

State Representative
Pamela A. DeLissio
194th Legislative District



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Dear Neighbor,

Happy New Year, and I hope that you find this newsletter informative and helpful. As always, I am interested in your thoughts, opinions and ideas pertaining to state policy. Please reach out to me at any time.

Yours truly,

Pamela A. DeLissio

Listening To Inmates At Our State Correctional Institutions

During my time in office, I have had the opportunity to visit two of our PA State Correctional Institutions (SCI) and to become knowledgeable about the corrections system in our state. Of particular interest have been my meetings with incarcerated men who are sentenced to Life Without Parole (LWP) and the impact of that policy on society and our inmates.

This past July, I accepted an invitation to meet with inmates at SCI-Chester who requested to meet with legislators. The presentation by about a dozen men and tour of this facility were, yet again, eye-opening as they shared their stories about how they became incarcerated as lifers.

Their acknowledgement of the harm and pain caused to victims and victims' families was impressive.

This visit also emphasized how most of us change and evolve as we age. Who we are at 19 or 20 is not who we are at 50 or 60 or 70. It is becoming clear to me that the purpose of the Life Without Parole policy needs to be revisited.

Signing Of Bipartisan Pennsylvania Farm Bill

As a member of the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, it was exciting to witness the first ever PA Farm Bill signed into law on July 1st.

I was privileged to be a primary sponsor of H.B. 1518, a bill that will provide Agriculture and Youth Development grants by revising and reestablishing a program to fund youth organizations that promote development in the areas of agriculture, community leadership, vocational training and peer fellowship across Pennsylvania. H.B. 1518 was subsequently included in S.B. 660.

Eligible projects include educational or workforce development programs, seminars, field trips and agricultural safety training programs.

As a staunch supporter of the only agricultural high school in the commonwealth, W. B. Saul High School, located in the Philadelphia part of the 194th Legislative District, I am pleased to know these funds will benefit aspiring future farmers.

The PA Farm Bill is a critical investment in the future of our commonwealth, protecting our farming heritage and inspiring the next generation of Pennsylvania farmers.



A Pennsylvania first: The historic Farm Bill.

Finally - Voter Reform Legislation

The Pennsylvania Election Code has not been substantially reformed, since it was enacted in 1937. During the past 82 years, most states have modernized their voting processes. But as most other states moved forward, we in Pennsylvania have stood still.

Finally, Pennsylvania has moved into the 21st century.

S.B. 421, a history-making voter reform bill was signed into law October 31, and I was privileged to bear witness.

Here are 3 highlights of the bill:

- 50 days before an election, citizens can use a no-excuse mail-in ballot. The single mom working two jobs, the health care personnel doing 12-hour shifts, and the senior citizen who cannot make it to the polls, due to a lack of reliable transportation can all now execute a mail-in ballot from the privacy and comfort of their own home.
- Voter registration deadlines will now be 15 days before Election Day. People move more frequently and are more transient than when the code was written. Citizens now have an extra 15 days to register to vote.
- This legislation eliminated the straight-ticket voting option, as has been done in 41 other states. I respect the concerns around wait times at the polls, impact on down-ballot races, and altering voters' long-held habits of voting a straight ticket at a time when new voting machines are coming into use. I am ready to help educate folks on using a mail-in ballot, which will be more convenient.

I have been passionate about the need for voter reform before I became your elected state Representative and have covered the topic at many of my 91 town hall meetings. I know this reform allows greater opportunity for citizens to participate in our most important civic obligation.

Even though these reforms are an excellent start, there is more to consider, including same-day voter registration and open primaries, to name two.



I was one of two House Democrats present for this major voting-reform bill signing.

I Spy A Spotted Lanternfly

For the past eight years, I have been a member of the PA House Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee.

Our commonwealth is facing an agricultural challenge occurring in the southeastern part of the state, although it is slowly spreading to rural areas.

The Spotted Lanternfly (SLF), is an invasive planthopper native to China, India, and Vietnam. The first detection of this non-native species to the U. S. was discovered in Pennsylvania in Berks County in September of 2014. It has since spread to 14 other counties in the southeast portion of the commonwealth, which are now quarantined.

This insect has the potential to greatly impact agricultural crops such as grapes, hops, and hardwoods. This pest poses a significant threat to the state's more than \$28 million grape, \$87 million apple, and more than \$19 million peach industries, as well as the hardwood industry in Pennsylvania, which accounts for nearly \$17 billion in sales.

If you see an SLF, it's imperative to immediately report it either online <https://services.agriculture.pa.gov/SLFReport> or via phone by calling 1-888-4BADFLY.

You should also kill it...squash it... smash it...just get rid of it. You also can have a little fun while doing that by downloading the app from the Apple Store if you have an iPhone.

The PA Department of Agriculture has extensive information on the SLF at www.agriculture.pa.gov.



Halloween Trunk or Treat at the Roxborough YMCA.

What You Need To Know About REAL ID

The REAL ID Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in 2005 and is a federal law enacted as a result of the attack that occurred on September 11, 2001.

Beginning October 1, 2020, Pennsylvanians will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, photo ID card, or another form of federally acceptable identification (such as a valid passport or military ID) to board a domestic commercial flight or enter certain federal buildings or military installations.

You do **NOT** need a REAL ID to drive, vote, access hospitals, visit post offices, access federal courts, apply for or receive federal benefits, such as Social Security or veterans' benefits.

The best thing you can do to prepare for REAL ID is to get your documents together. Federal regulations require that PennDOT must verify original versions or certified copies of the following documents for a customer before issuing a REAL ID.

DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED:

Proof of Identity: Original or certified copy of a birth certificate filed with the state office of vital records with a raised/embossed seal — issued by an authorized government agency — or valid U.S. Passport or passport card. If you do not have an original or certified birth certificate in your possession, it could take anywhere from 2 (rushed through my office) to 6 weeks to obtain one from Pennsylvania.

Proof of Social Security number: Social Security card

Two proofs of current, physical PA address: Examples include a valid PA license or ID, PA vehicle registration, auto insurance card or utility bill with the same name and address.

Proof of all legal name changes: Certified marriage certificate, court order, or divorce decree issued by your county's family court.

If you are a lawfully present non-U.S. citizen, acceptable documents include:

- Unexpired Employment Authorization Card** (EAD) issued by DHS; Forms I-766 or Form I-688B.
- Valid, Unexpired Permanent Resident Card I-551** Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) Issued by DHS or INS.
- Unexpired foreign passport with an unexpired U.S. visa affixed, and an I-94** indicating temporary evidence of permanent residence.

Visit any PennDOT REAL ID center to have your documents verified and imaged and receive your REAL ID at the time of service.

For more information go to: www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID for a list of those PennDOT Driver's License Centers to have your documents verified and imaged, and receive your REAL ID within 15 business days.

In case you are wondering, I plan to get a REAL ID card.

Say "Cheeeese" - Senior SEPTA Key ID cards

You are invited to have your photo taken for a free SEPTA Key Senior ID card.

This is by appointment only for residents in the 194th District who are 65 or older and have yet to get their SEPTA Senior ID photo taken. Call the district office at 215-482-8726 to make an appointment.

My office has helped more than 3,000 constituents get their picture taken. Just bring a valid proof of birth date, such as a photo driver's license, non-driver's ID card or passport ... and a smile. The SEPTA photo ID card will be mailed to you by SEPTA.

Is Your Senior SEPTA Key ID Expiring?

SEPTA is providing a one-year extension of all SEPTA Senior Key ID cards expiring in calendar year 2020. If you wish to renew your card in the coming year, you may obtain same-day card renewal by going to SEPTA Headquarters at 1234 Market Street Phila., or to Suburban Station, Room 109 15 N. 16th Street, Phila. However, all SEPTA Senior Key ID cards expiring in the year 2020 will be honored for one year past the expiration date noted on your card.

So Many Books, So Little Time

In January of 2019, I made the decision to start a book club in the 194th Legislative District. My primary reason was to broaden the various ways I dialogue with constituents. The thought was to select books that would provoke thoughtful conversation about state policy.

We are now four books into this new, additional way of communicating and those who have attended have shared invaluable insight. We have met new neighbors and have had tremendous discussions about policy voids and the need for policy enhancements during our quarterly gatherings.

We believe we are the only state representative-led book club in the commonwealth.

Our first book was *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance, a memoir about a young man's family's journey from the hills of Kentucky to Ohio. Our book club discussion included breaking the cycle of poverty, the insularity of culture, and how citizens may often make bad decisions about how to live their lives and these decisions can have an impact on future generations of the same family.

In June, we read *Educated* by Tara Westover. The book made me think about the role of state government, pertaining to child welfare, the rules by which we educate our children, and to what degree nature versus nurture plays out in our lives.

Kids for Cash by William Ecenbarger was our third read; this was a stomach-churning tale of the abuses that persisted for several years in the Common Pleas Court in Luzerne County in PA. These abuses allowed two judges to accept millions of dollars in kickbacks for detaining/incarcerating children with little to no just cause.

The book selected for the January 2020 gathering was *No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us* by Rachel Louise Snyder. Our discussion included how we can better identify friends and neighbors who may be suffering abuse.

Book club 'members' must sign up each time. We have a process in place to accommodate all interested as fairly as possible, while trying to ensure that folks on previous waiting lists and any new folks who are interested are accommodated.

Still Talking About Gun Violence

If you have attended any of my 91 town halls, you may have heard me say "if there was a corner on genius in Harrisburg, the state would have few serious problems." Well, Harrisburg has no "corner on genius" as evidenced by the continuing and maddening issue of gun violence in Philadelphia.

Gun laws are regulated by the state and when efforts have been made locally to enact gun safety legislation, the General Assembly has introduced more stringent legislation to pre-empt such efforts.

For Philadelphians, gun violence is real, and has in many instances taken lives, and in other instances, altered lives irrevocably.

It would be most helpful if you could email or call the offices of the majority and minority chairs of the PA House Judiciary Committee to ask that hearings be scheduled for pending gun safety legislation.

Majority chair Rob Kauffman can be reached at 717-705-2004 or www.repkauffman.com/contact.

Minority chair Tim Briggs can be reached at 717-705-7011 or www.pahouse.com/Briggs/contact.

One encouraging note is that the Philadelphia Delegation of the General Assembly successfully increased funding by \$2.5 million for Philadelphia's Gun Violence Task Force. This program operates within the office of the PA Attorney General. When the task force was initiated, it was funded at \$4.378 million.

The issue of gun violence is complex and perplexing. Removing illegal guns from the street and providing young people with opportunities, basic education, and jobs are also part of the solution.

I believe a comprehensive gun violence prevention strategy needs to include positive role modeling, support for parents who are dealing with troubled children, and the opportunity for youngsters to interact with currently incarcerated men in real time to understand the consequences of making decisions regarding the use of guns.

At the time of this writing, I was planning my 91st Town Hall with Gun Safety and the Second Amendment as the topic of conversation. If you missed this town hall on January 25th please know that I am still interested in your thoughts about solutions and policy initiatives that could curb or ideally stem the tide of this crisis.

Keep Informed

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To Your Health

For the third time, I will be introducing the Pennsylvania Health Care Plan, H.B. 1688.

This legislation, if signed into law, would provide citizens the option of a single-payer, Medicare-for-All-plan.

One of our guaranteed rights is life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and I believe the best way to guarantee those rights is to treat health care as a right and not a privilege.

It is important to understand that this bill is NOT government-run health care. Health care providers and health care facilities would remain in the private sector. State government would be responsible for establishing a system in which a single, public or quasi-public agency organizes the health care financing to support health care access. Cost controls (including administrative costs, pharmaceutical costs etc.), and citizens having sufficient 'skin in the game' are critical components of this plan.

There are currently 32 countries on the list of industrialized nations that have universal health coverage (UHC).

As defined by the World Health Organization, UHC means that all people and communities can use the promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services they need, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the user to financial hardship.

UHC is the goal of this legislation and single-payer is the mechanism to accomplish UHC in Pennsylvania.

I look forward to working with advocates and my colleagues to ensure that this legislation benefits all Pennsylvanians and is financially viable.



Enjoying a band massage alongside Officer Scott at my unique annual Senior Expo held Sept. 26.

Grant Awards In The 194th

It is always good news when I can announce state grants and awards that I have helped to secure for the district.

- A \$1.7 million grant for the Presidential Boulevard Project was awarded to the City Avenue Special Services District of Philadelphia via the state's Multimodal Transportation Fund to connect Presidential Boulevard to City Avenue, Neill Drive and Monument Road; three extremely busy roads which provide access to other destinations in the suburbs and city.
- The Roxborough-based senior center Journey's Way received a grant of \$48,600, funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.
- A grant of \$52,900 was awarded to the Roxborough Development Corp. to install a gateway to the pocket park at 6170 Ridge Ave., complete a mural in the park, and install lighting in the adjacent parking lot to ensure a safe place to park.
- \$100,000 was awarded to the Wissahickon Sustainability Council for the Cook-Wissahickon Schoolyard Greening Project located at the Cook-Wissahickon School for de-paving a portion of the playground at the school while providing aesthetic and stormwater management improvements.
- The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, (SCEE) was awarded \$25,000 to prepare a Master Site Development Plan for its 340-acre site located in Upper Roxborough.
- West Laurel Hill Cemetery and Funeral Home in Bala Cynwyd was awarded \$3,163 via a Small Business Advantage grant to replace florescent light bulbs in the basement of the funeral home with more energy efficient LED lights.
- A \$7,500 Ag and Youth grant for W.B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences. The grant will be used to purchase new laptops for the Career and Technical Education Program students to access online agriculture education resources.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

PRIMARY ELECTION DATES

March 9, 2020:

First day for mail-in voting

April 13, 2020:

Last day to register before the primary election (15 days prior to election day rather than 30)

April 21, 2020:

Last day to apply for a mail-in (no excuse necessary) or civilian absentee ballot

April 28, 2020:

Primary Election Day
(Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.)

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Feb. 27, @ 7 p.m.

Belmont Hills Library • 120 Mary Watersford Rd., Bala Cynwyd

March - June locations to be announced. Stay tuned!

March 30 @ 7 p.m.

April 22 @ 10:30 a.m.

May 21 @ 7 p.m.

June 18 @ 7 p.m.



Proud of hosting 91 town halls.

BOOK CLUB

Sunday, March 22, 3 p.m. • Friday, June 12, 7 p.m.

Book to be announced. Read about the book club on page 4 and how to sign up.

SHRED EVENTS

Saturday,

April 25, 9-11 a.m.

*Main Street Theatre parking lot
3720 Main St., Manayunk*

Saturday, May 9, 9-11 a.m.

*Magisterial District Court parking lot
925 Montgomery Ave., Narberth*



Shredding: a very popular constituent service.