

Winter
2021

MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN

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RepShusterman.com



@RepShusterman

Dear Neighbor,

After closing out a year that was filled with hardship and loss, I'm filled with hope for a better new year. Although we are still in the beginning of 2021, we are already off to a reassuring start as COVID-19 cases steadily decline and we are swiftly distributing the vaccine throughout our commonwealth. However, despite this being significant progress toward restoring a sense of normalcy, I know millions of Pennsylvanians are still struggling. Whether you're a small business owner or frontline worker or had issues collecting unemployment – this has been the most difficult year in many of our lifetimes. I am beyond proud of our community for coming together and helping one another overcome this crisis. Whether you sewed masks, delivered groceries, cared for individuals battling COVID-19 or just supported our area businesses, I sincerely thank you for your dedication to our community. Enclosed in this newsletter are multiple resources that I hope could be of use to those in need and a brief recap of my first term serving you. Please know that my office is here to help you with any state-related matter. Even if you're not sure that what you need help with is state-related – ask anyway, as we may know who can assist you. We are here for you.

Rep. Melissa Shusterman

Phone: (484) 200-8260

Email: RepShusterman@pahouse.net

Website: RepShusterman.com/contact



BRINGING HOME \$15 MILLION IN MY FIRST TERM

Throughout my first term, I worked hard to bring your tax dollars back to the district. In my first two years, I'm pleased to share that I helped secure \$15 million benefitting both Chester and Montgomery county residents.

Grants that I've helped to secure since 2018 include financial support to strengthen schools' safety and security, fund volunteer first responders, support survivors of domestic and child abuse, protect our environment and preserve local history.

Here's just a glimpse at how state funding has helped neighborhoods throughout the 157th Legislative District:

- ✓ Supporting 40 local business owners with COVID-19 Relief Statewide Small Business grants.
- ✓ Helping students living with disabilities at Phoenixville Area, Tredyffrin-Easttown and Spring-Ford School Districts and Renaissance Academy Charter School adjust to remote learning.
- ✓ Ensuring the success of the Phoenixville Senior Adult Activity Center, so patrons can continue utilizing its services and picking up meals as safely as possible.
- ✓ Installing a sidewalk along Valley Forge Road in Schuylkill.
- ✓ Preserving artwork at the Wharton Esherick Museum.



BEGINNING MY SECOND TERM WORKING FOR YOU

On Tuesday, Jan. 5, I once again took the oath of office so I can continue serving our community for the next two years. As your state representative, I am humbled to be the voice of our community in our commonwealth's Capitol. As we enter a new legislative session, here are some of my top priorities that I will be advocating for:

- Preserving the health and wellbeing of commonwealth residents.
- Providing small business owners with relief and growth opportunities.
- Strengthening women's health measures.
- Increasing government transparency.
- Protecting Pennsylvania's environment.
- Integrating more forms of renewable energy into Pennsylvania's energy portfolio.

I plan to bring these issues to the forefront as a vice chair of the House Democratic Southeast Delegation and Deputy Whip. These are both leadership positions that allow me to lift up the voices of the people I represent and address issues most important to you.

I will also serve as a member of the House Judiciary, Commerce, Aging and Older Adult Services, and Children and Youth Committees. Committees deal with pieces of legislation relevant to their topic and determine whether a bill will go to the House for a full vote. I encourage anyone with questions about the legislative process or input on prominent pieces of legislation to contact my office.

DISTRICT OFFICE OPERATING REMOTELY

As we continue battling COVID-19 and heightening our routine sanitation measures, my staff are still available to help you with any state-related matter remotely. We can accommodate some in-person appointments on a case-by-case basis as well as offer curbside pickup. Please call my office at (484) 200-8260, email RepShusterman@pahouse.net or submit your inquiry on my website, RepShusterman.com/contact, for assistance or to arrange a meeting.

Some services we can help with remotely include:

- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Finding and collecting unclaimed money through the Pennsylvania Treasury
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds

Examples of curbside services:

- Birth certificate applications
- PennDOT placards
- REAL ID forms

Please note that my Oaks office on Egypt Road is permanently closed. Any in-person appointments or requests for curbside pick-up must be at my Paoli office, 42 E. Lancaster Ave., Unit A.

PENNSYLVANIA AND THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE

As of mid-January, thousands of Pennsylvania's frontline healthcare workers and nursing home/long-term care facility residents have received the coronavirus vaccination. The Pennsylvania Department of Health continues to provide updates on its vaccine distribution plan, which you can find at health.pa.gov.

Curious about when you will be able to receive the vaccine? According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, it might be several months until the public receives the vaccines, but my office will be sure to keep you updated as more information becomes available.

My staff has received several questions regarding the vaccine's rollout and distribution order, but I encourage anyone seeking further information to consult the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

STOPPING THE SPREAD ALL ABOUT COVID VACCINES

	Two vaccines have been approved for emergency use		The available vaccine is two injections, given 3-4 weeks apart		Four other vaccines are being developed for U.S. use
	The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures safety of vaccines		First vaccines will go to health care workers/long-term care residents		Supplies are limited, but will increase over time
	Vaccines will be made available at no cost		No vaccine is 100% effective, but this will give the best COVID protection		Vaccines won't end the pandemic; other protections will continue

HELPFUL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

We are almost one year into this pandemic, and I know that people are struggling. Whether you're in need of mental health resources, food assistance or help with your rent or mortgage, help is available.

FOOD PANTRIES

- **Chester County Food Bank**
ChesterCountyFoodBank.org
(610) 873-6000

Chester County Food Bank provides local agencies with nutritious, shelf stable and fresh foods. Their website has a map of suppliers throughout the county, with includes cupboards in Devon, Berwyn, Paoli, Malvern, Phoenixville and Spring City.

- **T&E Care**
TECare.org • TECarehelp@gmail.com
(484) 254-6510

There are two food cupboards in the Tredyffrin/Easttown area, one in Devon and one in Berwyn, to serve families in need. More information including hours and contact information for both cupboards is available on T&E Care's website.

- **Montco Anti-Hunger Network**
Montcoantihunger.org

Helps provide fresh food to pantries throughout Montgomery County. MAHN works with The Open Door Ministry in Royersford to ensure everyone has access to healthy food. If interested in visiting, please call the Open Door Ministry in advance to confirm their hours at (610) 948-4818.

Those interested can visit MAHN's website for a complete list of food pantries offering fresh, nutritious food.

HOUSING

- **Legal Aid of Southeastern PA**
LASP.org
(877) 429-5994

Legal Aid of Southeastern PA provides free, high-quality legal representation to low-income and vulnerable people living in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties. Representatives are available to help those in need with housing and eviction issues.

- **PA 211**
uwp.org/programs/2-1-1/
Call 211 or text your zip code to 898-211

Calling or texting this United Way service connects you with a resource specialist who will provide you with information on community programs that could benefit you for free. Through 211, Pennsylvanians can connect with resources to help them cover utility bills, avoid homelessness and even job counseling and youth programs. They offer a wide variety of services and have helped individuals through many different crises.

MENTAL HEALTH

- Text "PA" to 741-741 • crisistextline.org/text-us/
Connect with a trained crisis counselor for free, confidential help over text message.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Main Line nanimainlinepa.org • info@NAMIMainLinePA.org
(267) 251-6240

NAMI provides free services to individuals in need of mental health services. Services range from support to educational events and family support programs. All services are free.

HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE

Applications for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are now open! LIHEAP helps families living on low incomes pay their heating bills in the form of a cash grant. Households in immediate danger of being without heat can also qualify for crisis grants. The cash grant is a one-time payment sent directly to the utility company/fuel provider to be credited on your bill. These grants range from \$200 to \$1,000 based on household size, income, and fuel type. Submit applications online using COMPASS, or my office can provide a paper application to be returned to the Department of Human Services. For more information, please visit: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/LIHEAP.aspx>

2020-21 Income Guidelines

for homeowners and renters

household size	Maximum Income
1	\$19,140
2	\$25,860
3	\$32,580
4	\$39,300
5	\$46,020
6	\$52,740
7	\$59,460
8	\$66,180
9	\$72,900
10	\$79,620

Each additional person + \$6,720



AROUND THE DISTRICT



Mt. Zion AME Church received an official historic marker for playing a pivotal role in the passing of the Pennsylvania equal rights bill. The church served as a headquarters for Black families battling segregation within Berwyn elementary schools.



Phoenixville Area Community Services has helped feed local families throughout a very difficult 2020. I was proud to volunteer with them last month and see first-hand exactly how they manage the collection and distribution of healthy food.

AROUND THE DISTRICT



I loved connecting with our area's senior citizens while I distributed complimentary lunches at Surrey Services for Seniors. I also had the pleasure of meeting a young man named James who stopped by to pick up lunches for his elderly neighbors, the very same neighbors who helped him move in when he was new to his neighborhood not too long ago.



In lieu of my annual Veterans Day breakfast, I hosted a drive-thru lunch to safely thank our area veterans for serving our country.

I met and talked with several business owners throughout our area so I can bring their needs to Harrisburg and support their livelihood during this difficult time.



State Representative
MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN

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Keeping Up with Shusterman!

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PUTTING PEOPLE OVER POLITICS IN HARRISBURG

A group of 10 House Democrats announced the introduction of proposed changes to the Operating Rules of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to reduce the impact of partisan politics, make sure ideas with broad public support get a fair hearing, and restore the people's faith in government.

The People Before Politics plan was crafted with this central idea: lawmakers work for the people, not the other way around. It focuses on openness, transparency and citizen control of the legislative process.

These proposals were not incorporated in the final House rules, but I support every one of them and I'll be fighting in Harrisburg for government transparency and ensuring your voice is heard throughout the lawmaking process.



Scan this QR code
to read about each
of the proposed rule
changes.



STAY IN THE KNOW

Follow me on social media and opt in to receive my weekly emails to keep up on the latest legislative happenings in Pennsylvania and for information on my upcoming events. I've hosted several virtual events covering issues such as human trafficking, Pennsylvania's election process, local history and systemic racism.

Sign up for my emails on my homepage at RepShusterman.com

@RepShusterman