

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# STEVE McCARTER

SERVING THE 154TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT IN CHELTENHAM, JENKINTOWN AND SPRINGFIELD

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## 2020 Legislative Report

### Dear Friends,

It has been my pleasure and honor over the past eight years to represent the people of the 154th Legislative District.

With the assistance of an extremely talented and hard-working group of legislative assistants, both in Harrisburg and in the district, we have tried to keep everyone updated on the latest news on issues and events influencing our lives in Cheltenham, Jenkintown and Springfield.

This newsletter will be my last before I leave office at the end of November, and I wanted to take the opportunity to thank my staff and all of you for your support and assistance in making this a productive period for the district. We have all witnessed tremendous change over these past several years, and yet we have moved forward together to improve our schools, racial justice and our environment in very challenging times.

The past seven months have presented us with unprecedented disruptions in our normal lives, but by working together, we have weathered the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we must continue our efforts to get past the ongoing viral threat until we can begin to fully return to a sense of normalcy. That means we must keep up our social distancing efforts, wear our masks and get our seasonal flu vaccination to ensure that we will prevail over these health challenges.

We must also continue our efforts, even during the pandemic, to face



the reality of climate change and to address the pain of racial injustice that has become so apparent through the tragic events of the past years.

Climate change is real. It is already impacting all of us. We must make a transition away from fossil fuels and make meaningful efficiency changes over the next few decades if we are to lessen inevitable changes to our coastlines and a warming environment. Unfortunately, it is now apparent that we have already passed the time when we can avoid the impacts. It is now only a question of when they will come and how we will adapt to them.

Simultaneously, we must deal with the systemic racial biases apparent not only in many of our law enforcement agencies, but also in the broader aspects of American culture. No one should ever have to teach their children how to stay alive if they are approached by police. No one should ever be choked to death or mistakenly shot by law enforcement after their doors are broken down. Every child needs to have a true quality education in our public schools no matter their ZIP code.

We still have much to do! Let's get to work.

Sincerely,

*Steve McCarter*



# Eye on the Legislature

As we approach the final stretch of the 2019-2020 legislative session, I wanted to lay out some of the bills I've authored and introduced recently, including an environmental education bill related to climate change as discussed on the front page of this newsletter. For further details and the progress of these bills, visit my House website at [www.pahouse.com/mccarter](http://www.pahouse.com/mccarter).



## Relief for Restaurants, Bars and Clubs

Citing the distressing impacts COVID-19 is having on Pennsylvania's restaurant industry and a recent Yelp survey showing more than half of restaurants could close permanently due to the virus' impact, Democrats in Harrisburg have crafted a legislative package aimed at providing relief to community business owners and the workers who cook and serve our food.

I have a bill included in this package. My legislation, H.B. 2774, would eliminate the \$500 off-premise catering permit fee, remove the March deadline to submit an application, and also do away with the current five-hour cap on events and the limit of 52 events a year during the COVID-19 emergency declaration. By giving our restaurant industry more flexibility with off-premises catering permits, we are giving them a fighting chance to make it through this difficult time.

The package includes nine bills that will provide direct relief to an industry of Pennsylvania businesses the virus has hit hard. Restrictions put in place have been necessary in the state's response to COVID-19, but we recognize the hardship the virus has continued to place on the restaurant industry. Restaurants have served as the backdrop of many life occasions and special moments, and they need support now more than ever.

Details of the entire package of bills can be found at [pahouse.com/NewsCenter](http://pahouse.com/NewsCenter).

## Other Bills I Support

**H.B. 2735:** Would repeal the most recent changes made to the fireworks law and reinstate the provisions as they existed before the passage of Act 43. Nothing in this legislation would prohibit Pennsylvania residents from using novelty fireworks or enjoying display fireworks that are set off at community events to celebrate Independence Day and other holidays.

**H.B. 2702:** Would institute a 72-hour waiting period for all firearm transfers in Pennsylvania. Study after study supports the fact that disrupting impulsive acts of violence and self-harm by establishing a waiting period such as this saves lives and provides the time necessary for individuals to gain perspective and seek help.

## COVID-19 Cyber Charter School Enrollment Freeze

The current public health crisis has had profoundly negative consequences for public schools, students, teachers and taxpayers. The uncertainty of the current environment and the immense mitigation efforts being implemented by our public schools have caused a huge financial burden on school budgets. Because of this, we need to ensure that the cost for cyber charter school tuition does not become overwhelming in the process. Cyber charter schools do not face the same financial needs that traditional public school districts face to commence in-person learning in an era of the novel coronavirus.

To ensure that our districts are not hit with unexpected tuition bills, I propose that cyber charter school enrollment be limited to the students who were enrolled in cyber charter school as of July 1, 2020. I believe that our public school districts should be given all the necessary financial tools to ensure that reopening schools is safe, educationally sound and in the best interest of the entire school community.



“Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life is a hero to me.”



## Green Stimulus Package

Before the pandemic, Pennsylvania faced urgent challenges: a weakening economy too reliant on fossil fuels for prosperity, crumbling natural and physical infrastructure, severe economic and environmental inequality, and a worsening climate crisis.

COVID-19 has exacerbated these challenges to unprecedented levels, but it is also providing an opportunity for bold action — green stimulus and recovery investments that put Pennsylvania back to work in our nature-based and clean-energy industries.

The Green Stimulus and Recovery Platform for Pennsylvania aims to achieve four overarching goals:

- Safely and equitably restart the economy in a way that protects human health from the pandemic as well as pollution.
- Avoid state budget cuts that will harm economic recovery and set back our nature-based businesses.
- Target recovery investments that put Pennsylvanians back to work rebuilding our natural infrastructure.
- Support Pennsylvania's homegrown sustainable industries, like clean energy, that have long-term growth trajectories.

The policy agenda is estimated to require \$2.83 billion in annual investments for the duration of the crisis and recovery, preserving or creating as many as 389,000 jobs. Read more about the package at [www.pennfuture.org/greenstimulus](http://www.pennfuture.org/greenstimulus).



# Stay Ahead of COVID-19

For the latest and most trustworthy information about the COVID-19 pandemic, I suggest visiting these websites:

- The CDC ([cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus))
- The PA Health Department ([health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus](https://health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus))
- Montgomery County Office of Public Health ([montcopa.org/covid-19](https://montcopa.org/covid-19))

## Protect Yourself from COVID-19



# Spotted Lanternflies are BACK!



The invasive spotted lanternfly insect has emerged for the summer.

The spotted lanternfly presents a significant threat to Pennsylvania agriculture, including the grape, tree-fruit, hardwood and nursery industries, which collectively are worth nearly \$18 billion to the state's economy.

If you find any of these life stages of the spotted lanternfly, remove and/or kill the insects.

For more information or to report a spotted lanternfly infestation, call 1-888-4BAD-FLY or visit [www.agriculture.pa.gov/spottedlanternfly](https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/spottedlanternfly).

## PUA and additional UC

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program is available for self-employed workers, independent contractors, gig workers and workers impacted by COVID-19 but not eligible for regular unemployment compensation.

The PA Department of Labor & Industry also launched the

## Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation Program Progression

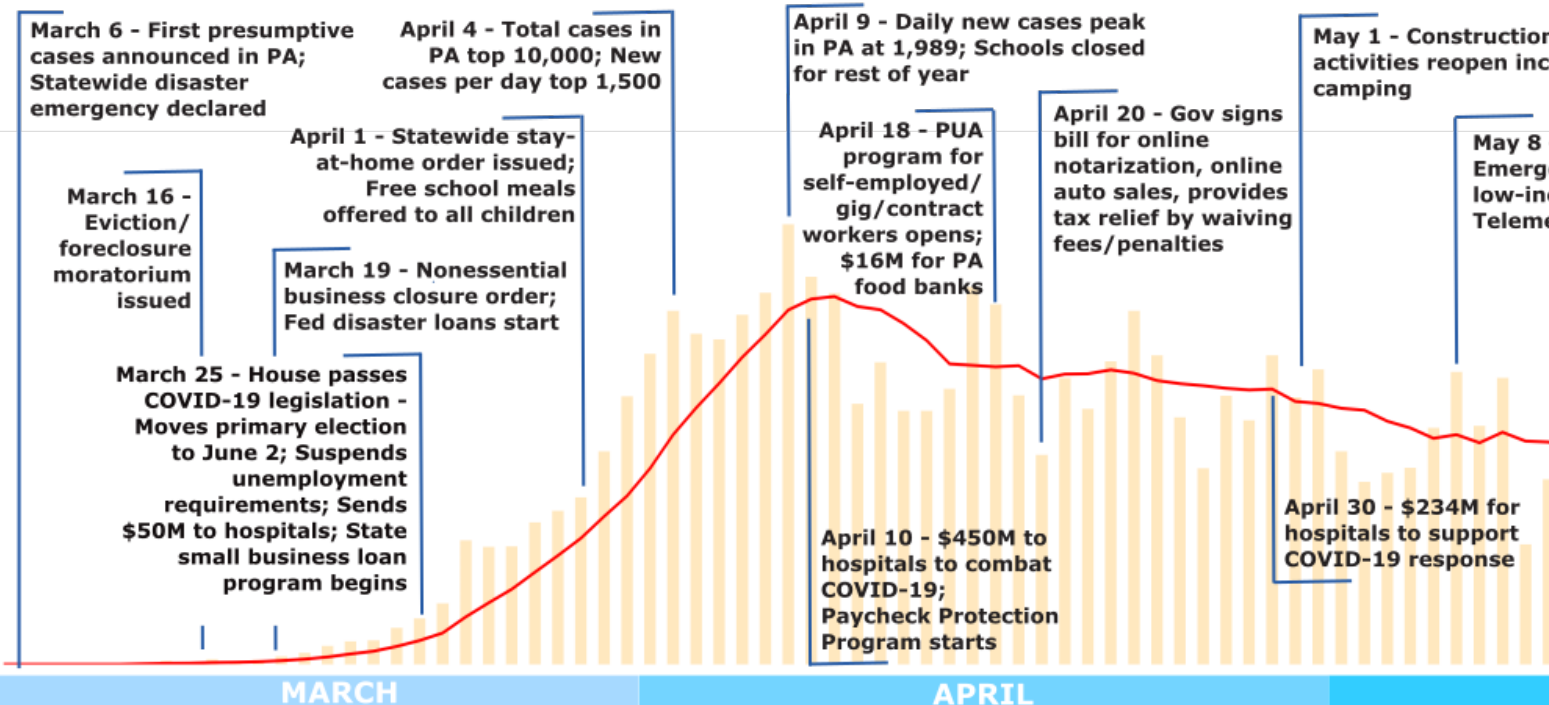
### UNDERSTANDING THE UC PROGRAMS & HOW TO GET BENEFITS



Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program to provide an additional 13 weeks of benefits to people who exhaust their regular unemployment

compensation. If you have an open UC claim but exhausted all your benefits, the 13 additional weeks will automatically be added to your existing claim.

# Pennsylvania's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: D



## A Thank You to My Staff



Here I am with members of my district staff earlier this year – before the pandemic! The entire crew, past and present, has worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 crisis to keep things running as smoothly as possible.

Special thanks to my fantastic district office and Harrisburg staff, who have worked endlessly over the past several months – largely from home – to keep up communications and help constituents with unemployment and COVID-19-related grants, along with all our normal services. Stephanie Berardi, Morgan-Victoria Johnson, Nancy Porvaznik, William Taylor and Megan Othersen Gorman have answered thousands of emails and calls, contacted countless agencies and have gone way beyond the norm to help so many through this incredibly hard time. You're very special! Thank you!

## Stay Protected from the Flu

Everyone 6 months of age or older should get a flu vaccine every season. This recommendation has been in place since Feb. 24, 2010, when the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted for "universal" flu vaccination in the United States to expand protection against the flu to more people. Vaccination to prevent influenza is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza.



I got my flu shot last year, and I plan to do it again this year!



## Precise Action Saved Lives and Flattened the Curve

Restarts; Outdoor dining golf and

First counties go yellow; Policy Assistant Program for me families starts; Vaccine expansion bill signed

May 17 - Additional 13 weeks of unemployment offered

May 29 - State budget signed; includes \$2.6B in federal relief funding; targets \$420M to PA nursing homes

June 4 - Statewide stay-at-home order ends

June 11 - \$625M offered to counties to aid recovery; \$225M small business grant program launches

June 29 - \$175M rental/mortgage assistance program launches

Seven Day New Case Average  
New Cases Per Day

March 1st to July 20

July 1 - Gov issues order requiring masks be worn in public

July 3 - Last county in PA goes green, most restrictions lifted

July 9 - Eviction/foreclosure suspension extended through Aug. 31

July 13 - Gov orders nightclubs to close, tightens restaurant rules due to rising case numbers

MAY

JUNE

JULY



# Improving Community-Police Relations

In early June, members of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus took over the House chamber in the state Capitol with a call for action on several reform bills that had languished in the House Judiciary Committee for far too long.

These actions were inspired by the May 25 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody and the ensuing protests calling out the systemic racism that exists throughout our country.

In short, we need meaningful change and to strengthen police-community relations.

The PLBC's action led to swift and unanimous passage of H.B.s 1841 and 1910, which were recently signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf. These social justice reform bills, which I proudly co-sponsored, ensure more thorough background checks for law enforcement applicants, establish an electronic database containing separation records of law enforcement officers to weed out those who've been removed from positions for misconduct, require mental health evaluations with a focus on PTSD for law enforcement officers, and require training for police officers on trauma-informed care, use of deadly force, de-escalation, implicit bias and other key issues, procedures and techniques.

The fight continues in Pennsylvania and throughout the country for safer communities that fully embrace a healthy, productive relationship with law enforcement.



Members of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus took over the House chamber at the state Capitol on June 8 with a call for action on social justice reform bills. This led to the passage of two bills that Governor Wolf recently signed into law. However, we still need action on 17 other reform bills sitting in the Judiciary Committee!

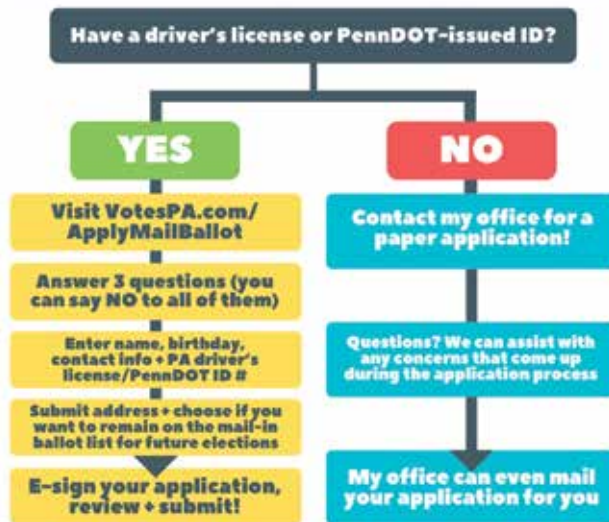


## Safety Grant for Cheltenham PD

Earlier this summer, I announced a trio of grants from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency were approved for Montgomery County, including one for Cheltenham Township. A total of \$41,461 in federal funding was approved for the Cheltenham Police Department to implement a body-worn camera program, allowing Cheltenham PD officers to better serve residents and visitors of the township.

# Vote by Mail

## APPLYING FOR A MAIL-IN BALLOT



Mail-in voting is a secure, convenient and safe option to ensure that your voice is heard from the comfort of your own home. Since we're not sure what the fall will bring regarding COVID-19, I highly encourage utilizing this option for the General Election in November. **You can apply for a mail-in ballot online ([votespa.com](https://votespa.com)) now.** Make sure to send your mail-in applications and ballots to:

Montgomery County Voter Services  
P.O. Box 311  
Norristown, PA 19404-0311

Also, make sure you're registered! Visit [register.votespa.com](https://register.votespa.com) to check on your status or to get registered. Deadline is Oct. 19!



More info | [www.2020census.gov](https://www.2020census.gov)

## How to take the 2020 Census



Online



Phone



Mail

## Why it matters

### Federal funding

For local programs and organizations

### Determines representation

In Congress and the state legislature

### Better planning

For roads, schools, healthcare and emergency services

### Helps businesses

Locate factories and stores, recruit employees and conduct market research



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## Flu Vaccine Event

### Save the date!

My Senior Influenza Vaccination Event is coming **Aug. 27 at Keneseth Israel** in Elkins Park. Follow my PA House page and social media accounts for more upcoming details!

## Stay informed!

Want to learn more about what is happening in our district and in Harrisburg? Sign up for my email! To continue receiving regular email updates during

the pre-election blackout, you must opt in (if you haven't already).

Sign up to receive my

regular email updates by visiting my PA House page: [www.pahouse.com/McCarter](http://www.pahouse.com/McCarter). Just scroll down to "Stay Informed" and sign up!

You can also follow me on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/RepMcCarter](https://www.facebook.com/RepMcCarter)) and on Twitter ([twitter.com/RepMcCarter](https://twitter.com/RepMcCarter)).

For the latest and best information about COVID-19, rely on the CDC ([cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)), the PA Health Department ([www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus)) and the Montgomery County Office of Public Health ([www.montcopa.org/covid-19](https://www.montcopa.org/covid-19)).

### IN-PERSON VISITS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

115 E. Glenside Ave., Suite 8, Glenside, PA 19038

- Rent Rebate Application Help
- Notary Services for State Documents
- Unclaimed Property
- And More



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