.

REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and photo ID cards will be available beginning this month. In order to obtain a REAL ID you will need to provide all of the following documentation:

- Proof of identity (original birth certificate with a raised seal, or a valid U.S. Passport)
- A Social Security Card
- Proof of all legal name changes (marriage license or court order from applicable county's family court)
- Two proofs of current, physical PA address (unexpired PA license or ID and a no-more-than 90-day-old bank statement or utility bill with the same name and address)

Because PennDOT may already have electronic documents on file for approximately 35 percent of its customers, individuals who received their first PA driver's license or ID card after September 2003 can apply for REAL ID pre-verification online.

Most of PennDOT's customers, however, received their initial product before September 2003, so PennDOT does not have their required REAL ID documents on file. Customers in this group who want a REAL ID will need to bring the required documents to a Driver's License Center so they can be verified in person.

If you do not have your birth certificate, my office can help you obtain one. Sending an application through my office is the fastest way to apply for a birth certificate. My staff can also help with any questions or issues that you may have.

More information about REAL ID can be found at <https://www.dmv.pa.gov/Pages/REAL-ID-Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>.

Vitali Reappointed as Chair of Environmental Committee, to Environmental Quality Board

I have been reappointed Democratic chairman of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee for the 2019-20 legislative session. The committee advances energy and environmental legislation and oversees the state departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources.

I previously served as a member of the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee for 24 years, spending

the last four of those years as chairman.

I also was reappointed to the state Environmental Quality Board. The EQB is a 20-member independent board that considers Department of Environmental Protection's regulations.

These appointments put me in a better position to be a strong voice for good environmental policy.

Ardmore Avenue Bridge Closing

Ardmore Avenue Bridge is scheduled to close in late spring or early summer and remain closed for about a year, according to PennDOT officials. The bridge, which spans the Route 100 line at Ardmore Avenue Station, will be closed to complete improvements to enhance the safety and operations of the aging structure. In order to avoid the delays experienced with College Avenue, Ardmore Avenue will not be closed for replacement until all utility work is complete for the project.

During the project, Ardmore Avenue will be closed and detoured between Darby Road and Haverford Road. The detour route will include Haverford Road, College Avenue and Darby Road. The closure of Ardmore Avenue will not impact the Norristown High Speed Line, and motorists will be able to access the Ardmore Avenue Station parking lot via Golf View Road.

Summer Jobs for College Students

PennDOT will sponsor its Summer Maintenance Program for college students this year. The program runs May through August 2019 to supplement the permanent workforce.

Students help with summer maintenance work and sign upgrade services, provide maintenance and custodial services at roadside rest facilities, and perform labor and flagging duties in maintenance organizations and highway worksites.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old, enrolled full time in college for the fall 2019 semester, and have a valid Pennsylvania driver's license.

Apply directly at <https://is.gd/PennDOTSummerJobs>.

Have You Tested Your Home for Radon?

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is encouraging Pennsylvanians to test their homes for radon infiltration. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can cause cancer.

Most hardware stores sell radon testing kits, and winter is the best time to test your home because doors and windows are closed, providing more accurate results.

If you test your home for radon and find results higher than 100 pCi/Lm – and/or you've installed an active mitigation system in the past year – the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection will send you a free follow-up test kit.

Visit <https://is.gd/Radon> or call 1-800-237-2366 to learn more about mitigating radon.

State Could be Holding Your Unclaimed Property

The Pennsylvania Treasury is seeking the owners of more than \$3.4 billion in unclaimed property. One in 10 Pennsylvanians has money to claim that is legally theirs. Types of unclaimed property can include checks from employers and utility companies, dividends and interest from savings accounts and stocks, and credit balances.

My office regularly checks the database for district residents to see if their names are listed, but you can conduct a search for yourself any time. Visit www.patreasury.gov to see if you have property with the state.

If you need help, my staff can help you search or claim something in your name.

Pa. Offers College Savings Programs

The Keystone Scholars Program and the Tap 529 Program help families and children save for post-secondary education.

The Pennsylvania 529 College Career Savings Program provides a tax shelter for families to save for education. The program offers two plans: the PA 529 Guaranteed Savings Plan, where growth is tied to the rate of college tuition inflation, and the PA 529 Investment Plan, in which investment returns are determined by financial markets.

Through the Keystone Scholars Program, the Pennsylvania Treasury invests \$100 for every baby born or adopted in 2019 to be used for the baby's future higher education expenses. As part of a demonstration project, babies born in 2018 in six PA counties, including Delaware County, may also be eligible, but must claim their grant by the child's first birthday.

For more information, visit www.pa529.com.

Home Heating Assistance Available

The 2018-19 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program – LIHEAP – is now accepting applications for heating assistance grants through April 12.

LIHEAP offers cash grants of \$200 to \$1,000 that are sent directly to the utility company to defray heating costs for eligible households, and crisis benefits of up to \$600 for households in immediate danger of being without heat.

Contact my office or visit <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/heatingassistanceliheap/index.htm> for help applying.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Applications Available

Applications for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for taxes or rent paid in 2018 are now available online and in my office. The program provides rebates up to \$650 on rent or property tax paid by Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older.

The application is available on the Department of Revenue's website at www.revenue.pa.gov.

The income limit for applicants is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. Half of

Social Security income and all Social Security cost-of-living increases are excluded.

Claimants must reapply for rebates every year because they are based on annual income and property taxes or rent paid each year. Spouses, personal representatives or estates may file rebate claims on behalf of deceased claimants who lived at least one day in 2018 and meet all other eligibility criteria.

My office also can help complete and submit the application.

New Drug and Alcohol Referral Tool Available

Pennsylvania's new Drug and Alcohol Referral Tool, DART, can help Pennsylvanians find drug and alcohol treatment options and supportive services for themselves or someone they know struggling with addiction.

The free and anonymous tool is available at www.humanservices.state.pa.us/Dart.

Users can fill out the anonymous questionnaire on the site, and DART provides Pennsylvania-

specific information to them. This information includes resources on drug, alcohol, and gambling treatment; mental health services; transportation services; housing options and legal services. In addition, the tool will indicate federal, state, and county benefits for low-income individuals and veterans.

Anyone who needs help with a substance-use treatment, or to learn more about programs, can call Pennsylvania's Get Help Now Hotline at 1-800-662-HELP.

Household Hazardous Waste Collections

There will be household hazardous waste collections in southeastern Pennsylvania in 2019. All events will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine.

- Saturday, May 4
Emergency Services Training Center
1600 Calcon Hook Road, Sharon Hill
- Saturday, May 18
Temple University – Ambler Campus
1431 E. Butler Pike, Ambler
- Saturday, June 15
Norristown Area High School
1900 Eagle Drive, Norristown
(enter at Whitehall Road)
- Saturday, June 22
Abington Junior High School, Abington
(enter at 2056 Susquehanna Road)
- Saturday, July 20
Delaware County Community College
901 Media Line Road, Media

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 <http://delcopa.gov/recycle/index.html>.

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

Sports Wagering Begins in Pa.

A gambling expansion bill enacted in 2017 along with a U.S. Supreme Court decision last May has cleared the way for sports betting in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvanians can now wager on sporting events at casinos throughout the state, including three in the Delaware Valley.

Harrah's in Chester, Parx in Bensalem and Sugarhouse in Philadelphia have opened on-site sportsbooks, while Valley Forge Casino in Valley Forge is expected to open in March.

Bettors will be able to wager on professional and college athletics. Players must be at least 21 years old and physically located in the casino to participate.

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

Gambling disorder treatment information is available by calling 1-800-GAMBLER.

Stoneleigh Preserved

Lower Merion School District has decided not to pursue by eminent domain proceedings the acquisition of a portion of Stoneleigh for athletic fields. Instead, LMSD is attempting to acquire two private properties totaling 13 acres on County Line Road and Montgomery Avenue, adjacent to Stoneleigh.

The fields are expected to be built in 2023, a year after the new middle school is scheduled to open.

The acquisition of Stoneleigh acreage was made more difficult by a new state law that requires local orphans' court approval before conserved lands can be taken under eminent domain.

Stoneleigh Gardens, a 42-acre parcel located next to Villanova University, was gifted by the Haas family to Natural Lands in 2016 for conservation. After two years of planning, Stoneleigh opened to the public on May 12, 2018.

For more information about visiting Stoneleigh Gardens, visit <https://stoneleighgarden.org/garden/home/> or call (610) 353-5587.

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.