



Summer 2019

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State Representative

Adam Ravenstahl

20th Legislative District

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Legislative update



As your state representative, I want to keep you updated about some of the bills I am sponsoring and preparing to introduce this legislative session:

- **Keystone Tree Fund** — This bill would create a fund financed entirely by voluntary donations, which would be used to support state environmental programs that encourage tree plantings in neighborhoods, and projects that reduce flooding and protect our state's streams and rivers.
- **Community Solar Projects** — This legislation would encourage neighbors, businesses, farms and other community members to participate and benefit from joint offsite solar projects connected to the electric grid by giving them credit on their electricity bill for the power produced.
- **Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Schools** — Legislation would require each school building with fossil-fuel burning heating systems or appliances to be equipped with carbon monoxide detectors. If installing these critical, life-saving devices in our schools helps to save even the life of just one child or school employee, this effort will have more than proven its value to us as parents and family members.
- **Littering Fines** — Legislation would increase the maximum amount of each littering fine, creating a higher payment potential depending on where the littering occurred.

Giving teeth to public accountability

I recently joined my fellow legislators in voting to pass the first new law of 2019 – one which would require public officials convicted of crimes to forfeit their taxpayer-funded pensions.

Public officials, whether they sit in the governor's office or on a local commission, are given a great and sacred trust – to put the good of the community over their own self-interest. When they violate that trust, they do more than commit a crime, they strain the very bonds that bind our democracy together.

Because of that, public officials convicted of crimes should not be entitled to the benefits of public office. And I agree with Gov. Tom Wolf, who, while praising the legislature for acting on this issue, also called for further reforms. As vice chair of the House Ethics Committee, I consider it my mission to ensure that we, as legislators, live up to that trust and are held to the highest standard.

We have a lot of work to do in restoring your trust in our public institutions, but it is something that now, more than ever, is vital to protecting our democracy.

Fighting to raise the wage

As Pennsylvania has bounced back from the Great Recession, the rising economic tide has not lifted everyone equally. Too many hardworking men and women — and their families — have been left behind, struggling to make ends meet.

The minimum wage hasn't increased since 2009, almost a decade ago. We cannot wait for the federal government to act, but instead should join our neighboring states in promising hardworking Pennsylvanians a fair wage for a fair day's work.

To do so, I have joined my colleagues in introducing legislation (HB 1215) that would raise the minimum wage in Pennsylvania to \$12 an hour. Under our plan, the state's minimum wage would then increase annually until it reaches \$15 an hour, at which time it would then be tied to the consumer price index.

Quite simply, the cost of living has outpaced the minimum wage, and we must fight for an adequate and sustainable minimum wage here in Pennsylvania.





Fighting for healthy people and a strong economy

No matter what happens on the federal level, we can protect people’s rights to good, affordable care here in Pennsylvania.

With the president leading a renewed push to dismantle affordable health care coverage in the United States, I have joined my fellow legislators in sponsoring a series of bills designed to make sure people in Pennsylvania can always afford to see a doctor when they get sick.

They are the following:

- **Protecting Your Coverage, Protecting Your Health (HB 469):** would recognize that a consumer paying for an insurance plan that doesn’t cover items as basic as hospitalization and emergency services has insurance that is almost worse than having no insurance at all.
- **Can’t Deny Pre-Existing Conditions (HB 1013):** would prohibit insurers from using a consumer’s pre-existing condition to deny coverage or a chance to purchase a policy if the ACA is eliminated.
- **Your Health Care, Your Decision (HB 913):** would help protect younger adults by allowing families to have a larger voice in the decision to stay on a parent’s insurance until age 26, instead of allowing extended coverage to be decided solely by the parent’s employer.
- **Prohibiting Lifetime Health Insurance Limits (HB 470):** would make sure people’s benefits can’t run out when a corporate accountant decides it’s time to stop paying.

Access to health care for working families, senior citizens and people with pre-existing conditions is under attack once again, and we must ensure our residents are protected and are able to access the health care they need.

UPMC and Highmark dispute

As many of you know, the agreement between UPMC and Highmark that ensures patients can access the health care and hospitals they need regardless of which entity is their health insurance provider is scheduled to end this summer.

The uncertainty that this has created is among the top concerns I hear about from you, the people whom I represent. While the various parties have tried to find a negotiated compromise, sadly, those efforts have failed.

That is why earlier this year I joined Attorney General Josh Shapiro at a news conference to announce that his office was filing a petition asking the courts to modify and extend the consent decree regarding UPMC and Highmark.

Doing so would force them to work together to ensure that patients can continue to access quality, affordable medical care.

It is unfortunate that neither UPMC nor Highmark has been able to negotiate a new agreement to protect patient’s access to health care, forcing the state to intervene. But without legal intervention, the competition between these two entities will only hurt – not help — patients, families and communities in Allegheny County.

Real ID cards now available

Real ID cards are now available from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Real ID is a new, optional form of driver’s license or identification card that PennDOT will issue after verifying certain identification and residency documents provided by you.

Getting a Real ID is not mandatory but it may be useful depending on your needs. After card-based enforcement of the Real ID Act starts **Oct. 1, 2020**, you will no longer be able to use your regular, state-issued driver’s license or identification card to board commercial airline flights or enter high-security federal facilities such as military bases. Instead, you will either have to use the new Real ID or rely on your passport, military ID or other form of federally accepted identification.

You don’t need a Real ID to visit regular federal buildings, vote, apply for or receive federal benefits, or gain access to hospitals and health clinics.

For more information, you can read about Real ID on PennDOT’s website: www.PennDOT.gov/REALID.





I had the opportunity to visit the Pittsburgh Allegheny K-5 school and read to a group of 1st grade students. I had a wonderful time visiting with the kids, but more importantly, this was an excellent opportunity to highlight the vital impact elementary school instruction has on our children.



In Harrisburg I was joined by the Ellwood family at a rally to promote the need to invest in quality, affordable child care for all Pennsylvania families.



Earlier this year I visited Northgate Middle/High School to discuss issues impacting the district with state Sen. Wayne Fontana and Superintendent Caroline Johns.



I was honored to present Luigi Della-Ragione with a House of Representatives Citation at a Bellevue Borough Council meeting. Luigi recently retired after owning Luigi's Pizzeria and Ristorante for 42 years. I want to thank him for his investment and commitment to our area!



In Januray I had the honor of presenting a Pennsylvania House of Representatives Citation to Melva Deitt, recognizing her on her 100th birthday.



This winter I also met with Meredith Meyer Grelli and Mark Meyer (co-owners of Wigle Whiskey) to discuss a wide range of topics.



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Rep. Innamorato and Senator Fontana*



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For more information, call Rep. Ravenstahl's office at (412) 321-5523.