



State Representative Maria P. Donatucci



P.O. Box 202185 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2185 • (717) 783-8634

2115 Oregon Ave. • Philadelphia, PA 19145 • (215) 468-1515

713 Sharon Ave., Office 1B • Sharon Hill, PA 19079 • (610) 522-2290

Mercy Wellness Center, 2nd Floor • 2821 Island Ave. • Philadelphia, PA 19153 • (215) 492-5811

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I hope you've had an enjoyable summer with family and friends. The past few months have been especially busy in Harrisburg and the 185th Legislative District, so I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on recent events, as well as what's to come in the near future.

I would also like to remind you that if you have any questions about state-related services or programs, please don't hesitate to contact one of my district offices. My main district office is at 2115 Oregon Ave. in Philadelphia and can be reached at (215) 468-1515. You can also visit my other office in Philadelphia in the Mercy Wellness Center, 2nd Floor, at 2821 Island Ave. or call (215) 492-5811. My office in Sharon Hill is at 713 Sharon Ave., Office 1B, and can be reached at (610) 522-2290. My staff and I are happy to help with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



I helped kick off Diaper Need Awareness Week at a news conference in Harrisburg, which also launched a two-week diaper drive at my district offices.

'The Big Gimmick' budget bad for Pennsylvania

The irresponsible 2014-15 state budget, dubbed by some "The Big Gimmick," unfortunately does nothing to help our students, middle-class taxpayers and seniors who have struggled under this administration for too long. Instead of offering help to those who need it most, Gov. Tom Corbett has chosen to engage in politics as usual.

The "smoke and mirrors" spending plan uses \$1.7 billion of unsustainable funding gimmicks to try to make up the gaping deficit the governor created. However, the use of one-time funding transfers and dependence on overly optimistic tax revenue forecasts could have been avoided. Missed revenue opportunities, such as a reasonable severance tax on the natural gas industry and the expansion of Medicaid, could have brought in significant funds to help close the gap. It is my hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will realize how valuable these and other opportunities may be, and choose to take advantage of them in the near future.

The budget also severely underfunds public education, particularly in Philadelphia schools. Corbett has cut \$1.12 billion to these schools since he first took office, which has resulted in massive teacher and support staff layoffs, larger class sizes, fewer extracurricular activities and more. School budgets have been slashed to the bone and simply cannot sustain any more cuts. We must do what's right for our students and give them the resources they need to succeed, but unfortunately, this budget fails in this regard.

Ultimately, I could not support the budget, which was crafted without Democratic input. By failing to adequately fund important programs and employing gimmicks to try to balance the plan, the majority party has failed to move Pennsylvania forward – yet again.



Ending wage discrimination

Women may make up a growing portion of today's workforce, but they only make about 77 cents for every dollar men bring in – and even less in many counties around the state. Paying women less than men for equal work isn't just wrong; it's downright illegal.

I recently co-chaired a House Democratic Policy Committee public hearing at Philadelphia City Hall on wage discrimination. There, a panel of experts, including women's rights advocates, analysts and education activists, all relayed a similar message: The gender wage gap continues to be a significant problem in Pennsylvania, but it can certainly be fixed.

One of the ways I'm hoping to help fix this problem is by sponsoring legislation that would increase penalties on employers that pay women less than men for equal work. It may be hard to believe, but the value of fines levied on these employers has not increased since 1959. My House Bill 1250 would fine employers between \$400 and \$1,600 for violating the state's Equal Pay Law or failing to keep pertinent records related to the law.

We need to understand that failing to pay women what they deserve isn't just a women's issue – it affects all of us.

By furthering income inequality, we harm our families and our communities on the whole. We also send a dangerous message to our young children when they see that women in the workplace aren't valued in the same way as men.

I hope that soon, the gender wage gap will become an unfortunate memory of the past. Until then, I will continue to do all that I can to advocate for this important cause.



At a recent House Democratic Policy Committee public hearing, co-chairperson Rep. Mike Sturla (D-Lancaster) and I heard testimony from experts on the devastating effects of the gender wage gap.



I was proud to stand on the state House floor and speak on my House Resolution 768, which designated May 2014 as "Sleep Apnea Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania.



I was honored to participate in this year's St. Patrick's Day parade in Philadelphia with City Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, among others.

Tavern gaming license fee reduced

As Democratic secretary of the House Gaming Oversight Committee, I wanted to let you know that the state Liquor Control Board has lowered the fee for tavern gaming licenses for bars, restaurants and other establishments. The \$2,000 license will now cost \$500.

Last year, the state legislature expanded tavern gaming, allowing qualifying facilities to offer pull-tabs, tavern daily drawings and raffles. The individual prize limit for any single chance for tavern games is \$2,000, while the weekly prize limit is capped at \$35,000 per seven-day period.

It remains to be seen just how many establishments will apply for these licenses, and how much money these licenses will bring to the state. I will certainly keep you informed of any new developments in tavern gaming and related issues as they arise.



Protecting our children

As a parent, there is nothing more important to me than keeping our children safe. That's why I'm proud I voted for the following child protection bills, which have all been signed into law:

- Act 28 establishes a grant program supported by an increase in the cost of a duplicate birth certificate from \$10 to \$20. The money goes to existing and future Children's Advocacy Centers, which provide a comprehensive treatment program for abused children, including child-focused programs, medical evaluations and victim support services.
- Act 31 requires professionals who are licensed to care for, supervise or routinely interact directly with children to receive training on how to identify and report child abuse.
- Act 32 enhances penalties for mandated reporters who fail to report cases of suspected abuse.
- Act 33 defines who is mandated to report child abuse and specifies that reporting of suspected abuse may be done electronically.
- Act 44 removes different child abuse reporting requirements for school employees, mandating that suspected child abuse be reported directly to the state Department of Public Welfare's ChildLine and the school's administrator.
- Act 108 of 2013 redefines the term "child abuse" to ensure children are protected, while avoiding unintended consequences.

I'm glad that Pennsylvania is stepping up to protect its most precious assets – its children – and I will do all that I can to fight for them.

New law benefits seniors on PACE/PACENET

A new law I supported benefits nearly 50,000 seniors in Pennsylvania who qualify for discounted prescriptions through the state's PACE/PACENET programs. One of the main qualifying factors in determining if a senior is eligible for PACE/PACENET is their income.

About 40,000 seniors were in danger of losing their PACE/PACENET coverage because Social Security cost-of-living increases would put their income just over the maximum. A previous COLA adjustment law was set to expire Dec. 31, 2013. This new law extended the protection to Dec. 31, 2015.

In addition, the law also enabled approximately 8,200 additional seniors to access PACE/PACENET by no longer requiring applicants to count their Medicare Part B premium as income.

These changes are now in effect, so those who recently applied, but were turned down, should contact one of my constituent service offices to find out if they now qualify.

Stay safe during emergencies

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation offers the Yellow Dot Program, an initiative aimed at saving lives during emergency situations. This program is intended to assist citizens in the "golden hour" of emergency care following a traffic accident when they may not be able to communicate their needs.

The program allows people to fill out a form with their emergency contact information, medical history and medical contact information. The information, along with a photo of the participant, is placed in the vehicle's glove compartment and a yellow dot sticker is then placed on the vehicle's rear window. The sticker alerts emergency responders to check the vehicle's glove compartment for the participant's information.

My offices are stocked with Yellow Dot materials to keep you and your family safe. You can also find more information and download an information card online at www.YellowDot.pa.gov.



I rallied with other elected officials and workers at the Philadelphia Airport to support a minimum wage increase for the airport's employees.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for PACE or PACENET:

- You must be 65 or older
- You must be a Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days before the date of application
- You cannot be enrolled in the Department of Public Welfare's Medicaid prescription benefit
- PACE and PACENET eligibility is determined by your previous calendar year's income

PACE

- For a single person, total income must be \$14,500 or less
- For a married couple, combined total income must be \$17,700 or less

PACENET

- For a single person, total income can be between \$14,500 and \$23,500
- For a married couple, combined total income can be between \$17,700 and \$31,500

PACE Plus Medicare

Under PACE Plus Medicare, PACE/PACENET coverage is supplemented by federal Medicare Part D prescription coverage and offers older Pennsylvanians the best benefits of both programs. Older adults continue to receive the same prescription benefits while, in many cases, saving more money.

Do you need help with your Property Tax/Rent Rebate application?

The state has extended the deadline to apply for a Property Tax/Rent Rebate until Dec. 31. My office is available to help you with any questions you may have regarding the program, which benefits older Pennsylvanians and those with a disability. While there are companies that offer to help with your application for a fee, this is **NOT** necessary. Please contact my office for free assistance with filing your forms.

The program is open to residents 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people 18 or older with disabilities. The income limit to qualify is \$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters. Applicants must count all sources of income toward the limit but only half of any Social Security, Supplemental Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I benefits toward their local income.

The maximum property tax or rent rebate for most qualifying Pennsylvania residents is \$650.

I enjoyed presenting certificates to this year's Green City Clean Waters Art Contest winners. Calendars featuring the winning entries are available at my Oregon Avenue office.



I welcomed Alison Pirl of the Women and Girls Foundation to shadow me for a day at the state Capitol.



State Representative

Maria P. Donatucci

185th Legislative District

P.O. Box 202185
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2185

lpo.kl.0814

MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Public Welfare (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Information about federal, state and local government agencies

Any problem with state government!

Follow me on social media



I firmly believe that people should be able to access elected officials through social media, and that elected officials should be engaging residents.

That's why I like to use Twitter and Facebook. If you would like to follow me, here are the links you need:

- www.pahouse.com/Donatucci
- www.twitter.com/RepDonatucci
- www.facebook.com/RepMariaDonatucci



I had a great time attending the Darby Township Community First's inaugural banquet with Township Commissioner Richard Womack, among others.



I stood with my colleague, former Rep. Ed Neilson (D-Phila.), to support various labor groups at the state Capitol.