



STATE REPRESENTATIVE **Tony DeLuca**

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As I sit writing this message, once again the number of local COVID-19 cases is surging during this seemingly relentless pandemic. What a rough, unthinkable two years we have lived through, but thankfully we've had each other with whom to make the journey.

In that time we've certainly learned a lot (both good and bad) about ourselves; our family and friends; our neighbors and community; our coworkers and our employment; and even our politics.

We have a new respect for the unfailing spirit and dedication of the medical profession, teachers, police officers, emergency medical personnel, firefighters, grocery store employees, restaurant servers, truck drivers, bus drivers and trade workers. Without question we have redefined the word "hero." To say our faith has been tested is an understatement.

To our credit, though, the pandemic has taught all of us to learn to be more flexible in our daily and long-range planning; more accepting of situations over which we simply have no control; and hopefully more patient with ourselves and others.

Thanks to communication/computer technology providing some of us the ability to work remotely, I have never stopped working for you. When COVID-19 was initially raging through our communities, we were still able to conduct our House business (introducing bills, voting on legislation, etc.) without ever leaving the district. It was a relief and a step toward normalcy, however, when it was safe for us to return for session in person in the Capitol.

As many of you know in August, Connie, my beloved wife of 67 years, lost her courageous battle with cancer. I miss her every single day. Thank you to everyone who reached out to me and offered sympathy and support. Connie was my rock and absolutely the wind beneath my wings. She will certainly continue to be my motivation as I do my job in Harrisburg and at home.

The votes we cast are not always easy or popular. But as always has been the case, I let the best interest of my constituents be my guide as I weigh the facts before me and make a decision. In this newsletter you will read about the many bills I have introduced on your behalf just in the 2021-22 session.

We have so much work ahead of us. I am looking forward to not only the warmer weather but also the new hope spring always brings. Among my many legislative priorities in the next few months will be infrastructure; mental health issues; pharmaceutical prices and more transparency; and school safety.

Hopefully those issues will also have support from my colleagues across the aisle.

In the meantime, stay safe and well. Know that all of you and your loved ones are in my daily prayers. Remember my very qualified district office staff and I are always ready to help you. Feel free to contact us.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony DeLuca".

STAY CONNECTED

www.RepDeLuca.com

 @RepTonyDeLuca

REPORTING CYBERCRIME

In 2020, Pennsylvania saw more reported victims of cybercrime than Canada, India, Australia, France, Germany, and Mexico combined.

This shows a pressing need for state policies that deter cybercrime.

As Democratic Chairman of the House Insurance Committee, I will be introducing legislation with Republican Chairwoman of the House Insurance Committee Tina Pickett that would require insurance entities to report data breaches. The bill would also establish cybersecurity standards and protocols insurance entities should use to keep your data safe.

Your privacy is important. You should know when your personal information has appeared in a data breach. I look forward to shepherding this important legislation through the legislative process, and hopefully into law.



Because life happens and you never know when you will need it, I was proud to stand with Governor Tom Wolf as he visited with me and Jay Costa to explain the value of Pennie, the state's health insurance program. We were encouraging individuals who need health insurance to enroll through the state site before open enrollment ended on January 15th. As Chairman of the House Insurance Committee, I supported the legislation for Pennie, which provides quality and affordable health care for hundreds and in some cases thousands of dollars on

WORKING FOR YOU IN HARRISBURG MOST BILLS INTRODUCED BY ANY REPRESENTATIVE

I am honored to be your Representative in the Pennsylvania House. I believe in working hard for the constituents of the 32nd District, for our local communities, and for the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Every time I go to Harrisburg when the House is in session, I ask myself how I can help improve the lives of the people in my district. For that reason, I introduce more legislation than any other representative. In fact, I have introduced more than 80 bills this session alone. They range in topics from consumer protection, crime and education, to government accountability and transparency; and of course, as Democratic Chairman of the House Insurance Committee, I have been a longtime negotiator of improvements to insurance laws that benefit consumers.

We have a full-time legislature in Pennsylvania, and I believe in putting in full-time work on your behalf. Some of the bills that I have proposed in Harrisburg include:

House Bill 509, which would change the Amber Alert system to alert the public sooner when a child goes missing, after the death of Nalani Johnson, a child from Penn Hills.

House Bill 318, which would eliminate conflicts of interest by prohibiting members of the legislature

from receiving outside income.

House Bill 559, which would help eliminate blight by requiring mortgage lenders to maintain foreclosed properties.

House Bill 760, which would freeze property taxes for senior citizens.

House Bill 841, which would reaffirm that mental health patients have the right to be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

House Bill 1824, which would require municipalities and school districts to hold public hearings for using federal COVID-19 stimulus money.

House Bill 209, which would make pharmaceutical prices more transparent.

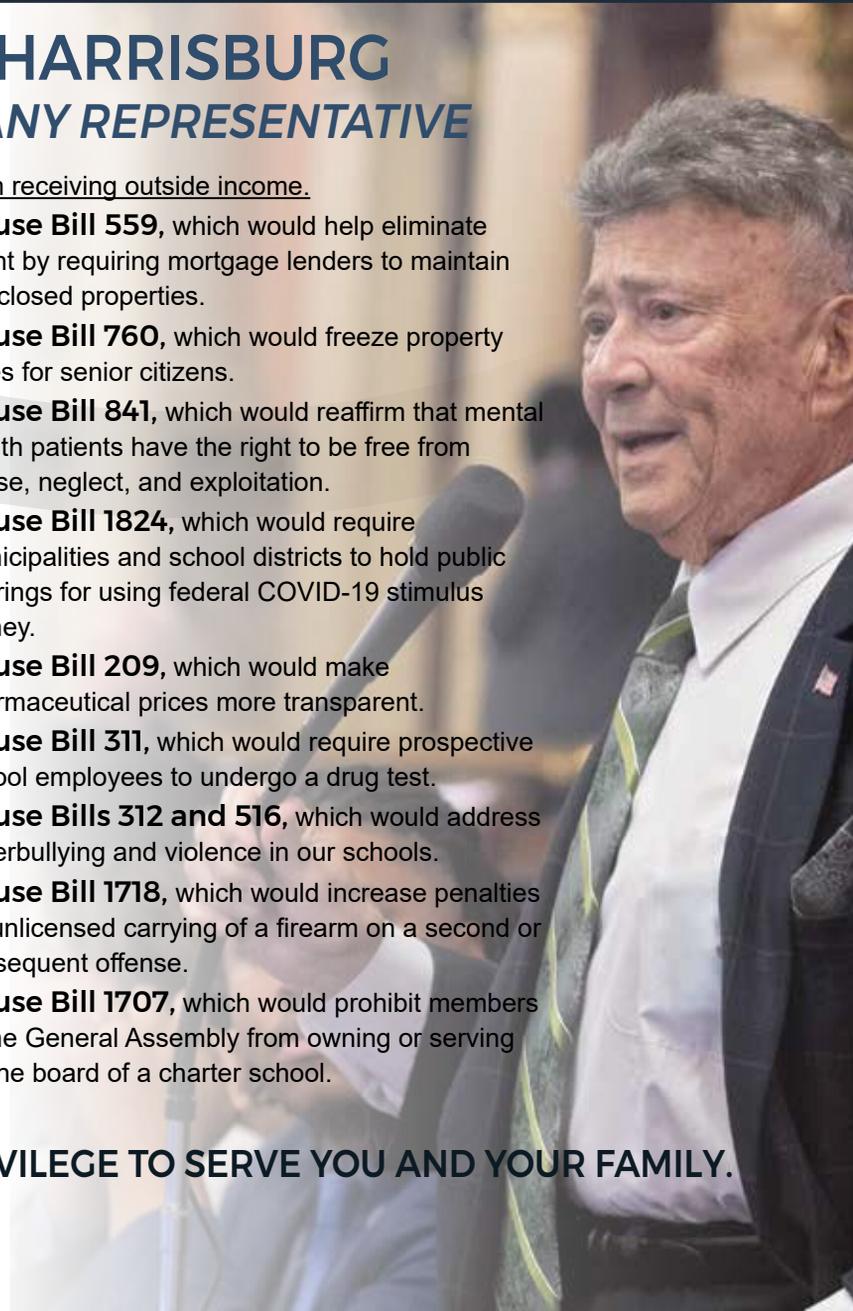
House Bill 311, which would require prospective school employees to undergo a drug test.

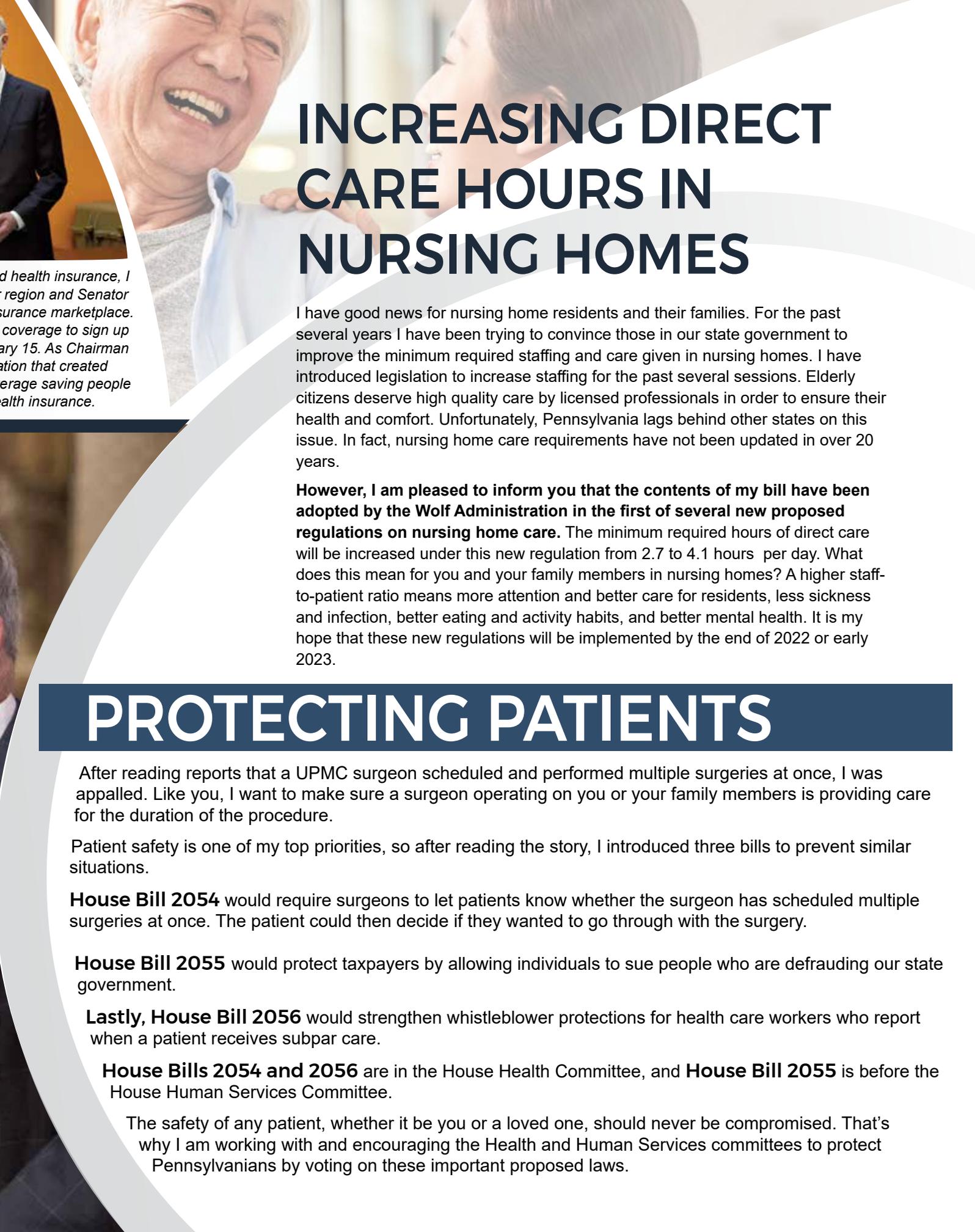
House Bills 312 and 516, which would address cyberbullying and violence in our schools.

House Bill 1718, which would increase penalties for unlicensed carrying of a firearm on a second or subsequent offense.

House Bill 1707, which would prohibit members of the General Assembly from owning or serving on the board of a charter school.

THANK YOU, AS ALWAYS, FOR THE PRIVILEGE TO SERVE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.





INCREASING DIRECT CARE HOURS IN NURSING HOMES

I have good news for nursing home residents and their families. For the past several years I have been trying to convince those in our state government to improve the minimum required staffing and care given in nursing homes. I have introduced legislation to increase staffing for the past several sessions. Elderly citizens deserve high quality care by licensed professionals in order to ensure their health and comfort. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania lags behind other states on this issue. In fact, nursing home care requirements have not been updated in over 20 years.

However, I am pleased to inform you that the contents of my bill have been adopted by the Wolf Administration in the first of several new proposed regulations on nursing home care. The minimum required hours of direct care will be increased under this new regulation from 2.7 to 4.1 hours per day. What does this mean for you and your family members in nursing homes? A higher staff-to-patient ratio means more attention and better care for residents, less sickness and infection, better eating and activity habits, and better mental health. It is my hope that these new regulations will be implemented by the end of 2022 or early 2023.

PROTECTING PATIENTS

After reading reports that a UPMC surgeon scheduled and performed multiple surgeries at once, I was appalled. Like you, I want to make sure a surgeon operating on you or your family members is providing care for the duration of the procedure.

Patient safety is one of my top priorities, so after reading the story, I introduced three bills to prevent similar situations.

House Bill 2054 would require surgeons to let patients know whether the surgeon has scheduled multiple surgeries at once. The patient could then decide if they wanted to go through with the surgery.

House Bill 2055 would protect taxpayers by allowing individuals to sue people who are defrauding our state government.

Lastly, House Bill 2056 would strengthen whistleblower protections for health care workers who report when a patient receives subpar care.

House Bills 2054 and 2056 are in the House Health Committee, and **House Bill 2055** is before the House Human Services Committee.

The safety of any patient, whether it be you or a loved one, should never be compromised. That's why I am working with and encouraging the Health and Human Services committees to protect Pennsylvanians by voting on these important proposed laws.

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW, REGULATIONS TO BE ENACTED

Did you know that Pennsylvania is one of only three states in the entire country that has no regulations for pharmacy technicians? After a constituent spoke to me about his elderly mother receiving the wrong prescription medication, I was surprised to learn that while Pennsylvania licenses and regulates pharmacists, the state has no requirements in place for the technicians who play a large role in filling our prescription medications every day.

In order to protect consumers, I have introduced legislation every session for the last decade requiring pharmacy technicians to register with the state, pass a criminal

background check, have at least a high school diploma, and complete a certified training program. These are commonsense requirements that should be required for anyone dealing with something as important as life-saving medications. **I am pleased to announce that my bill was finally passed by the House, Senate, and signed into law by the Governor.** This legislation will provide much needed protections for anyone taking prescription medications at home, as well as those drugs administered in hospitals. Now that the bill has been signed into law, regulations will be put into place by the Department of State soon.



PA nurses received great news last month when the Legislature voted to dedicate \$15 million to expand the Student Loan Relief for Nurses Program that was sorely underfunded. I lobbied hard on behalf of the dedicated nurses in this Commonwealth who have served tirelessly through the COVID-19 pandemic. They certainly deserve loan debt relief as a small token of our gratitude. While legislation was being considered by the Senate, before it reached the House, I drafted a letter to the Governor and asked my colleagues to sign onto it urging the increase of funding for the state's Student Loan Relief for Nurses Program so more qualified nurses could take advantage of this benefit. I was happy to see both the House and the Senate came together and recognized the need for financially expanding this program. The Legislative vote also included money to go directly to hospitals to develop and employ staff recruitment efforts as well as funds to recruit staff in hospitals for individuals who work closely with behavioral health patients and those that deliver much-needed services in low-income and rural communities.



Thanks to the generosity of my constituents, the Western PA Police Athletic League "Stuff A Store" Toy Drive box in my district office in December was overflowing with gifts that were collected and distributed by local police departments, including Penn Hills, to families in need in the community in time for the holidays. Stopping by to also drop off unwrapped toys was Penn Hills District Justice Anthony DeLuca, Jr. (left).



It was a beautiful December day when the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Deputy Secretary Lauren Imgrund visited Universal Park in Penn Hills to announce a \$237,500 grant for the municipality to rehabilitate both Universal Park and Penn Hills Community Park including making them ADA-compliant so citizens of all abilities can enjoy the outdoor recreation areas. I was disappointed I could not personally attend this presentation but the House was in session so I was in Harrisburg. On hand for the announcement however were (from left) Penn Hills Superintendent of Public Works Scott Shepard, my District Chief of Staff Liza King, Penn Hills Mayor Paulene Calabrese, Penn Hills Planning Director Chris Blackwell, Deputy Secretary Imgrund and Adam Mattis, a regional adviser within the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (at the microphone).



It was my honor to personally meet PA Auditor General Timothy DeFoor (R) when he visited the Rosedale Food Pantry this fall. I enjoyed conversing with this newly elected official as he was touring the pantry and getting to know my constituents and the district. I look forward to working closely with Auditor General DeFoor on our shared bipartisan goals in the future.



Throughout 2021 Verona hosted a number of events to celebrate the borough's 150th birthday. Among the festivities in the fall commemorating this historic occasion was a parade through town that included floats and elected officials in classic/antique cars. Joining me and Senator Jay Costa as we gathered before the parade kicked off was Verona Councilwoman Trish Hredzak-Showalter and her sweet daughter Winnie.

SERVING THE DISTRICT – GRANT MONEY COMING TO US

I am excited to announce that I have been successful in securing money from various commonwealth departments for very worthwhile projects and programs in the 32nd Legislative District. It is extremely rewarding to lead the way to help the state invest in our local communities, which enables them to grow and provide much-needed services to my constituents.

- The Allegheny County Gaming Economic Fund allocated \$139,400 in grant funding to **Verona Borough** to rebuild roads in the community. The funding was allocated to the Allegheny Valley North Council of Governments for reconstruction of Verona Alley and installing an underdrain on Oak Alley to fix a water issue.
- The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources awarded \$237,500 in grant funding to the **Municipality of Penn Hills** for rehabilitation projects in Universal Park and Penn Hills Community Park. The money will be used to install new playground equipment with safety surfacing at Penn Hills Park, while upgrades to Universal Park include pavilions, pedestrian walkways and parking areas. Both parks will also see enhancements for ADA access, landscaping, project signs and other related site improvements.
- Through the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program, the Commonwealth Financing Authority awarded more than \$165,000 for projects to upgrade parks in **Plum Borough, Verona Borough and the Municipality of Penn Hills**.
- **Plum** received \$81,000 for the third phase of a project to mill and resurface the basketball court and add court line striping, new chain link fence with gates and new hoops at Renton Park, as well as additional landscaping to establish a multi-purpose green space.
- **Verona** received \$75,000 to renovate Cribbs Field and Riverbank Park. The Riverbank Park project includes new ADA restrooms, repair of existing play equipment, installation of new equipment, repair and installation of new sections of the park's walking path and renovating the basketball courts with an acrylic sports surface. The Cribbs Project includes the installation of new play equipment, rehabilitation of existing equipment, new swing installation and renovating the basketball court with an acrylic sports surface.
- **William Penn Volunteer Fire Association (Penn Hills Station #222 Rosedale)** received \$9,860 to improve the Rosedale Fire Department Community Park in Penn Hills which has not been updated in over 30 years. Work will include an ADA-compliant parking lot, removal and installation of a playground safety surface, removal of the old wood border, installation of two new ground level play structures and an ADA-accessible ramp.
- The **Municipality of Penn Hills** was awarded \$300,000 in grant funding from the Commonwealth Financing Authority's Blight Remediation Program to demolish two properties that were condemned following damage from landslides. The project will remove the tax-delinquent properties at 235 and 270 Bramble Street, which have been uninhabitable due to landslides. Both properties were in danger of further damage since the slides are still active and the hillside continues to move, which could also cause additional damage to adjoining properties. The project also includes excavation and grading.
- **Verona Borough** received \$18,000 in WalkWorks grants to create an active transportation plan that includes new and improved pedestrian, bicycle and transit networks.
- PennDOT's Automated Red Light Enforcement Fund is the source of \$328,803 for the **Municipality of Penn Hills** to modernize and update traffic and pedestrian equipment at the intersection of Frankstown Road, Spring Grove Road and Shenandoah Drive. The outdated and failing equipment will be replaced with new equipment that will improve the safety for vehicular and pedestrian traffic through this heavily traveled intersection. The ARLE program aims to improve safety at signalized intersections by providing automated enforcement at locations where data shows red-light running has been an issue.
- **O'Hara Township** received \$100,000 from the Allegheny County Gaming Economic Development Tourism Fund and approved by the Commonwealth Financing Authority. The grant will be used by the township to help implement the Powers Run Pollutant Reduction Plan, which will aid in removing sediment runoff that enters the Powers Run watershed.
- **Blawnox Borough** was awarded two grants totaling \$255,040 from PA Small Water and Sewer for improvements and repairs to its water and sewer systems. The borough will use a \$100,000 grant for phase seven of its sanitary sewer upgrades to reduce inflow and infiltration. The \$155,040 grant will be used to check and replace valves in its water conveyance system.
- Water and sewer projects undertaken by **Verona Borough** and Wilkensburg Penn Joint Water Authority benefited from \$225,000 in state grants endorsed by both me and Senator Jay Costa. Verona received \$125,638 for storm sewer condition ratings and repairs. WPJWA's \$100,000 grant was for Duffield Avenue area water line replacements.
- The **Penn Hills School District** received \$34,000 in education funding for the 2020-21 academic year to purchase computer equipment such as laptops, tablets and internet hot spots or instructional materials such as paper lessons and coursework. The school district was also awarded \$384,810 for school and community safety programs for staff and students. Senator Costa helped facilitate the safety grant with me.
- **Turner Dairy Farms, Inc. in Penn Hills** received \$334,282 in state funding to increase its facility's dairy processing capacity.



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After a long hiatus as a result of COVID-19, I was happy to resume my paper shredding event in the fall. Hundreds of individuals brought their personal documents to be shred on location at the former St. Bartholomew Church property in Penn Hills. This very popular event provides a secure and free way to destroy individual papers that contain personal information. In conjunction with the shredding event, we accept voluntary non-perishable food contributions which we donate to a local food pantry. This time Plum Food Pantry benefited from the generosity of the participants. My next shredding event will be held on Saturday, May 14, at a place yet to be determined. Watch for a mailer advertising this upcoming event or check out my Facebook page or website as the date gets closer.