



# State Representative Harry A. **READSHAW** 36TH DISTRICT **report**



**Fall 2018**

1917 Brownsville Road • Pittsburgh, PA 15210 • (412) 881-4208 • [www.pahouse.com/readshaw](http://www.pahouse.com/readshaw)

## Putting People First in Response to the Heroin and Opioid Epidemic



The heroin and opioid addiction epidemic is the most serious public health crisis facing the commonwealth. According to the state Department of Health, up to 13 Pennsylvanians die each day from drug overdoses. Last year alone, there were more than 5,000 overdose deaths in our state – an increase of nearly 15 percent from the year before. More die from opioid overdoses than from motor vehicle accidents.

There is no doubt that this epidemic has affected Pennsylvanians from every walk of life, regardless of income level, ethnicity or age. The extent of the crisis isn't confined to just the individual victim of addiction or overdose, as family

members, neighbors, friends and even colleagues witness the devastation.

That's why I and other members of the House believe this epidemic must be approached in a manner that truly puts people first. Our plan includes the following:

- An additional \$4.5 million to provide home visiting services to approximately 800 families affected by substance use disorder;
- A \$26.5 million federal funding grant to support existing efforts and expand access to treatment and educational services;
- PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs funding to continue to provide grants to county authorities across the state to implement and expand access to substance use disorder treatment, prevention and education programs;
- Additional training for service providers and continued service for families through home visits. State funding would help train providers and allow them to continue serving the hundreds of families affected by opioid addiction through evidence-based, home-visit programs. These are especially effective at aiding addiction recovery for new and expecting mothers and helping infants who are born substance-exposed; and
- An increased number of special drug courts. These courts address the underlying addiction problems of those involved in the criminal justice system, while holding them accountable for their actions. Teams including the judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, treatment provider, probation officers, law enforcement and court coordinator work together to support and closely supervise a participant's recovery. Funding will aid in the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency's effort to expand access to these drug courts throughout the state.



*It was my honor to join Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn and Brentwood Borough officials to announce a \$697,600 grant for Brentwood Borough Pool rehabilitation and site improvements. Work will include reconstruction of the swimming pool with a zero-depth entry deck; installation of a pool liner, water features, piping and the addition of fencing, landscaping, ADA accessibility and other improvements.*

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*On July 12, I joined the governor and my colleagues at the IBEW Local 5 South Side and Western Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association Apprenticeship Training Center to announce that approximately \$30 million will be invested in workforce development to launch the next phase of the PAsmart initiative, which focuses on workforce development training and apprenticeships.*

*PAsmart brings people from labor, industry, the tech sector, education and government together to connect with people of all ages in science, technology, engineering and math, and computer science.*

In an effort to make it safer for our children to get on and off a school bus, I voted for legislation that became Act 59 of 2018, providing for the installation and use of stop-arm cameras on school buses across the commonwealth.



Previously, state law didn't allow stop-arm cameras on school buses. However, some districts have already begun using the technology to help identify drivers who do not stop when a stopped school bus has its red signals flashing. This law will enable drivers to stay focused on the safety of the children on the bus, while the technology will capture any violations as they occur, and after review of law enforcement, citations can be issued.



*It was my pleasure to join state Rep. Bill Kortz in presenting John Barrett, manager of Baldwin Borough, with a Pennsylvania House of Representatives citation acknowledging him for his dedicated civic endeavors, professional excellence and service to our community.*

## Heroin and Opioid Epidemic

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In addition, state Attorney General Josh Shapiro has launched a comprehensive plan to attack the epidemic. Aspects of his plan that I support include:

- Cracking down on drug traffickers;
- Implementing a research-based initiative to combat the supply-side component of the drug problem by closing illegal drug markets;
- Ending the over-prescription of opioids and getting rid of unused medications through the use of drop boxes;
- Enforcing drug addiction treatment laws to reduce barriers to treatment; and
- Directing the AG's Education and Outreach Unit to focus on educating kids about heroin and opioids.

It's important to remember that this is not a battle you or your loved one must face alone. There is help available; call the state's 24/7 helpline, 1-800-662-4357, for information about treatment resources available. Your call will be confidential. You can also visit [www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov) for information about available treatment services.

Although it is easy to be discouraged by current statistics, it remains my strong belief that a multi-agency approach attacking the problem from different angles is the right one. Pennsylvanians are strong; together, we will overcome this epidemic.

## MEDICAL FORM TO ALLOW PATIENTS TO REFUSE OPIOIDS NOW AVAILABLE

The Pennsylvania Patient Non-Opioid Directive, a two-page form, recently released by the state Department of Health in accordance with Act 126 of 2016, is now available to allow patients to refuse opioid therapy (Oxycodone, Vicodin or Morphine) just by checking a box.

I am committed to finding ways to reduce opioid addiction and fight the epidemic we're facing in our communities. I voted for the law that provides critical information to all prescribers, practitioners and health care facilities that a patient has declined to be administered an opioid drug or offered a prescription for an opioid drug lacking abuse-deterrent properties.

You can find this form on the Department of Health website at <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Opioids/Pennsylvania%20Non-Opioid%20Directive.pdf>.



# VETERANS: CHECK OUT THESE PROGRAMS

There are a number of programs available to veterans through the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The [Military Family Relief and Assistance Program](#) provides financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible service members and their families who have a direct and immediate financial need as a result of circumstances beyond their control. Based on documented need, the amount of each grant will not exceed \$3,500.

The [Amputee and Paralyzed Veterans Pension Program](#) is specifically designed to provide \$150 per month to an eligible veteran who is paralyzed or an amputee.

Also available to veterans and their families is the [Educational Gratuities Program](#), which provides financial assistance to children of honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities and served during a period of war or armed conflict. Children of veterans who died in service during a period of war or armed conflict are also eligible.

The above only represent a sample of the various state programs available to veterans. To learn more, please contact my office at 412-881-4208.



## Opt-in for the Veterans Designation on Your Driver's License

Did you know that as a veteran you can join the more than 500,000 Pennsylvania veterans who have opted for the Veterans Designation on their driver's license since the program began in 2014? The designation – an American flag with the word VETERAN beneath – is a patriotic way for those who served to show their pride and convey to others their service to our country in the U.S. military.

This designation doesn't entitle a veteran to any special consideration or discount, but rather simply identifies the bearer as a veteran.

Qualified applicants must have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and/or the reserve component and have been discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

There is no fee for the designation, however regular renewal or duplicate fees still apply. Forms for driver's license or ID renewals and duplicates have a box for applicants to certify that they are a veteran and to have the designation added. Once the Veterans Designation has been added to a driver's license or identification card, it will automatically appear each time it is renewed.



For more information, please call my office at 412-881-4208, or visit the Department of Transportation's website at [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov) and visit the Veterans Designation link under "other services."

## CAR REGISTRATIONS

Retirees with incomes up to \$19,200 can register their vehicles for an annual fee of \$10, instead of the usual fee. The necessary forms are available in my constituent service office, at 1917 Brownsville Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15210.

## Operation Game Thief

The state Game Commission needs your help to enforce the law. Please report the illegal shooting or taking of big game or protected, endangered or threatened species, or any crime against those species, to the Game Commission's toll-free tip line: 1-888-PGC-8001. Please be prepared to provide as many details as possible, including a description of what you saw and the species involved; the date, time and location; and any descriptive details of the person involved and their vehicle.

Calls to the hotline are always answered by a secure recording device. Callers may remain confidential. However, if you wish to claim any monetary award, your contact information is necessary.

Other violations should be reported as quickly as possible to the regional office serving the county in which the violation is taking place. Our local regional office is located off Ligonier Street in Bolivar. The phone number is 724-238-9523.

## Childhood Cancer Research Bill Passes into Law

Pennsylvanians renewing their driver's licenses, identification cards and vehicle registrations online can now check a box to automatically make a donation to the Pediatric Cancer Research Fund, thanks to a new law – a great step forward to finding a cure for pediatric cancer and better funding for research without impacting our General Fund.

Pediatric cancer is the leading cause of death by disease among children in the United States. Children in Pennsylvania and throughout the country are fighting for their lives, and we have to do everything we can to support the research that could save them.

Additionally, last year's Act 39 established a check-off box on Pennsylvania's state income tax form allowing taxpayers to designate a contribution for childhood cancer research.



*Dedicated 29th ward residents will strive to "Make Carrick Great Again," as city councilman Anthony Coghill and I had the pleasure to attend the function.*



*I had an opportunity to sit with Anna Samuels, a MA student studying Public History at Duquesne University, and participate in the South Side Voices oral history project. In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the East Carson Street Historic District, residents were invited to share their stories about East Carson Street and the South Side neighborhood. As an intern over the summer, Ms. Samuels cataloged the interviews and edited hours of audio into shorter, thematic clips, some of which were incorporated into a live storytelling event that took place at the end of the summer.*

## Learn to Avoid Telemarketing and Email Scams

Every day across the United States, fraudulent telephone scammers are at work. Losses are estimated at \$40 billion a year and the costs are rising. Callers often target older Americans who have accumulated savings for retirement. How can one avoid being a victim of these scams?

- Ask for printed material through the mail that includes the company's name, address, phone and charity registration number or business registration number.
- Contact the Attorney General's Office to verify the information sent to you.
- Never send cash through the mail or give it to someone at your door.
- Never reveal your credit card number or bank account information over the phone unless you initiated the call.
- Tell the person that you do not wish to be called again, and record the party calling and the date on a list by the phone. If he or she calls back, or if you have any doubts about the legitimacy of the call, contact the state Attorney General's Office, Bureau of Consumer Protection at 1-800-441-2555.
- Put your phone number on the state's Do Not Call list, 1-888-777-3406.

## The Federal Communications Commission offers the following tips:

- If you know you're receiving a spam phone call, hang up without pressing any buttons and, if you received a voicemail message, don't call the scammer back.
- Don't trust the Caller ID. Scammers are able via technology to display different numbers. If you don't recognize the number, allow the call to go to voicemail so you can then decide if the call is important enough to return.
- Never give out personal information, including Social Security numbers, account numbers, mother's maiden name, passwords, or other potentially identifying information in response to unexpected calls.

## Important Numbers

**Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection** – Investigates consumer complaints. Call 1-800-441-2555.

**Attorney General's Health Care Section** – Helps with disputes with health insurance companies or medical providers. Call 1-877-888-4877.

**Attorney General's Senior Crime Prevention University** – Teaches seniors how to avoid becoming a crime or abuse victim. If you would like to attend a Senior Crime Prevention University Program, or have your group host a presentation, please call 717-787-9716.

**PA Legal Services** – Provides listings, by county, of the organizations that provide free or discounted legal services for individuals with low and moderate incomes. Call 1-800-322-7572, or visit its website at [www.palegalaid.net](http://www.palegalaid.net).

**PennSERVE** – Promotes volunteering and community service throughout Pennsylvania for people of all ages and levels of physical ability. Call 717-787-1971 or 866-6-SERVE-U (866-673-7838) or email [pennserve@pa.gov](mailto:pennserve@pa.gov).

## Report Fraud to the PA Attorney General's Elder Abuse Helpline

Senior citizens are favored targets for many kinds of consumer fraud, including identity theft, charities, telemarketing and sweepstakes fraud.

Because various state agencies, local law enforcement, criminal investigators and prosecutors work together to resolve cases of elder victimization, it may be difficult to know where to report certain elder abuse concerns. Call the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Elder Abuse Helpline toll free at 1-866-623-2137. Well-trained staff will provide help.





*I attended a ceremonial groundbreaking as Allegheny Health Network and Highmark joined to provide a neighborhood hospital at Route 51 and Greenlee Road.*

## About REAL ID

I've been hearing a lot of questions lately about REAL ID, with people asking what it is and whether it's mandatory.

The federal government passed the REAL ID Act in response to 9/11. The act establishes minimum standards that state-issued driver's licenses and ID cards must meet to be accepted for boarding domestic commercial flights and entering high-security federal facilities.

Card-based enforcement of the act starts Oct. 1, 2020. From that date on, you will either need a REAL-ID compliant driver's license or photo identification card (or some other form of federally acceptable identification such as a passport or military ID) to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a high-security federal facility or military base. Therefore, although a REAL ID is not mandatory, it may be useful to you if you want to continue using a driver's license or photo ID card as identification for these purposes.

PennDOT will begin making REAL ID licenses and identification cards available in March 2019, but the agency is urging people to become pre-verified now. To learn more, visit [www.penndot.gov](http://www.penndot.gov) and click on the REAL ID icon with the star.

## Property Tax Rent Rebate Program Deadline Extended

The deadline to file for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2017 under this popular program has been extended to December 31. To find out if you qualify, visit [www.Revenue.pa.gov](http://www.Revenue.pa.gov), click on "tax information," and scroll down to the program listing.

## HELP FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

In Pennsylvania, suicide is the 11th leading cause of death, with an average of one person dying every four hours, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Nationally, suicide rates are 13 per 100,000 of the population, but in the commonwealth, the rate is 14. Suicide is a preventable public health problem. Two years ago, a new law was enacted requiring licensees of the State Board of Social Workers to complete one hour of continuing education in the assessment, treatment and management of suicide risks as a portion of the total continuing education required for license renewal.

The legislation covers psychologists, social workers, therapists and counselors. It doesn't increase training hours, but simply would require one of the hours to be suicide prevention training. It's important to make sure our professionals have the skills to deal with suicide when they need to intervene or console during a difficult situation.

Several resources are available to anyone who may be suicidal. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is (800) 273-8255.

## The Bakery Society of Pittsburgh Ribbon-Cutting

A first-of-its-kind bakery incubator located in Mt. Oliver, The Bakery Society of Pittsburgh has a mission to develop bakers who are interested in opening their own bakery through brand development, learning business skills and developing a community presence, via support of Economic Development South.

TBSP is located in the former Kullman's Bakery, and will house four bakers-in-residence who will be trained for 12-18 months. During this time period, the participants will produce their niche products, sell out of a retail space on Brownsville Road and enter into a revenue partnership with TBSP.

TBSP will also open its doors to community bakers for rent at a small fee, with community classes and events (including free monthly classes to local youth).



*It was an honor to attend a VIP ribbon-cutting ceremony for The Bakery Society of Pittsburgh; the nation's first full-bakery incubator designed to provide entrepreneurship training and support to bakers-in-residence through a vigorous 18-month program.*

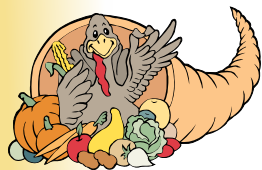
## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Kinship caregivers – grandparents and other relatives raising children younger than 18 – face a variety of emotional, legal and financial challenges. The National Family Caregiver Support Program helps to relieve the caregiver burden by offering qualified primary caregivers up to \$200 per month in reimbursements for approved out-of-pocket expenses. Under special circumstances, there is a potential to receive up to \$500 per month in approved reimbursements. For those who qualify, the program also provides up to \$2,000 in pre-approved reimbursements to modify a home or purchase assistive devices or technologies.

To be eligible, one must be 55 or older and be the primary caregiver for children younger than 18 who are relatives and whose parents do not live in the home. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for additional information on eligibility and to apply for the program. You may also visit the Aging Department website at [www.aging.state.pa.us](http://www.aging.state.pa.us) for more information about programs to help kinship caregivers.

**Wishing you and  
your family:**

**A Happy Thanksgiving Day**  
on November 22, 2018



**&**

**A Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year  
holiday season**

*Harry*



lpo.kaf.1118



*It was extremely hot on Labor Day, so I begged off going with Harry to march in the Labor Day Parade. As you can see, he found two volunteers to take my place. (That didn't really bother me, as I was sleeping at home beside the air conditioner.)*

## **BUSTER: Sniffing Out Some New Bills on the Horizon**

The Justice for Libre animal advocacy action group, in cooperation with Finding Shelter Animal Rescue and the HSUS-PA, recently hosted an event to promote two priority animal welfare bills and raise awareness of the cruelties associated with puppy mills.

Animal advocates, representatives from shelters/rescues, and canine ambassadors/ puppy mill survivors from across the state were there to show support for animal protection bills. Senate Bill 1154, PA's Retail Sales bill, would require pet stores to source animals from shelters and rescues rather than from puppy mill operations and require license numbers to be posted with all puppies for sale to allow transparency for consumers. This legislation does not impact reputable breeders, because they do not sell to pet stores.

Act 104 of 2018, Animals in Distress, or the "hot car law," will protect dogs and cats from distress in motor vehicles by allowing public safety professionals to remove unattended dogs/cats without liability for damages.

Harry continues to support protecting our animals, especially me!

