



State Rep.
**BRANDON
MARKOSEK**
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Spring Newsletter

KEEPING **YOUR** BEST INTERESTS IN MIND

It seems like a mere few days have passed since being given the opportunity to represent you, and what an honor it is to do that at the state Capitol and at home.

One important aspect of my job is to listen and learn from you – about your concerns, your issues and your problems with state government. I can’t represent you to the best of my ability without it! Reach out with your comments, whether they’re positive or negative, and let me know how you envision the future of the 25th Legislative District.

As always, my office has been a place where residents can come in and get things done. My highly trained staff can help you with any state government-related matter, including unclaimed property and the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, just to name a few.

My Monroeville office is located at 4232 Northern Pike, Suite 303, and the phone number is 412-856-8284.
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State Could be Holding Your Unclaimed Property

The Pennsylvania Treasurer's Office is seeking the owners of more than \$3.4 billion in unclaimed property. One in 10 Pennsylvanians has money to claim that is legally theirs. Types of unclaimed property can include checks from employers and utility companies, dividends and interest from savings accounts and stocks, and credit balances.

My office regularly checks the database for district residents to see if their names are listed, but you can conduct a search for yourself any time. Visit www.patreasury.gov to see if you have property with the state.

If you need help, my staff can help you search or claim something in your name.

Pa. Offers College Savings Programs

The Keystone Scholars and the Tap 529 programs help families and children save for post-secondary education.

The Pennsylvania 529 College Career Savings Program provides a tax shelter for families to save for education. The program offers two plans: the PA 529 Guaranteed Savings Plan, where growth is tied to the rate of college tuition inflation, and the PA 529 Investment Plan, in which investment returns are determined by financial markets.

Through the Keystone Scholars Program, the Pennsylvania Treasurer's Office invests \$100 for every baby born or adopted in 2019 to be used for the baby's future higher education expenses.

For more information, visit www.pa529.com.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Applications Available

Applications for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for taxes or rent paid in 2018 are available in my district office. The program provides rebates up to \$650 on rent or property tax paid by Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older.

The application is available on the Department of Revenue's website at www.revenue.pa.gov.

The income limit for applicants is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. Half of

Social Security income and all Social Security cost-of-living increases are excluded.

Claimants must reapply for rebates every year because they are based on annual income and property taxes or rent paid each year. Spouses, personal representatives or estates may file rebate claims on behalf of deceased claimants who lived at least one day in 2018 and meet all other eligibility criteria.

My office also can help complete and submit the application.

New responsibilities – same goal

House Democratic Leader Frank Dermody, D-Allegheny, has appointed me to serve on three standing House committees: Commerce, Gaming Oversight and Professional Licensure.

The Commerce Committee reviews legislation involving the banking and financial services industries. It has oversight of the Department of Banking, Department of Community and Economic Development, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, the Securities Commission and the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority.

The Professional Licensure Committee reviews bills that pertain to positions requiring licensing for qualified employees and businesses.

The Gaming Oversight Committee oversees Pennsylvania's table games, slot machine gaming, small games of chance and amusement laws.

In addition to my committee assignments, I also am co-chairman of the Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Caucus.

This is an important issue for me and, as a legislator, I plan to provide support for those with intellectual disabilities through the state resources at our disposal.

Despite my new responsibilities, my goal remains the same – keeping **YOUR** needs front and center. Just like I advocate for you in the House chamber, I will continue to do so in committee meetings!

UPMC/HIGHMARK UPDATE

Working to ensure patients are put before profits

I recently joined more than 50 of my fellow Democratic legislators in filing a brief in support of Attorney General Josh Shapiro's lawsuit to extend the consent decree between UPMC and Highmark that is set to expire June 30.

If the decree expires, UPMC has said it will require patients with Highmark health insurance to prepay in full prior to receiving any non-emergency treatment or procedures at most UPMC hospitals. Patients would then have to seek any possible reimbursement from Highmark or another out-of-network insurer on their own.

This is unconscionable. As a nonprofit that enjoys tax exempt status – among other benefits -- UPMC should live up to the responsibilities that that status confers, namely that these regional assets remain available for the benefit of the entire community.

That is why I am supporting the Attorney General's lawsuit to ensure that everyone in our region has access to quality, affordable healthcare, regardless of their insurer.

PHOTOS FROM HARRISBURG



In April, I attended a union rally at the state Capitol in support of commonwealth carpenters.



I had the opportunity to meet with faculty and administration from East Allegheny School District. Thank you for your hospitality! I look forward to working with the district.



It was a privilege to present Pennsylvania House of Representatives citations to three new Eagle Scouts. Congratulations to them on this great achievement!



I had a great experience visiting the facilities at Tenders in Monroeville! Thank you to the attendees!

REAL ID CARDS ARE NOW AVAILABLE



Real ID cards are now available from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Real ID is a new, optional form of driver's license or identification card that PennDOT will issue after verifying certain identification and residency documents provided by you.

Getting a Real ID is not mandatory, but it may be useful depending on your needs. After card-based enforcement of the Real ID Act starts Oct. 1, 2020, you will no longer be able to use your regular, state-issued driver's license or identification card to board commercial airline flights or enter high-security federal facilities such as military bases. Instead, you will either have to use the new Real ID or rely on your passport, military ID or other form of federally accepted identification.

You don't need a Real ID to visit regular federal buildings, vote, apply for or receive federal benefits, or gain access to hospitals and health clinics.

For more information, you can read about Real ID on PennDOT's website:
www.PennDOT.gov/REALID



We need to invest in transportation improvement projects!

In March, I held my first House Democratic Policy Committee hearing at the Monroeville Municipal Building.

I requested the hearing to discuss how the state and local governments could improve public safety and the economy by investing in transportation improvement projects.

At the hearing, I was joined by my colleagues from across the state, including Policy Committee Chairman Mike Sturla, D-Lancaster.

Pennsylvanians need structurally sound bridges and roads so that our friends and families can travel safely to and from work, school, activities and home.

I'm very grateful Chairman Sturla and other House Democrats were able to attend so that we could discuss this important issue and find ways to rectify the problem!

AND AROUND THE DISTRICT



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The situation regarding the UPMC/Highmark split continues to cause quite a stir. I recently attended a rally in support of the residents who will be adversely affected by this split.



Thank you to the Allegheny County Conservation District for inviting me to its annual Envirothon at Boyce Park!



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LPO.AD.0519

WAYS MY DISTRICT OFFICE CAN SERVE YOU

- Process applications for birth and death certificates
- Provide you with Pennsylvania state tax forms
- Print out federal tax forms whenever possible
- Provide you with and help you fill out Property Tax/ Rent Rebate forms
- Notarize any state form for free
- Help you find and claim unclaimed money in your name through the Pennsylvania Treasurer’s Office
- Notarize and process applications for disability parking plates and placards
- Field questions or handle problems concerning PennDOT, including complaints about road conditions
- Explain the Real ID application process
- Assist you with unemployment compensation questions or problems
- Field questions or complaints about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Provide you with recognition from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Provide you with any state form or brochure
- Send state forms for you to their appropriate departments in Harrisburg to expedite their processing
- Schedule tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Answer questions about proposed legislation

Nearly
\$700,000
awarded
to district
so far in
2019!

- ✓ In January, a \$115,641 business education partnership grant was awarded to provide Allegheny County students with hands-on exposure to careers in the building and construction industry.
- ✓ As part of a targeted grant provided through Gov. Tom Wolf’s PAsmart initiative, East Allegheny School District received \$35,000. The grant money will be utilized to fund training and equipment needed to prepare teachers and students for the expansion of computer science programs.
- ✓ In late March, a \$525,000 state grant was disbursed to fund critical road repairs to Pitcairn’s Center Avenue. The needed repairs were located on Center Avenue between Fifth and Highland avenues.
- ✓ Three entities recently were awarded Small Business Advantage grants through the state Department of Environmental Protection. Pirollo Chiropractic was awarded \$5,000 for the purchase of a new medical X-ray machine; Penn Garden Day Care Center Inc. was awarded \$2,182 for an LED lighting project; and One Monroeville Center Association also was granted \$2,971 for an LED lighting project.