



*Frank*  
**Burns**  
 State Representative

72nd Legislative District



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Summer 2014

## Crime watch can help neighborhoods fight crime



If you're interested in creating a crime watch in your neighborhood, Rep. Frank Burns would like to invite you to this important informational seminar.

**July 31**

Lower Yoder Volunteer Fire Co.  
 Activity Building

7 p.m. 515 Fairfield Ave., Johnstown

### Why fighting crime is important to Rep. Burns: A personal story

At the age of 16 I was a victim of a violent crime involving a gun.

On Aug. 11, 1992, I was walking back to the car with some friends after Johnstown won game two in the AAABA tournament at Point Stadium, when I was assaulted by three males.

They surrounded me and started circling, then one of them yelled. When I turned toward the sound, I was blindsided from behind. I fell to the ground, catching myself with my arms so my head didn't hit the concrete. But before I could get to my feet, one of them came running up and kicked my head as if he were kicking a football.

With blood pouring out of my mouth, I got to my feet and ran. As I looked around, I had no idea where I was – I might as well have been in New York City – I was roaming around the streets of Johnstown, desperately looking for help. Just as I rounded a corner, there they were. They began to chase

me down a back street; choking on blood and having a hard time breathing, I ran for my life! One of them yelled, "STOP or I'll shoot!" I couldn't keep running, so for whatever reason, I stopped and sat on the steps of a church. I asked God to help me as I waited for them to catch up. One of the males put the gun in my face. I don't remember what he was saying, but I calmly kept saying, "Please don't shoot me." Within a few minutes, my friends drove down the side street and found me. The guy put the gun away and surprisingly, I was able to get in the car without further incident and get help.

The perpetrators pleaded guilty, but never went to jail. Their penalties were nothing compared to what I had experienced.

My jaw was broken in two places, but I also had to overcome the psychological pain of living with distrust and fear, which lasted for several years, long after my physical wounds healed. Today, I'm left with a 1-inch scar on my face as a reminder of how important it is to keep our streets safe.

**Help Rep. Burns keep our streets safe and join him for this important seminar.**

# Firefighter for the day



Rep. Frank Burns spent a day at the Cambria County Fire School this spring to see firsthand what kind of training firefighters go through. He put on the turnout gear, learned how to use some of the equipment and even knocked down a fire in the controlled-burn structure.

“I had a good time, but it was just pretend. My hat is off to the brave men and women who put on the gear and do

this every day. I have nothing but respect for the dedication and willingness of volunteer firefighters to protect lives and property for others,” Rep. Burns said.

It also happened to be the fire school’s 60th anniversary, and Rep. Burns presented officials at the school with a legislative citation on its anniversary.

## Hit-and-run penalties increased

Rep. Frank Burns voted for a new law that toughens the penalty for hit-and-run violations to a three-year mandatory minimum sentence.

Previously, fleeing the scene of a fatal accident carried only a one-year minimum sentence, but accidental death while driving intoxicated carried a minimum three-year sentence. This law puts both sentences on par with one another and discourages drunk drivers from fleeing the scene.

This law is known as Kevin’s Law, named after a 5-year-old boy who was killed by a hit-and-run driver while crossing the street with his family in December 2012.



## How to avoid electricity bill spikes

This winter, thousands of Pennsylvanians were shocked when their electric bills doubled or tripled in one month. Those customers who had a variable-rate contract with an electric supplier or who had a fixed-rate contract that expired, were subject to the price spikes. To avoid this problem, be sure to check the terms and conditions of your contract with your electric supplier.

You can obtain information regarding the current status of your contract, including whether your rate is fixed or variable, and any cancellation fees, by calling the supplier. The name and phone number of your supplier, along with the current rate you are paying can be found on your monthly bill.

As a result of the price spikes, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission has approved new rules to help consumers.

One rule, which took effect in June, requires competitive energy suppliers to clearly disclose the details of their offers, especially the risks of variable-rate offers. In regard to fixed-term contracts, suppliers must notify customers by mail if their contracts are expiring or if there are changes to terms of service.

Another rule will shorten the time to switch suppliers. Currently, it takes up to 40 days; however, the new rule, which is expected to take effect by the end of the year, will require the change to occur within three days of the request.

You can learn more about shopping for electricity suppliers, or choose another supplier by visiting [www.papowerswitch.com](http://www.papowerswitch.com), a website maintained by the PUC.



## 2014-15 state budget is unfair to Pennsylvanians

State Rep. Frank Burns said it was an easy decision to vote against the \$29.1 billion 2014-15 state budget in June.

“Many people in the district are troubled that Governor Corbett raised taxes on gasoline earlier this year, forcing us to pay more at the pump, but has refused to enact a reasonable severance tax on the Marcellus Shale industry which has some of the largest companies in the world. Because Pennsylvania is a major exporter of natural gas, the cost would not be passed down to us but passed on to the states importing the gas.

“It’s just one indication that the governor’s policies are unfair, and this budget is no different.”

He said public schools again are significantly underfunded.

“This is the fourth budget that perpetuates the \$1 billion in cuts for public education, which has led to skyrocketing property taxes as middle-income families and those on fixed incomes are forced to pick up the tab.

“Yet, while these cuts have continued, Governor Corbett has wasted hundreds of millions of dollars defending such failed policies as lottery privatization, while giving \$2 billion in tax breaks to big corporations and refusing to close tax loopholes that benefit big business,” Rep. Burns said. “This year’s spending plan is more of the same.

Rep. Burns said the budget takes money from worthwhile programs to balance the budget, including the Volunteer Fire Company Loan Fund and programs to help senior citizens, just to name a few.

“Overall, this budget is unfair to most Pennsylvanians and I could not in good conscience support an unfair plan that shortchanges education and places the burden on working Pennsylvanians.”

## Burns votes for drug monitoring bill

Legislation is pending that would institute a Prescription Drug Monitoring system to track prescriptions of controlled substances so that law enforcement can access this data to intercede in the selling of prescription drugs to unauthorized users.

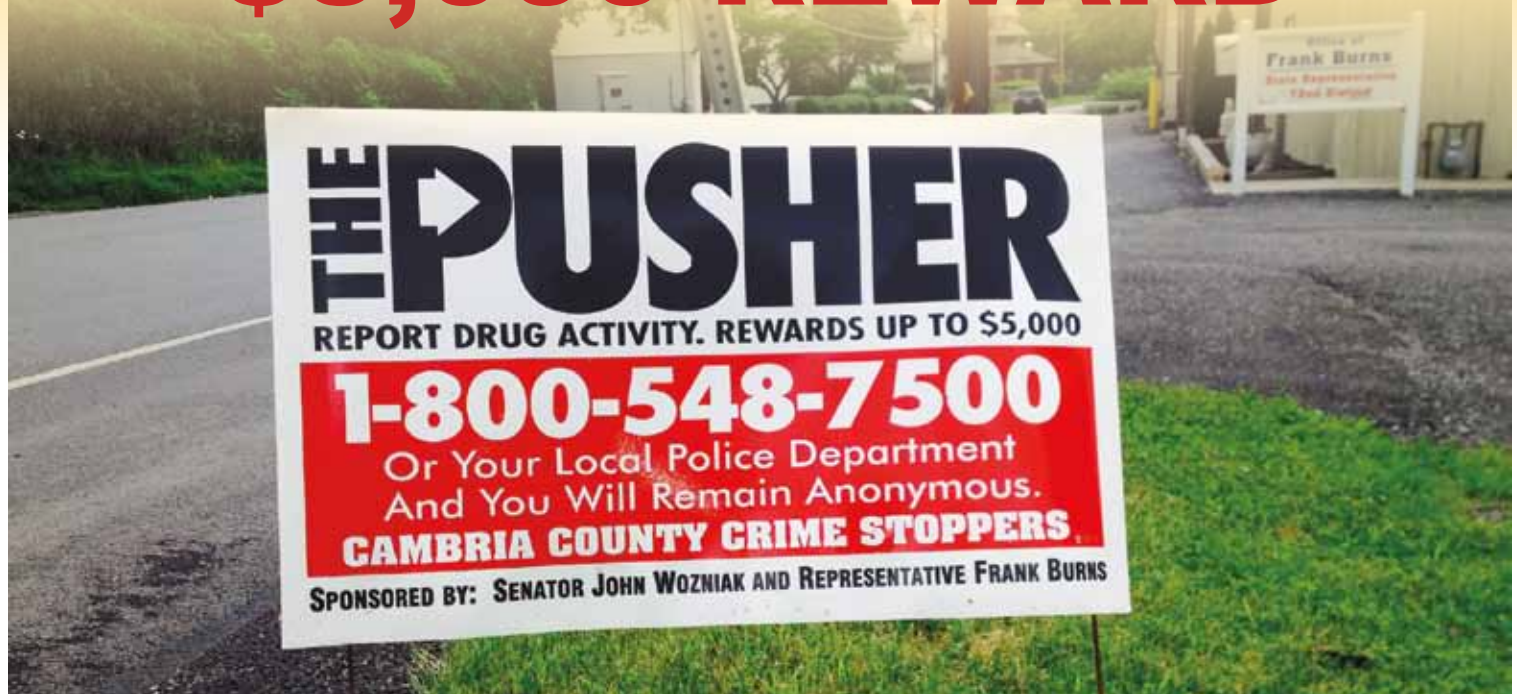
Rep. Burns voted for H.B. 1694. The database would track such controlled substances as oxycodone, amphetamines and cough medicines containing codeine. The information collected would include the names of the prescribing physician and patient, the drug dosage and the source of payment. To address privacy concerns, the bill includes a provision that would require law enforcement to obtain a search warrant before accessing individual information.

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# \$5,000 REWARD



## Did you know that 85 percent of criminal cases in Cambria County are related to drug or alcohol abuse?

Cambria County had 51 drug overdose deaths in 2013, and so far this year, that number is 11.

Rep. Frank Burns said there's a new program he's sponsoring designed to rout out drug users from neighborhoods. It's called "Push out the Pusher" and it's asking communities to help.

Signs are being posted in neighborhoods throughout the county asking people to call the drug enforcement tip hotline if they see anything or have any information that could lead to the arrest of a drug dealer.

"Drug crimes harm our families, our neighborhoods and our communities," Burns said. "Drug crime leads to increases in other types of crime, which makes our communities less safe, results in increased costs to taxpayers and lowers home values. Combating crime is a community effort."

The Cambria County Drug Task Force hotline is 1-800-548-7500.

If you would like a yard sign to put on your property, please contact Burns' office: 536-8400.

***"Let's all do our part to fight crime!" – Rep. Frank Burns***