

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

AUGUST 2022

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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Property Tax/Rent Rebate Application Deadline Extended

The deadline for older and disabled Pennsylvanians to apply for rebates on rent and property taxes paid in 2021 has been extended from June 30 to Dec. 31, 2022. Applications for the 2021 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program can now be submitted online or by mail. This program provides a state rebate on 2021 property taxes or rent to income-eligible residents who are 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older. The maximum standard rebate is \$650.

To be eligible, your household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter. When applying, only count half of your Social Security or federal railroad retirement Tier I benefits toward your total income.

You can obtain information about the program, an application and free help applying through my district office or on the state Department of Revenue's website at www.revenue.pa.gov

Upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Events

There will be several household hazardous waste collections in southeastern Pennsylvania in 2022. Here are some upcoming events nearby:

- Saturday, September 10, 2022: Emergency Services Training Center, 1600 Calcon Hook Rd., Sharon Hill (Darby Twp.), PA 19079.
- Saturday, September 24, 2022: Spring-Ford 9th Grade Center, 400 South Lewis Rd., Royersford, PA 19468.
- Saturday, October 15, 2022: Upper Chichester Township Municipal Building, 8500 Furey Rd., Upper Chichester, PA 19061.
- Sunday, October 23, 2022: Lower Merion Transfer Station, 1300 N. Woodbine Ave., Penn Valley, PA 19072.

All events will be held rain or shine and preregistration is required and can be done by visiting the websites below. Household hazardous waste includes household products labeled poisonous, toxic, flammable, caustic, corrosive, reactive or explosive. **Items containing Freon and electronic waste will not be accepted.**

For Delaware County Collection registration, or for more information, call the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority at (610) 892-9627 or visit <https://www.delcopa.gov/recycle/hhw.html>

For Montgomery County Collection registration, or for more information, call Montgomery County Recycling at (610) 278-3618 or visit <https://www.montcopa.org/637/Recycling-Information>

Search for Unclaimed Property

The Pennsylvania Treasury is holding about \$4 billion in unclaimed property and estimates that 1 in 10 Pennsylvanians has a legal claim. Unclaimed property includes checks from employers and utility companies, dividends and interest from savings accounts and stocks, and credit balances.

You can search for unclaimed property at <https://www.patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property> or by calling the Treasury at (800) 222-2046. Claims can be filed online, providing real-time approval and faster payment. My office can also help you search.

Medical Marijuana Dispensary Opens in Wynnewood

Zen Leaf Wynnewood, a medical marijuana dispensary, recently opened at 257 Lancaster Ave. in Wynnewood. There are also dispensaries in Ardmore, Bryn Mawr, Plymouth Meeting and King of Prussia.

Pennsylvania law allows medical marijuana for specific conditions including autism, anxiety disorders, inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's disease, Tourette syndrome, cancer, epilepsy, intractable seizures, post-traumatic stress disorder and terminal illness.

For more information, including other dispensary locations, go to <http://www.medicalmarijuana.pa.gov> For further questions about Pennsylvania's medical marijuana program, please call 888-733-5595. To contact Zen Leaf Wynnewood, call 814-447-2936.

Resources for Veterans

Here are some programs the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) offers to help veterans:

- **The Records Request Program** assists veterans in obtaining their DD- 214/215 forms, and other important paperwork, so they can receive credit for military time served. Phone: 717-861-6481 | Email: RA-REQ@pa.gov
- **The Veterans Temporary Assistance (VTA)** program provides eligible veterans, or their beneficiaries, that are experiencing financial hardship, with up to \$1,600 a year for necessities of life such as food, shelter, fuel, and clothing.
- **PA VET Connect** helps connect veterans, their beneficiaries, and advocates with resources available to them such as benefits, employment, and financial assistance, as well as help with mental wellness, substance use, post-traumatic stress, and more. www.dmva.pa.gov/VETConnect

For more information on these and other DMVA programs contact your County Veterans Affairs Office, at 610-891-4646 (Delaware County) or (610) 278-3285 (Montgomery County), or visit www.dmva.pa.gov/

Pennsylvania Toughens Penalties for Repeat DUI Offenders

Legislation, known as Deana's law, was recently enacted to increase penalties for repeat driving under the influence (DUI) offenders. The new law upgrades a DUI charge from a first-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony if a driver has two or more previous DUI convictions, and to a

second-degree felony if the driver has three or more convictions. Additionally, the act lengthens sentences by requiring someone convicted of a third DUI offense to serve consecutive sentences for separate counts, instead of serving the sentences at the same time. The penalties for a first-time DUI

vary depending on circumstances, but usually do not result in incarceration, and may not result in a criminal conviction.

The law is named in memory of Deana Eckman, who was struck and killed by a five-time drunk driver, and its provisions will go into effect this November.

SEPTA Key Senior ID Cards

SEPTA Key Senior ID Cards (SEPTA Key Cards) allow seniors (65 years and older) to ride for free on all SEPTA service lines in Pennsylvania. The cards expire four years after issuance.

Due to COVID-19, SEPTA extended the expiration date on SEPTA Key Cards. SEPTA Key Cards with expiration dates between January 2020 and December 2022 have been extended until the same expiration month in 2023. **No SEPTA Key cards will expire in 2022**, however, SEPTA encourages you to visit our office to renew prior to 2023 if you are able.

My district office can help complete first-time and renewing applications and take your photo. Bring identification containing your birth date, such as a Pennsylvania driver's license or non-driver ID, U.S. Passport, or birth certificate, and your expiring SEPTA card if you are renewing. To replace a lost or stolen SEPTA Key Card, call SEPTA Customer Service at 855-567-3782.

Renew Your Handicap Placard Online

You can now renew your Handicap placard online. You can also request a replacement placard or update your address online. This is a quicker alternative than traditional paper processing.

To process these forms online you will need your placard number. Placard holders will continue to receive a renewal form by mail approximately 60 days prior to their expiration.

To renew a placard online, or to obtain additional information on services provided, visit www.dmv.pa.gov/ click on "Vehicle Services" and select "Persons with Disabilities information" in the drop-down menu.

REAL ID Reminder

The Department of Homeland Security has postponed the enforcement date for the REAL ID law to May 3, 2023, in response to COVID-19. Beginning next May, you will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license/photo ID card, or another form of federally acceptable identification (such as a valid passport or military ID) to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a federal building or military installation that requires ID.

Obtaining a REAL ID is optional for Pennsylvania residents. You will be able to get either a REAL ID driver's license/identification card, or a standard driver's license or identification card when you visit a full-service Driver's License Center.

To obtain a REAL ID you will need to bring a proof of identity, your Social Security card, two proofs of your current PA address, and proof of all legal name changes. **As this list of required documents is exacting, you should review the PennDOT REAL ID document checklist carefully before you go, www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID**

My office can assist in obtaining original birth certificates and marriage licenses. The closest REAL ID Center is: 43 S. Gulph Rd., King of Prussia, PA 19406.

New PA Fireworks Law

In response to noise and public safety concerns, Pennsylvania has recently made changes to the fireworks law passed in 2017. These changes will take effect in September.

The new law allows municipalities to limit the timeframe for using fireworks from 10 am to 10pm, with exceptions for the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve, when consumer fireworks will be allowed until 1am. Townships can also ban fireworks if there is no place to use them safely. In addition to more severe penalties for improper sales or illegal use of fireworks, this law will also require all fireworks to be set off be at least 150 feet away from any building or vehicle.

988: A Direct Link to Mental Health Crisis Support

Pennsylvanians now have a new, easier way to connect to behavioral or mental health crisis services. By dialing 988, callers will be directly connected to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Lifeline services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at no cost.

If you need support for a suicidal, mental, behavioral health, and/or substance use crisis, you can call, text, or chat with 988. You can also call 988 on behalf of someone else. The existing Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will remain available.

Making Consumer Protection Complaints Online

The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection provides mediation services for individuals who have not been treated fairly in commercial transactions. Typical complaints include disputes with home contractors, problems arising out of the purchase or repair of cars, and health care coverage issues.

The quickest way to file a complaint is online at: <https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/submit-a-complaint/>

You can also call the Consumer Protection Helpline at 1-800-441-2555 or contact my office.

Follow me on Facebook

You can follow me on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/RepVitali There you will find updates from Harrisburg, district news, and other important state-related information.

Join My Email Update List

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. To be added to that list, please email RepVitali@pahouse.net

Free Notary Service

Most official documents can be notarized for free at my district and satellite offices. Please call ahead to make sure our notary is available and can notarize your type of document.

Documents my office is not able to notarize include car titles, wills, deeds, mortgage and mortgage-related documents, powers of attorney, and the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9.

Notary work is done weekdays between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the district office and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the satellite office. The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in person and provide proof of identity such as a valid driver's license, photo ID card, or passport. Please let us know in advance if witnesses are needed. Unfortunately, we cannot provide witnesses at our satellite office.

My District Office is on the second floor. If you are unable to climb stairs, please let us know when you call. Our notary can meet you on the ground floor. Our Satellite Office does not have stairs and is handicapped accessible.

District & Satellite Office Hours

My Havertown district office is open to help with your state-related matters from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday.

Additionally, my satellite office, located in the basement of the Ardmore Library, is open on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The library location is ADA compliant if you are not able to climb the stairs to my district office.

My staff can assist with SEPTA Senior ID Card Applications, Property Tax/Rent Rebate Forms, Birth/Death Certificates, Notary Services, and more at both locations. **Due to continually changing COVID conditions, it is best to call before coming to the office.**