

THE NORTHEAST NEWS

From State Representative

Ed Neilson



SUMMER 2021

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Representative Neilson Appointed to Committee Chairmanship



With the beginning of the 2021-22 Legislative Session in January, I was honored to be appointed Democratic Chairman of the House Game and Fisheries Committee. I have been an active member of this committee in every session since first being elected to serve as your representative in the Pennsylvania House. In this role, we are responsible for overseeing the operations of the Pennsylvania Game Commission as well as the Fish and Boat Commission, while also promoting and protecting the outdoor traditions and wildlife resources of our state.

Without a doubt, the Game and Fisheries Committee operates as one of the most bipartisan groups in

the Legislature because all members share the common goals of serving the interests of the hunters, anglers, and boaters of the Commonwealth. It has been a pleasure to work with my colleagues on the committee in recent years to enact important legislation that affects small businesses, local tourism, and the ecological health of our state in addition to the outdoor enthusiast community. I look forward to continuing that work with members from both parties in my new capacity as a leader on the committee.

Our region has a wealth of outdoor resources to enjoy, whether on the water or in our parks and woodlands. As the first chairman of the committee ever from Philadelphia, I am proud to be positioned to protect and promote those resources as well as those throughout the state.



Always working for you! My offices are open to serve.

You can reach my office at 215-330-3714 for help over the phone, to schedule an appointment, or you can email me at RepNeilson@pahouse.net.

New Legislation Will Create Free Therapeutic Fishing Licenses

Fishing has been used as a successful therapeutic activity by health care professionals in the treatment of a wide variety of ailments throughout the nation. Programs that teach fishing skills and provide experiences on the water have helped those with mental and physical disabilities, cancer, and other chronic diseases. They also assist in recovery efforts from addiction, traumatic brain injury, and post-traumatic stress. Organizations that provided these free fishing opportunities include veterans' groups, such as the Wounded Warrior Project, as well as health care advocates, such as Casting for Recovery and Project Healing Waters.

The Fish and Boat Commission has the authority to award free license exemptions to participants of certain educational activities. However, currently the Pennsylvania Fish and



Boat Commission has no specific free exemption for therapeutic activities, relying instead on educational permits, even when the activity may not be technically qualified as such. In the

recent past, participants in over 60 different service organizations and hundreds of unique one-day fishing events across the Commonwealth would have qualified for a therapeutic license exemption, if it had existed.

It was with all this in mind that I was pleased to introduce House Bill 1108, the Therapeutic Fishing License Act. The bill would allow the Fish and Boat Commission to properly award free fishing privileges to people whose recovery and well-being will be improved by participating in educational fishing programs. The Fish and Boat Commission supports this legislation and agrees with the unique value of this initiative.

My bill won unanimous support in the House Game and Fisheries Committee earlier this year and now awaits attention by the House of Representatives.

Annual trout restocking in the waters of Pennypack Creek.



New REAL ID Requirements and Deadlines

Beginning May 3, 2023, 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 a federal building or military installation that requires ID. REAL IDs are now available to Pennsylvanians who want them. Visit penndot.gov/REALID for more information to help you decide if you need a REAL ID, and for information on what documents you will need and steps you can take to get an optional REAL ID.

Applicable Uses	Standard ID or Driver's License	REAL ID ID or Driver's License
Driving (DL only)	✓	✓
General identification purposes	✓	✓
Boarding a domestic (U.S.) flight after May 3, 2023	✗	✓

REAL ID will not be required to:

- Drive • Vote • Access hospitals • Visit the post office
- Access federal courts • Apply for or receive federal benefits, such as Social Security or veterans' benefits

The federal REAL ID Act has been extended in Pennsylvania until

May 3, 2023

The best thing you can do to prepare for REAL ID is to get your documents together:

- Proof of identity
- Social Security card
- Two current, physical proofs of PA residency
- Proof of all legal name changes



Visit **PENNDOT.GOV/REALID**

SEPTA Key Senior Card Availability

Senior citizens, age 65 and older, with a valid ID, ride FREE at all times on all Transit Routes (Bus, Trolley, Trackless Trolley, Broad Street/Broad Ridge Spur Line, Market Frankford Line/Norristown High Speed Line) and on Regional Rail for travel to and from stations located in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Seniors are also entitled to half fare (50% of the weekday fare) for travel to and from New Jersey and Delaware. To enjoy this benefit and ride, seniors will need to use one of the following VALID types of identification:

- Pennsylvania driver's license (licenses issued AFTER July 2017 cannot be used).
- Pennsylvania non-driver ID card (IDs issued AFTER July 2017 cannot be used).
- SEPTA Key Senior ID card.

There are three ways to apply for a SEPTA Key Senior Card.

1. Our District Office at Ashton Center is able to process applications for SEPTA Key Senior cards for our constituents (new applicants only), including taking photographs for the ID.
2. Same-day service is available by appointment ONLY, at SEPTA headquarters, 1234 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19107. To make an appointment: Call 215-580-7145 - press #6. Call center hours are Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM.
3. Visit <https://go.oncehub.com/septacct>

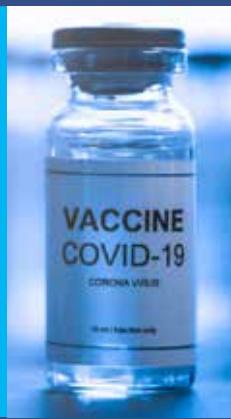


Expiring SEPTA Key Senior Cards

Due to the COVID-19 social distancing protocols and the desire to minimize non-essential travel, ALL SEPTA Key Senior Cards that expired in 2020 and those set to expire in 2021 have been extended through the end of calendar-year 2022.

COVID Update

More than 11 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Pennsylvania. All adults over age 18 as well as adolescents aged 12-17 are eligible for vaccination. To find a vaccine provider, please proceed to: <https://www.pa.gov/guides/get-vaccinated>.



July 16th, I had the pleasure of being present to support Captain Nick DeBlasis with the Philadelphia 8th Police District at the 1st Annual Community Wiffle-ball Tournament.



Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program



Application Deadline Extended

You have until December 31, 2021, to file your Property Tax/Rent Rebate application.

My office can help you with your application.

New State Tax Filing System

The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue has introduced a new online portal, myPATH, as an easy-to-use online system available for taxpayers in Pennsylvania who file and pay certain tax types, including Personal Income Tax, and Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications. To learn more, please go to: mypath.pa.gov.

New Unemployment Compensation System

The Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation (UC) program is administered by the Department of Labor and Industry and provides temporary wage replacement income to qualified workers. The system has undergone significant enhancements over the past year in response to increased need resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The new UC system is easy-to-use and designed to simplify and speed up the claims process. Claimants will now have access to more information and new self-serve options that will reduce the need to contact the UC customer service center.

The new system will make sure people will get the benefits they need while also reducing the opportunity for fraud. The



new UC system requires a log-in using a Keystone ID and password. You might already have one from using a different Commonwealth of Pennsylvania online service (such as PA CareerLink or COMPASS). Individuals currently filing for benefits through one of the programs will use the new UC system to file their weekly or biweekly claims. In the new UC system, claimants may access the UC Dashboard to file claims, access claim information, file an appeal, check payment status and more. To get started, visit: <https://benefits.uc.pa.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>.



Verify with **ID.me**

ID.me has entered a partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) to facilitate Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Unemployment Compensation (UC).

ID.me is a federally certified identity verification provider that specializes in digital identity protection. ID.me is already assisting several other states with preventing fraud within the PUA program. L&I is continuing to monitor claims for fraudulent applications and working with law enforcement partners in bringing scammers to justice.

"This new layer of identity verification will help ensure PUA payments are going to Pennsylvanians in need and not into the pockets of fraudsters," said PA Department of Labor & Industry Secretary Jerry Oleksiak. "Our partnership with ID.me will allow us to make payments more quickly to legitimate PUA claimants while helping L&I fulfill its fiduciary responsibility to the public to prevent fraud."

Be on the lookout for Unemployment Compensation fraud

The Department of Labor & Industry is urging Pennsylvanians to be vigilant of fraud and the warning signs and steps to take if they become a victim.

Across the nation, fraudsters have been applying for unemployment benefits using stolen identities that were obtained in data breaches that occurred outside of state government. Many people whose personal data was leaked are unaware until a fraudster uses their identity to apply for unemployment benefits and they receive notification that a benefits application has been filed in their name.

Anyone can contact the Pennsylvania Department of Banking and Securities with questions or complaints about a financial transaction, company, or product at 1-800-PA-BANKS by using the online complaint form, <https://www.dobs.pa.gov/Consumers/Pages/File-a-Complaint.aspx>.

Visit www.uc.pa.gov and click on "fraud" to learn the warning signs of unemployment benefits fraud, how to report it, and the steps you should take if you become a victim.



2021 Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program

A bulk mailing of Produce Voucher applications was sent to people who received the vouchers last year. Anyone who does not receive one of those automatically in the mail can call the PCA helpline, email or check the PCA website.

Helpline: 215-765-9040

Email: sfmnp@pcacares.org

Website: pcacares.org/produce



Crossing Guards Breakfast



In early June I had the pleasure, along with Senator John Sabatina, of honoring crossing guards of the 7th and 8th Police Districts for their dedication and hard work. They were treated to a nice breakfast. We also recognized 2020 and 2021 retirees who received flowers and citations of recognition for their many years of service. It was nice to be able to meet once again in person and spend a little time conversing with people in the neighborhood.



My staff and I helped those in the community who came out in late March to dispose of important documents properly and safely.



I met with Gov. Tom Wolf and residents who were affected by July's heavy rains that flooded and damaged homes.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Please join State Representative

ED NEILSON

for

FREE COMMUNITY SHREDDING EVENTS

To raise awareness about consumer fraud and identity theft, I am hosting free shredding events to give local residents the opportunity to securely dispose of documents they no longer need.

Saturday, September 11 • 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Maternity BVM Church Parking Lot (Lower Level)

9220 Old Bustleton Ave. • Philadelphia, PA 19154

Saturday, October 9 • 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Our Lady of Calvary Church Parking Lot

11024 Knights Road • Philadelphia, PA 19115

Do Not Exit Your Vehicle At Both Events!

WHAT TO BRING:

- Documents containing Social Security, credit card and bank account numbers
- Old credit card statements
- Bank statements
- Credit card applications
- Retirement/pension information
- Income tax information

All paper collected will be recycled. To ensure all attendees have the opportunity to shred their documents, you are asked to limit what you bring for shredding to three boxes. Please do not bring newspapers, x-rays, binders or hardback books.