

State Representative | 157th Legislative District



MELISSA L. SHUSTERMANN



Fall
2021

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CONGRATULATIONS

Upper Providence Little League!



It is with great pride that I extend my congratulations to all players, coaches, and parents of the Upper Providence Little League team, which secured the title of 2021 Mid-Atlantic Regional Champions. After an exhilarating season, the team went on to represent our community in the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. The series was broadcast live on ESPN. I applaud their grit, heart, and exceptional dedication to the game and to each other.

HURRICANE IDA:

OUR COMMUNITY IN RECOVERY

For many, Labor Day weekend looked very different this year. After Hurricane Ida ripped through much of the southeast region, stories of immeasurable loss and incredible resilience were seen throughout much of our district. I am in awe of the cleanup efforts organized by our municipal and township leaders, EMS service providers, nonprofits, and area volunteers. Enormous amounts of donations were collected, and our community came together in full strength to help our neighbors.

I felt fortunate to be able to lend a hand and speak to many residents who needed assistance. However, I know that many are still struggling, and that the effects of this storm will be felt for quite some time. With well over \$100 million in reported damages, complete recovery is a work in progress. My office is currently fielding as many questions as possible, getting out to join cleanup and donation efforts, and continuing to share resource information as it is announced.

Below is a list of currently available resources. If you are able, please spread the word to those who do not currently have access to their homes or mailboxes to receive this publication. Resources will also be posted to my website and social media accounts.



STATE AND FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

The major disaster declaration through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will provide federal funding and services to eligible individuals and households through the Individual Assistance program and impacted communities through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. For individual assistance please visit www.fema.gov/assistance/individual. For community grants, please visit www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation.

REPORTING DAMAGE

Property damage reports should be filed with your county of residence. For forms, and the most up-to-date county assistance, please head to www.chesco.org/4996/Ida OR www.montcopa.org/3878/Hurricane-Ida.

HOUSING & UTILITIES

Emergency Rent & Utility Assistance Program

This can be accessed by dialing 2-1-1, and press (2) for Homelessness and Housing Crisis. You will then be asked to select your county. After selecting your county, press (2) again for Emergency Assistance Program.

For more information and eligibility guidelines, please visit www.211SEPA.org.

FREE CLEANUP ASSISTANCE

SEPA VOAD (Southeastern PA Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)

Please contact co-chair Julia Menzo at jmenzo@libertylutheran.org or 267-464-7740 OR the general email inbox at info@sepavoad.com.

MENTAL HEALTH

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Disaster Helpline

Provides 24/7, 365-days-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. Please call 1-800-985-5990.

Teen Talk Line by Access Services

Allows teens to speak confidentially with peers of their own age. They are available by phone at 855-852-8336 or by text at 484-362-9515. If you are a teen experiencing a mental health crisis, please call Valley Creek Crisis Center at 610-280-3270.



REPRESENTING YOU ON PENNSYLVANIA'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

I was honored to be appointed to Pennsylvania's Workforce Development Board by Governor Tom Wolf in May 2021. Since elected to office in 2018, I have made workforce development a legislative priority. Many sectors of our economy are changing or expanding. These changes have only been expedited by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, our approach to job training and a comprehensive education must evolve with them.

Building a prepared, educated, and well-trained workforce and providing that workforce with ample opportunity to succeed is critical to keeping skilled talent right here in the Commonwealth. My goal as a member of the Workforce Development Board is to make sure we are training and educating our emerging and current workers for the high-quality jobs that exist here and now. In order to further this goal, I spent the summer visiting several institutions and organizations to learn about how they are matching individuals with well-paying and rewarding careers.

TOURING LOCAL UNION APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING SITES

Perhaps now more than ever, union apprenticeships have much to offer our emerging workforce. With high wages, competitive benefits, and debt-free education and training, our building trades are recruiting the next generation of leaders in essential industries. What is more, our local unions facilitate nationally recognized apprenticeship programs that put superior safety, quality training, and equal opportunity first.

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 542

IUOE Local 542 trains their apprentices for the critical jobs that keep PA infrastructure projects moving. Future heavy equipment operators and stationary engineers get high-quality, hands-on experience at IUOE Local 542's training grounds in Glenmoore, PA. I even got the chance to test out some of the equipment myself, a humbling experience that further highlighted the impressive, skilled work being done by apprentices on-site. IUOE apprentices take part in a 4-year program, during which they are paid to work for real contractors at a competitive, negotiated pay rate with comprehensive benefits. All training and education are free, and lifelong careers await an overwhelming majority of graduates.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 126

IBEW Local 126 upholds an unbeatable standard of safety and instruction for the individuals who help power PA. Their future Journeymen Linemen (and women!) are trained for real-world conditions using controlled climbing and confined space simulations in their newly built training facility in Collegeville, PA. 7,000 hours of high accredited education and training at IBEW Local 126's Northeastern program are completely free of charge, and apprentices get to work straight away earning steady paychecks and securing competitive benefits. Graduates of the program can expect sustainable, well-paid work well into retirement. I was fascinated at the emerging technologies and impressive skills needed to perform this work.

Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Committee of Philadelphia and Vicinity

The Carpenters JAC offers a wide breadth of opportunities for its apprentices and future industry professionals. Like many others, I was surprised to find just how much Carpenters JAC covers beyond traditional carpentry. During my visit, I was informed about the organization's cabinet making program and floor laying program, and I even had the opportunity to view the largest underwater welding tank in North America. Just as with our other labor unions, Carpenters JAC offers an earn-as-you-learn model that pays apprentices competitive wages while they complete their education. Among traditional benefits like medical and retirement, the organization also gives all apprentices the opportunity to graduate with an associate's degree.

Strategic workforce development is important to help our state adapt to a dynamic, post-pandemic economy. Workforce Development is economic development. We need to make sure our workforce is capable to meet the needs of the jobs that are available here at home and continue to build partnerships that connect these workers to strong and ethical employers right in our area.

As a member of the Workforce Development Board, I will make sure we use state funds wisely to accomplish these goals. With rich resources and a strong system of colleges and apprenticeship programs, Pennsylvania has what it takes to be an innovative leader in our country's changing economic landscape.



CONNECTING WITH DELAWARE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

At Delaware County Community College, instructors and administrators are helping their students build a bright future. I was especially impressed by Delaware County's dual-enrollment program, which allows high school students to hone their skills early and explore good-paying jobs in major industries across our Commonwealth even before graduation. I believe much of their success comes from the proactive model of partnering with real companies in the area. These companies give the college feedback regarding what kind of skills they are looking for when hiring. In turn, Delaware County Community College develops a curriculum that reflects that feedback. Students feel empowered and prepared by this direct access to industry demands.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES & PRIORITIES

The Passage of SB 664, which Included My Provision for Compensatory Education and Students with IEPs

For some students with IEPs or disabilities, last year's changes caused a regression in important learning and soft skills. I am happy to report on behalf of the parents and stakeholders who worked with me to create House Bill 909 that our work has passed through the legislature in the form of Senate Bill 664, now Act 66.* I hope that parents who chose to apply for Act 66 earlier this summer feel more confident that their children will accomplish their goals this academic year and regain the important progress that was lost during the pandemic.

*Act 66 was signed by Governor Tom Wolf on June 30, 2021. Applications were accepted until July 15, 2021.

Producer Responsibility Recycling Bill

Last session I was the primary sponsor of legislation that would place recycling responsibility on the producer, not the consumer. This legislation would require producers to use plastic packaging that is recyclable in Pennsylvania. Often, producers will use plastic packaging that does not have a recycling market in our area, making it nearly impossible for consumers to recycle effectively. I believe this is a matter of good faith and accountability. We need to make sure that if a producer is going to create plastic packaging for its products, the plastic being used can be recycled locally. I look forward to introducing this legislation again this fall.

Reentering the Workforce, Infrastructure, and Critical Child Care

Our abilities to get to work and care for our families are deeply interconnected. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many parents to choose between making a living and caring for their children full time. Statistics tell us that women, and specifically working mothers, were disproportionately affected by the difficulty of this juggling act. As our Commonwealth recovers, I intend to continue supporting legislation that creates a reliable network of resources for working parents. That means accessible transportation, dependable child care, and conscientious workplaces with good benefits and living wages.

To view all of the legislation I have sponsored or co-sponsored, and to view my voting record, please visit www.legis.state.pa.us.



COVID-19: FALL 2021

The uptick of COVID-19 cases both nationally and within the Commonwealth is due to the hyper-transmissible Delta variant. However, we are now seeing far fewer hospitalizations and cases of serious illness than previously observed. This is due to high vaccination rates across our district and a return to masking in higher risk situations. Vaccines continue to be our strongest weapon against serious illness and fatality from COVID-19.

Vaccines and milder infections mean those who are sick can quarantine comfortably at home, and that our local hospital systems remain at safe capacities with beds and available staff to tend to our most vulnerable patients. In order to keep businesses and schools open, masks continue to be strongly encouraged while interacting with others outside your household, and are now required for all teachers, staff, and students in Pennsylvania schools for the 2021-22 academic school year.

I strongly encourage all those who haven't yet, to get vaccinated. Together, we can keep our neighbors, friends, and loved ones safe and healthy as we return to many of our favorite activities and traditions this fall.



To schedule an appointment, head to pa.gov/get-vaccinated.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS COMING TO OUR AREA IN FALL 2021

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has awarded a grant of \$689,496 to rehabilitate the block pavement on Gulph Road in Valley Forge National Historical Park, part of the National Memorial Arch in Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County, and Tredyffrin Township, Chester County. Using the grant, PennDOT's contractor will restore approximately 180 linear feet of deteriorated granite block on Gulph Road in front of the National Memorial Arch while maintaining the roadway's historical significance and providing an improved riding surface for the public. The project is slated to begin this fall and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2022.

As infrastructure remains a challenge in our district, I intend to continue advocating for more repairs in our area. This is one of many projects still needed, and Pennsylvania will be aggressive in our bid to acquire appropriate federal dollars for these projects. At the federal level, the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act plans to invest \$110 billion of new funds for roads, bridges, and major projects, and reauthorize the surface transportation program for the next five years, building on bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization bills passed out of committee earlier this year.

This investment intends to repair and rebuild our roads and bridges with a focus on climate change mitigation, resilience, equity, and safety for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians. The bill includes a total of \$40 billion of new funding for bridge repair, replacement, and rehabilitation, which is the single largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system. The bill also includes around \$16 billion for major projects that are too large or complex for traditional funding programs but will deliver significant economic benefits to communities.

Questions regarding federal legislation may be directed to Congresswomen Chrissy Houlahan and Madeleine Dean, representing our district in the U.S. House of Representatives.

FALL EVENT OFFERINGS

Policy Hearing: Revitalizing Our Main Streets and Local Economies

This event has been POSTPONED. Please stay tuned for a rescheduled date.

Free Shredding Event

Saturday, October 9th
9 A.M. – 12 P.M. (or until truck is full)

Technical College High School

Pickering Campus
580 Charlestown Rd.
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Veterans Breakfast

Thursday, November 11th
9 A.M. – 12 P.M.

Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge

Please call to RSVP at 484-200-8260

For continuing event information, be sure to follow me on socials @RepShusterman and sign up for my weekly emails by visiting RepShusterman.com.

GET CONNECTED TO MY OFFICE

Paoli District Office

42 E. Lancaster Avenue, Suite A
Paoli, PA 19301
Monday – Friday, 9 A.M. – 5 P.M.

New Mobile Office Hours

Upper Providence Township Building
1286 Black Rock Rd.
Phoenixville, PA 19460
Wednesdays, 9 A.M. – 1 P.M.



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MELISSA L. SHUSTerman

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Paoli, PA 19301

Keeping Up with Shusterman!

@RepShusterman

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***EVENT NOTICE:**

Please note that my
**September 21st Policy
Hearing** was postponed
until further notice as we
direct our attention to
Hurricane Ida recovery.

Ipo.km.0921



Dear Neighbor,

As one of the most critical times in our Commonwealth's history, this summer presented us with new and ongoing challenges. From COVID-19 to Hurricane Ida, our district has met these challenges head-on. While our work is far from over, we continue to take meaningful strides toward restoring our vibrant future here in Pennsylvania. This fall, I am ready to return to the House for the 2021-22 voting session and represent the key interests of our region. Enclosed here, you will find resources and updates on the issues facing us today, the legislative priorities I consider to be most pressing, and a look at some of the meaningful work and achievements happening right here in our community.

As always, I thank you for the opportunity and privilege to serve.

Sincerely,

Rep. Melissa Shusterman
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Website: RepShusterman.com/contact