



STATE REP. JENNIFER O'MARA

SUMMER 2019

165TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Mon. – Fri. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; with extended hours on Thursdays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and weekends by appointment only

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Dear Neighbor,

I am happy to report back to you that the Pennsylvania budget, which was due on June 30, passed on time this year with no new tax increases for residents from the state. While the budget included some positives — such as increases to basic education funding and a tax code change that was added to help veterans — there were many issues with this budget. Both departments of Environmental Protection and Transportation did not see vital staffing or funding increases, which are necessary to deal with our outdated infrastructure. We also did not see a raise to the minimum wage, and the elimination of General Assistance is putting us in a position to leave behind our most vulnerable neighbors.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass a budget that works better for families in our district.

In the meantime, I am back in the district working for you this summer. My office is hosting numerous events, from town halls to informational sessions to senior expos, so please stay in touch on social media or by calling my office.

I have been privileged with the opportunity to work for you, and my staff and I hope to see you around town soon. Please enjoy the updates in the latest edition of my newsletter.

Kind regards,

Jennifer O'Mara

Go Paperless!

My office sends bi-weekly e-newsletters containing legislative updates, highlighting local events and providing you with valuable information. In an effort to conserve paper and reduce costs, we will be limiting the amount of paper newsletters that we send.

Please sign up to receive e-newsletters on my website at www.pahouse.com/OMara.

Does the PES refinery news affect you?

Following the explosion at Philadelphia Energy Solutions, my staff and I attended a meeting at the United Steelworkers District 10-1 Union Hall in Norwood and heard directly from workers who are impacted by the explosion and impending shutdown. Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon, members of Delaware County Council and state representatives from southeastern Pennsylvania from both sides of the aisle attended the nonpartisan meeting.

The oil refinery in South Philadelphia has been in the industry since 1866 providing home heating oil, gasoline, and other refined sources of energy for the Eastern Seaboard. Now, after the explosion, PES announced it is shutting down the refinery — a huge surprise for thousands of workers in the region who depend on the refinery for their incomes. *(continued on page 3)*

Legislation to Grow Veterans' Trust Fund Passes House

I'm proud to report that language from my Veterans' Trust Fund bill was fully enacted into law, along with an omnibus budget code bill. Under my change, Pennsylvania residents will be able to designate a tax donation of any amount to the Veterans' Trust Fund from their state income tax refunds, increasing the opportunity to give directly to our veterans.

I'm also proud to announce that this spring the House unanimously passed its sister bill, my House Bill 1609, to commit more funding to the Pennsylvania Veterans' Trust Fund through PennDOT renewal forms.

Under the bill, the voluntary contribution amount that a person can make to the Veterans' Trust Fund when applying for or renewing a driver's license, ID card or vehicle registration would be increased from \$3 to \$5. The amount would increase from \$6 to \$10 when applying for or renewing a two-year vehicle registration through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation website. The bill still must pass the Senate before it can be signed into law.

More than 95 percent of the Trust Fund's annual revenue is generated through PennDOT donations. By increasing the voluntary contribution amount, its annual revenue is expected to double to nearly \$3 million.

Pennsylvania's heart for investing in veterans' care is only matched by the deeds and needs of its heroes. I hope the Senate sees fit to move H.B. 1609 quickly for the governor's signature.

Does the PES refinery news affect you?

(continued from page 1)

Analysis shows that 13 families from my district are being impacted by the shutdown, but that number only includes current employees, not retirees. In addition, over 2,000 union jobs and 30,000 tertiary jobs will be impacted in this region.

One thing to me is abundantly clear – we owe it to the workers to fight for their jobs. In the face of an emergency event that could've led to catastrophic results, the workers acted with professionalism and expertise to ensure that no lives were lost and damages were mitigated. This is why unions are so important. They work tirelessly to train their workers to ensure safety. I, too, will work with my colleagues, labor leaders and stakeholders to ensure that no one is left out of the solutions needed to overcome this catastrophe.

If you or your family is being impacted by the impending shutdown of the refinery, please email my office at repomara@pahouse.net or call at 610-544-9878.



PA GI Bill Signed into Law

Members of the Pennsylvania National Guard can now send their spouses and children to college at no cost or at a substantially reduced cost if he or she re-enlists for an additional six-year term.

Gov. Tom Wolf signed the PA GI Bill or Military Family Education Program this summer – a bill I was proud to vote for.

It's the first program of its kind in the nation.

The GI Bill provides members who re-enlist the opportunity to receive five years of higher education benefits for their spouses and children. Pennsylvania National Guard members are eligible for the Education Assistance Program as part of their initial service obligation of six years. It provides a non-transferable education benefit.

The GI Bill benefit must be used at an institution of higher learning approved by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. The benefit will cover the cost to attend one of the State System (PASSHE) universities, which includes Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Millersville, Shippensburg, Slippery Rock and West Chester.

If the family member attends an institution that costs less than the annual PASSHE tuition rate, the student would pay nothing. If it costs more, the student would cover the expenses exceeding the PASSHE's annual rate.

Upcoming Events

Town Halls – August 8

I want to hear from you! Please come out and join me at one of my town halls.

6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. – Springfield Township Building



Senior Expo – August 20

10 a.m. to 12 p.m. – Springfield Township Building

Shredding Events – September 28

Please bring your personal documents to be securely shredded and recycled during this free event for constituents who would like to protect themselves from identity theft. Please remove all plastic bags and tape in advance.

9 a.m. to 12 p.m. – My District Office



Student Debt Policy Hearing

Save the date: Oct. 16

Please join me at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16 at Cabrini University, 610 King of Prussia Road in Radnor for a Policy Hearing on student debt. As a co-chair of the Student Debt Caucus, I am determined to get to the bottom of the student debt crisis that is plaguing our state.

What's a Caucus?

A caucus is an organization of House, which sometimes includes Senate members, that exists to discuss mutual concerns, conduct legislative research and policy planning. Unlike a committee, caucuses are neither assigned, nor do they conduct hearings or vote on legislation.

I am proud to serve on the following House caucuses:

- ***Student Debt Caucus, Co-Chair and Founding Member***
- ***Firefighters and Emergency Services Caucus, Co-Chair***
- ***PA SAFE Caucus***
- ***Climate Caucus***
- ***Ladies of the House Caucus***
- ***Women's Health Caucus***

Spot this pest?

Pennsylvania needs your help to stop the destruction being caused by the spotted lanternfly. It's



imperative that everyone do their part by keeping an eye out for this very destructive insect and to destroy it on site. These invasive insects are a threat to our fruit and hardwoods industries, and it will take everyone doing their part to help stop the spotted lanternfly from continuing to spread.

You can keep up to date with the latest information through the "Spotted Lanternflyer" – an e-newsletter to keep Pennsylvania informed on the latest happenings related to the invasive spotted lanternfly. Sign up for updates from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture on treatment, research, permitting, quarantine, life cycle and more.

Join me at one of my upcoming experts meeting on the lanternfly:

Springfield Lanternfly Event Fall, TBD

Please follow me on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

 **@RepOMara**

 **@RepOMara**

Radnor Lanternfly Event

Thursday, Aug. 8

2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

**Radnor Memorial Library
114 West Wayne Avenue
Wayne, PA**

Join me and House Democratic Environmental Resources and Energy Committee Chairman Greg Vitali for this event in Radnor.

Springfield Trail Update



In June, the community celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Springfield Trail! Many thanks to all of the residents who came out, learned about the trail, and headed out for a hike. I want to extend a special thank you to Jason Thompson, Springfield resident & volunteer extraordinaire, who was instrumental in organizing this event and preserving the history of the trail. I also want to extend a big thanks to Friends of Smedley Park for all of its clean-up work with Springfield parks.

APPRISE helps Pennsylvanians with Medicare

Did you know that PA offers a free health insurance counseling program (APPRISE) to help older Pennsylvanians with Medicare? My office will have specially trained volunteers to provide objective, easy-to-understand information about Medicare, Medicare supplemental insurance, Medicaid, and long-term care insurance on specific days throughout the year, listed below.

Please call my office to request an appointment.

**July 30
August 27
September 17
October 15**



Real ID Update

Real ID was enacted by the federal government to implement minimum security standards for state-issued identification.

Although Pennsylvania residents are not required to have a Real ID-compliant driver's license or state ID, commercial flights will require you to have a federally accepted form of identification beginning Oct. 1, 2020. If you have a valid passport or military ID, you won't need a Real ID to board the flight. My office will be having informational events about Real ID this fall and spring so keep an eye out for more information.

Rep. O'Mara will have a Veteran Service Officer on hand once a month!

**SECOND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH
10 A.M. — 2 P.M.**

We can help with:

- VA claims
- Reduced property taxes
- Educational benefits and more!

CALL TO MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT (610) 544-9878

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VSO Benefit Appointments

My office has a Veteran Service Officer available monthly who can help with VA claims, reducing property taxes and identifying education benefits. If you are a veteran and interested in speaking with a VSO, please contact my office to make an appointment.

Working For You in the 165th

Throughout the last few months, I've been in touch and involved with as many constituents in the district as possible. My staff and I have had the pleasure of hearing from neighbors through our town halls in Morton, Radnor and Marple, and we are looking forward to our town hall in Springfield in August!



It didn't matter that they were underdogs in their title game, because the Springfield High School Cougars were determined to win their school's first girls' lacrosse gold medal. Congratulations to our State Champs!



I commemorated Armed Forces Day on May 18 by presenting the Springfield American Legion with a copy of the formal resolution I authored in the House to mark its 100th anniversary.



In celebration of National Police Week, I visited the Morton Police Office on May 17 to present Chief LaSpina and the officers with certificates of appreciation. Thank you again to all of the police officers in our district who continue to serve our community.



In June, my staff and I had the pleasure of enjoying breakfast alongside senior constituents at the Wayne Senior Center. We provided information on state programs and services that my office offers, such as assistance in obtaining SEPTA Senior ID Cards.



On Memorial Day, my staff and I participated in events throughout the district to honor the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice, including this event at Veterans' Memorial Park in Broomall.



My staff and I hosted a paper document shredding event at the Radnor Municipal Building on June 22. Thank you to everyone who came out and recycled! We look forward to hosting our next shred event Sept. 28!



Reps. Mike Zabel, David Dellosa and I introduced House Resolution 341, which designates June 10 (6/10) as "Delco Day." With the residents of Delaware County at the forefront of our minds, we recognized the importance in taking the time to celebrate our community and get the word out about our offices' services.



Elwyn hosted the 2019 State Forum this year. Organized by the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce, the State Forum is an opportunity to connect and learn from Delaware County business leaders. Elwyn was a fantastic host, and I look forward to doing what I can as state representative to support its mission helping families with disabilities across our region.



Despite the storm and a power outage, I had a robust town hall in the Marple Township Building on July 18. We discussed issues ranging from property taxes, PennDOT concerns, health benefits and services for children with disabilities. Ideas were shared from residents to make Marple Township even more friendly for children and families. I want to thank everyone who came out and participated in the discussion.



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Stay up to date with Rep. O'Mara

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic updates from me, including legislation updates, event announcements, state and local programs, and services and more. You can sign up on my website at:

www.pahouse.com/OMara.

You can also follow me on social media, which is regularly updated with information from Harrisburg and events right here in Delaware County.

 @RepOMara •  @RepOMara •  @RepOMara •  RepOMara@pahouse.net

Ways my district office can serve you:

- Provide you with Pennsylvania state tax forms
- Print out federal tax forms whenever possible
- Provide you with and help you fill out Property Tax/ Rent Rebate forms
- Help you find and claim unclaimed money in your name through the Pennsylvania Treasury
- Notarize and process applications for Disability Parking Plates and Placards
- Assist you with unemployment compensation questions or problems
- SEPTA Senior ID Cards
- Explain the REAL ID application process
- Field questions or complaints about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Provide you with recognition from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Provide you with any state form or brochure
- Send state forms for you to their appropriate departments in Harrisburg to expedite their processing
- Schedule tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Help with state programs for children and adults with disabilities