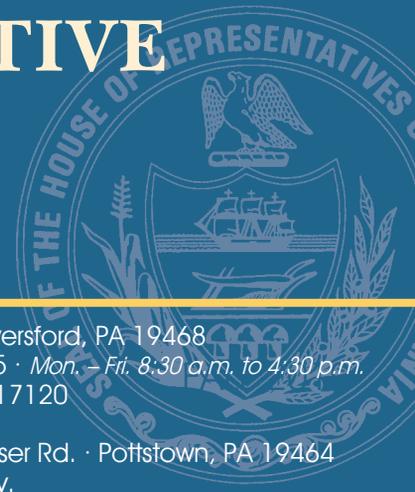




STATE REPRESENTATIVE Joe Ciresi

146th Legislative District



Constituent Services Office: 301 N. Lewis Road · Suite 140C · Royersford, PA 19468
P: (484) 200-8265 · F: (484) 200-8275 · *Mon. – Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*
Capitol Office: 125A East Wing · P.O. Box 202146 · Harrisburg, PA 17120
P: (717) 783-4086 · F: (717) 705-1891
Pottstown Satellite Office: TriCounty Active Adult Center · 288 Moser Rd. · Pottstown, PA 19464
Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
Office hours may vary: please call (484) 200-8265 to confirm hours

Fall 2021

Email: RepCiresi@pahouse.com · Website: www.RepCiresi.com

   Follow me on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @RepCiresi

Dear Neighbors,

The leaves are changing, the holidays are right around the corner, and we continue to return to some sort of normalcy. Much has happened in the district since our last newsletter that I am excited to share with you, and I hope that you will find it useful!

In this Fall 2021 newsletter, you will find updates on the following:

- Grants awarded in our district.
- Local property tax/rent rebate programs.
- My legislation.
- Home heating assistance.
- Connecting constituents with unclaimed funds.
- Aqua's proposed wastewater rate hike for Limerick.
- The Pottstown Photo License Center's closure.
- Upcoming events – including a shredding event and a veterans breakfast.

I also wanted to share that my office has hired two new part-time staff members, Tracy and RJ, and brought Mindi up to full-time to replace Mike and Sarah.

Tracy Glover, constituent services advisor, moved from Pittsburgh 22 years ago and now calls Royersford her home. She has been an active volunteer in the community for many years. She holds a special place in her heart for all rescue animals.

RJ Ward, constituent services advisor, lives in Royersford and recently graduated from Penn State in May. RJ is passionate about pursuing a legal career and he plans on attending law school in the future.

Mindi Cherry, constituent services advisor, lives in Perkiomen Township. She is married with 2 sons in college and a daughter at PVHS. She enjoys baking and relaxing with her family.

My office remains available to help you with any state-related issues – through office walk-ins at my Royersford District Office and by phone, email, and social media. While the Pottstown satellite office at the TriCounty Active Adult Center is still closed, we are looking forward to starting to reopen it in the near future.

Thank you for reading, and please never hesitate to reach out if my staff or I can connect you with state resources that exist to make your life easier!



*Introducing our newest staff members,
Tracy (left) and RJ (right).*

Over \$24 Million in State Grants Delivered

I continue to advocate for my constituents by seeking out and supporting state grants and other funding to help our residents, businesses, schools, and local governments. Since taking office in January 2019, I am proud to have helped deliver over \$24 million in state grants to the 146th Legislative District, including these recent grant awards since my last newsletter update:

“Thank you to Representative Ciresi for reaching out to us and helping us secure this funding, which undoubtedly makes our jobs easier and our community safer.”

– Pottstown Fire Chief Frank Hand

- \$3.7 million for the Pottstown Borough Authority to replace lead water lines in older homes, eliminating exposure to hazardous materials.
- \$770,000 in COVID-19 pandemic relief aid to 19 restaurants, hotels, and catering businesses through the COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program (CHIRP), which I pushed for and supported.
- \$120,000 for blight remediation projects in Pottstown Borough, transforming blighted properties on King Street into a structure for youth empowerment programming, early childhood education, and community meeting space.
- \$85,000 for the Pottstown Fire Department to purchase a utility rescue truck that would serve as a fully equipped mobile incident command unit, allowing access to hard-to-reach areas and featuring a boat, rescue equipment, and other specialty stock.
- \$40,000 for Historic Trappe to replace the outdated, failing HVAC system at the Henry Muhlenberg House with a new, energy efficient HVAC system to ensure preservation of the historic structure and its irreplaceable contents.
- \$18,000 for Royersford Borough to create an Active Transportation Plan to improve walkability and biking infrastructure throughout the borough.



Almost \$150K in Unclaimed Funds Returned to Constituents in 2020

As part of our constituent services, my office proactively searches for and locates unclaimed property for residents in my district. In 2020, a tough year when many individuals were especially in need of extra assistance, I am proud that my staff was able to help find and recover \$147,122.63 in unclaimed property from 81 claims, returning money to its rightful owners. This ranked my office 2nd and 3rd in the entire legislature for total amount and number of submitted claims.

We offer this unclaimed property assistance service free of charge to all constituents, so please contact my office if you think you have unclaimed property – or even just to do a quick check for you and your relatives. According to the Pennsylvania Treasury, 1 in 10 Pennsylvanians has unclaimed property waiting for them, including dormant bank and retirement accounts, stocks, uncashed checks, and military medals.



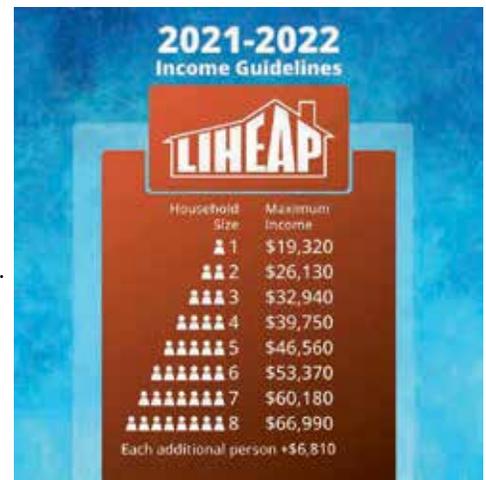
Presenting a legislative citation commemorating 100+ years of volunteer fire services in Limerick Township.

Home Heating Assistance

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is now accepting applications. LIHEAP offers cash grants to help with home heating bills and crisis grants to help with emergency situations, such as a broken furnace or an unexpected fuel shortage. Applicants do not have to be on public assistance to receive help through LIHEAP, nor will any lien be placed on a person's property.

This season's income limit for LIHEAP assistance is \$19,320 (yearly) for an individual. This limit increases by \$6,810 for each additional person in the household.

These grants are available to renters and homeowners. They range from \$500 to \$1,500 based on household size, income, and fuel type. Grants will be sent directly to your utility company or fuel provider and do not have to be repaid. Online applications may be completed by visiting www.compass.state.pa.us. My office can provide paper applications or help when applying.



2021-2022
Income Guidelines

Household Size	Maximum Income
1	\$19,320
2	\$26,130
3	\$32,940
4	\$39,750
5	\$46,560
6	\$53,370
7	\$60,180
8	\$66,990

Each additional person +\$6,810

Pottstown PennDOT Photo Center Closed

Without much warning, the Pottstown Photo License Center suddenly closed on October 4, 2021. PennDOT described that they terminated their contract for the location with Commonwealth Auto Tags, at 377 E. High St., "for cause."

I understand the importance of having an accessible Photo License Center in our area, and I immediately spoke with PennDOT officials and emphasized the importance of opening a new location as quickly as possible. PennDOT has been receptive and assured me that they are actively working to find and reopen a new location in the Pottstown area, and my office will provide further updates as they become available.

In the meantime, area residents can use the Harleysville Photo License Center or the Malvern/Frazer, Norristown, King of Prussia, and Reading Driver License centers for PennDOT photo license services. You can find a list of centers, or access PennDOT online driver and vehicle services, at www.dmv.pa.gov.

Bring PA Wine to BYOBs

Small local restaurants are a foundation of our communities and offer a place for people to socialize and enjoy their free time. Pennsylvania is also one of the top ten wine-producing states, with the multibillion-dollar local industry supporting tens of thousands of jobs and driving tourism and the economy.

I introduced House Bill 1876, which would allow Pennsylvania wineries to partner with a small number of BYOBs to sell wine for on-premises consumption, allowing customers to enjoy wine with their meals. This legislation would support our small local restaurants by providing a tool to enhance the dining experience as they recover from the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as increase exposure to our growing Pennsylvania wine industry.

Promoting Pennsylvania Tourism

As a member of the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee and Vice Chair of the Democratic Policy Committee, I have had the opportunity to travel the state to see how other regions in PA are promoting tourism to their areas. From Kinzua Bridge State Park to Erie to Pittsburgh, PA continues to find new ways to attract visitors to our state!

Find out more about what Pennsylvania and Montgomery County have to offer (and tell your friends and family) at www.visitpa.com and www.valleyforge.org.

I also want to hear from you! What is your favorite place to visit or tourist attraction in Pennsylvania? Let me know at repciresi@pahouse.net.



On our Tourism Committee visit to Elk County, my colleagues and I had the opportunity to see how they attract visitors to their state parks.

Fair Funding for Education

Since being elected, fair funding for education has been one of my top priorities – an issue that combines quality public education, property tax reduction, community revitalization, and racial equity all in one. While our state legislature passed fair funding formulas for education in 2015 and 2016, it only applied them to new funding – which means only 11% of basic education and 13.6% of special education dollars are factored into the new formulas.

Almost all education funding is based on an old way of funding education that guaranteed no school district would lose funding going back to 1991. While that sounds good in principle, it has led to massive disparities across the state as many school districts shrank, others (especially ones in our region!) grew, and state funding did not keep up with the needs of growing districts. The result: disproportionately higher property taxes for growing school districts like ours.

My bill, House Bill 1595, would completely phase in the Basic Education and Special Education Funding Formulas over the next five years, bringing \$18 million more in annual education funding to the school districts I represent – funding that they deserve based on the state's own formulas.

This money would go to support improving educational outcomes and reducing local property taxes.



Still Time to Claim Your Property Tax/Rent Rebate

If you're eligible and have not yet completed your application for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate, there is still time – the deadline to apply has been extended until the end of the year. Applications must be postmarked by December 31, 2021 to be considered.

If you already have applied and live in the Spring-Ford Area or Perkiomen Valley school districts, you now have the option to apply for a supplemental property tax rebate. Spring-Ford offers a rebate of 50% of your state rebate amount, while Perkiomen Valley offers 30%, and anyone who receives the Property Tax/Rent Rebate this year is eligible.



The Property Tax/Rent Rebate program offers rebates for qualifying Pennsylvanians on their previous year's property taxes or rent paid based on last year's income. To be eligible, you must be 65 or older, a widow or widower 50 or older, or 18 or older with a permanent disability. Gross income limits are \$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters, with only half of gross Social Security benefits being counted in calculating income. Rebates range from \$250 to \$975, not counting local school district supplemental rebates.

Applications can be submitted online at <https://mypath.pa.gov>, or my office can provide or help you complete a paper application. My office also has applications available for school district supplemental rebates.

Standing Up to Exorbitant Rate Hikes

On behalf of the 5,000 households that I represent in Limerick Township, I have taken a stand against the wastewater rate increase proposed by Aqua Pennsylvania – an increase that would amount to a doubling of rates for most township wastewater customers.

Under the proposed increase, the average Limerick resident's sewer bill would increase from \$35.36 to \$72.94, to provide the same service they've received for years. This astronomical rate increase would pose a significant burden on my constituents, especially for seniors on fixed incomes and for many still recovering from the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the time Aqua Pennsylvania purchased this sewer system from Limerick Township in 2018, their president called the system "compliant and well-maintained." Now, with this being the first opportunity to increase rates following the end of a post-sale three-year rate freeze, it is unimaginable that the costs of a "well-maintained" system could have doubled in that time.

I have urged the Public Utility Commission to reject this rate increase request. Subsequently, the PUC voted to suspend the rate increase pending further investigation. You can find information about the rate case at <https://www.puc.pa.gov/>.

PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE DISTRICT

Some of the Scouts from Cub Scout Pack 7155 stopped by my office to talk about how a bill becomes a law.



Standing with nurses at Pottstown Hospital in support of safe staffing levels and improving patient care.



I joined Joe Fescenmyer to make Meals on Wheels deliveries to seniors in the Limerick and Royersford area.

Meeting with local school superintendents to discuss their needs and how Harrisburg can better support our schools



Inspired by a similar event that Superintendent Russell and I participated in, I enjoyed listening to students at Perkiomen Valley and Spring-Ford discuss their experiences and present brilliant ideas for making their schools and communities better at the “Student Voice: Reflecting on Educational Experiences” event at PVHS.



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lpo.ad.1121

UPCOMING EVENTS

Paper Shredding Event

Co-Hosted with Limerick Township

Sunday, November 14th | 12 p.m. – 3 p.m. *(or until the truck is full)*

Western Montgomery Career and Technology Center | 77 Graterford Road, Limerick

Please limit five boxes of paper per household.

Veterans Discount ID Card & FraudSleuth Sign-Up Event

Co-Hosted with Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds Jeanne Sorg

Thursday, November 18

10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Rep. Ciresi's District Office

301 N. Lewis Road Suite 140C, Royersford

For Veterans: *Bring your DD-214 discharge paperwork (and a photo ID) to be recorded with the county and receive a Veterans Discount ID Card, accepted at over 500 county businesses.*

For Homeowners: *Sign up for FraudSleuth, a free county-run property fraud protection service, which will alert you if someone attempts to record a document matching your property with Montgomery County.*

Veterans Breakfast

Tuesday, December 7th

9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Royersford EMS Banquet Hall | 269 Green St., Royersford

RSVP at (484) 200-8265 or RepCiresi@pahouse.net