



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Kristine Howard

167TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Dear Neighbor,

As summer winds down and children head back to school, I wanted to provide you with an update on my work in Harrisburg, as well as resources to use right here at home.

Kristine C. Howard

UPCOMING EVENTS

FREE SHREDDING EVENT

Saturday, September 18 • 9 a.m. – noon

West Whiteland Township Building
101 Commerce Drive
Exton, PA 19341

Drive up and have your documents securely shredded.
No televisions, monitors, or other forms of e-waste.

SENIOR FAIR

Thursday, September 30 • 10 a.m. – noon

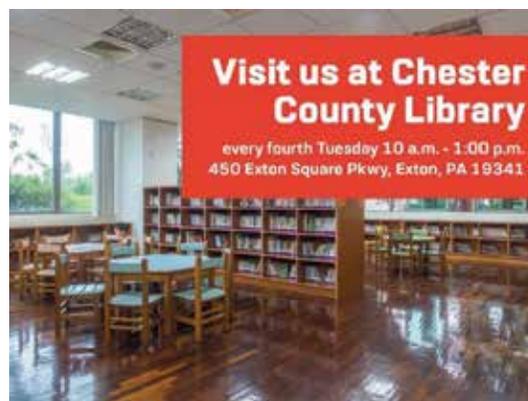
West Whiteland Township Building
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State and county agencies will be there to help you navigate the many benefits and assistance programs available to older Pennsylvanians.



Swearing in for my second term, January 5, 2021.

LIBRARY SATELLITE OFFICE HOURS



The 167th District includes Malvern Borough and the townships of Charlestown, Easttown, East Whiteland, West Pikeland, West Whiteland and Willistown.

LEGISLATION

PROTECTING PENNSYLVANIA'S POLLINATORS



Pollinators are necessary for about 75 percent of the plants grown across the world for food, beverages, spices, and medicine. Without pollinators, our food system would be unrecognizable. Unfortunately, a decline in pollinator populations is occurring throughout Pennsylvania and across the nation.

With agricultural monocrop expansion and consistent loss of habitat due to encroaching urbanization, pollinators are left with a limited food supply and a loss of basic needs. To combat this potentially apocalyptic problem, states have begun implementing roadside pollinator habitat programs. These programs create pollinator habitats filled with native plants along roadsides to help sustain pollinator populations. The deep-rooted native plants will also provide benefits for stormwater, infiltration, soil stabilization, and water quality, while reducing the cost of roadside maintenance through minimized mowing needs.

It is important to replenish and sustain the pollinator population in Pennsylvania, and this is why I am introducing legislation to help do just that. One bill would create a Pollinator License Plate, a program that would allow motorists to pay for a specialty license plate to fund roadside pollinator programs, while the other would create one of those programs, the Pennsylvania Pollinator Habitat Program. The Department of Transportation, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Department of Agriculture would work together to develop and establish the program to create native grass and perennial wildflower-filled habitats along our state highways to support the migration of pollinators.

Having a large population of pollinators in Pennsylvania is critical to the health and wealth of our heavily agricultural state.

BATS PROTECT OUR CROPS, LET'S PROTECT THEM

Although the importance of bats may not be readily apparent to the average person, these flying marvels save the agricultural industry billions of dollars annually through the consumption of harmful insects. This is because a typical colony of 100 bats feeding for roughly 200 days has been estimated to consume more than 2,220 pounds of insects, according to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. With fewer insects, less pesticide is necessary, not only bolstering our economy, but also our health and our environment.

However, in recent years, Pennsylvania's bat populations have experienced a significant decline, which has been attributed to a fungal disease known as white-nose syndrome. This disease causes bats to come out of hibernation prematurely and to burn through their fat reserves, thus starving them to death in the winter. In Pennsylvania, white-nose syndrome has caused the populations of the eastern small footed-bat, little brown bat, northern long-eared bat, and tri-colored bat to decrease by an estimated 99 percent.

Since bats provide such an important financial and ecological benefit to Pennsylvania, I have introduced a resolution (HR 124) directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study on the current status and management of bat species in the Commonwealth, and to issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

REPAIRABILITY INDEX FOR ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Yesterday's fancy new gadget is tomorrow's garbage. Television stopped working? Buy a new one. Microwave shorted out? Buy a new one. Phone screen cracked? Buy a new one.

While discussions of our throwaway culture frequently revolve around our collective impatience, the larger issue is waste. When our broken – or merely older – electronics become garbage, they flood our landfills and roadsides with hazardous and non-renewable components, components which must be mined and manufactured anew with great environmental impact for each new device.

To make matters worse, many products today discourage any other behavior. Devices are deliberately made difficult to repair, with access to information on how to make repairs kept scarce, ensuring even those with the interest and skills are prevented from doing so. This is manufactured helplessness, plain and simple.

This is why I've introduced legislation (HB 1757) that would create a repairability index, requiring original equipment manufacturers to rate and display the repairability and longevity of each item they sell. Displaying the difficulty of repairing products would make it easier for consumers to

make informed purchasing decisions, and is a necessary first step in changing the culture of planned obsolescence, a culture that is now creating a worldwide shortage of the computer chips necessary to make electronics, from synthesizers to cars to medical devices.

By ensuring consumers have pertinent repairability information, this legislation would help curb electronic waste and force manufactures to rethink their business models.

Repairability is not only a consumer rights issue; it's an environmental issue.

CONSERVATION CORNER

The Delmarva fox squirrel used to be a native species of Chester County, but habitat loss due to deforestation and farming, in addition to overhunting, caused this squirrel to become extirpated, or locally extinct, over a century ago.

Sadly, Chester County was not the only region to see its numbers dwindle. The population loss was severe enough on the Delmarva peninsula that the fox squirrel was classified as endangered by the USFWS from 1967 until 2015, when the designation was removed thanks to successful conservation efforts in parts of Maryland and Virginia.

What is particularly interesting about the change in status for the Delmarva fox squirrel is that 87 percent of the habitat they live on today is privately owned land. These private landowners, working alongside biologists and other public efforts, brought the Delmarva fox squirrel back from the verge of extinction.

It has been over 30 years since a revival was attempted in Chester County. The last, in 1987, was unsuccessful due to natural predation and the limited use of land, which inhibited the success of such efforts. Perhaps it would be different if a similar endeavor to that of Maryland and Virginia were to be made today. It certainly shows that local partnership really can make a difference for our animal friends!



CONSTITUENT SERVICES

UNEMPLOYMENT ISSUES

While my office does not have a direct line to the Department of Labor & Industry, we do have access to a web-based form for legislative office requests, which is much faster than the multi-month delays that many in our district have reported enduring.

If you have any issues receiving unemployment compensation, please contact my office. I can't promise that you'll receive an immediate answer on your claim, or that it will be the answer you're hoping for, but I can promise that you will get an answer.

REPORT POTHOLES

Potholes and other roadway concerns on state roads can be reported by calling 1-800-FIX-ROAD or visiting www.penndot.gov and clicking on "Submit Roadway Feedback."



**IT'S NO SECRET GEORGE,
PA TREASURY HAS \$3.8
BILLION IN UNCLAIMED
PROPERTY THEY WANT
TO RETURN.**

PaTreasury.gov/unclaimed-property

UNCLAIMED PROPERTY AT PA TREASURY

Did you know that the Pennsylvania Treasury is currently holding onto \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property?

Did you know that one in 10 Pennsylvanians is owed unclaimed property?

Did you know the average claim is worth about \$2,000?

As of January of this year, among addresses in our district, there was \$141,178,346 in unclaimed property, accounting only for the cases worth a minimum of \$20. My office is hard at work on trying to notify constituents of their unclaimed property, but you don't have to wait for us to reach out: you can search Treasury's online database at any time to see if you or friends and family have property waiting to be claimed. You don't need to pay anyone a fee to search for or claim property from the state. Learn more at www.patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES AND DEATH CERTIFICATES

My office can help you obtain copies of birth and death certificates. Certificates cost \$20 each, and must be paid via check or money order made payable to "VITAL RECORDS."



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Harrisburg, PA 17120-2167

lpo.ts.0821



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DISTRICT OFFICE OPEN BY APPOINTMENT

To minimize wait times and provide the best service possible without the need to rush our visitors, my office is open by appointment only. To schedule your appointment, call my office at (610) 251-1070 or email RepHoward@pahouse.net. Please wear a mask to your appointment.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 and older; widows and widowers 50 and older; and people with disabilities 18 and older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded (for example, if you were paid \$25,000 and received \$15,000 in Social Security, you are still under the income limit, because only \$7,500 of the Social Security income is counted). Spouses, personal representatives or estates may also file rebate claims on behalf of claimants who lived at least one day in 2020 and meet all other eligibility criteria. Visit www.revenue.pa.gov for more information.

Property Tax / Rent Rebates

Homeowners Receive:

Income	Max Rebate
\$0 - \$8,000	\$650
\$8,001 - \$15,000	\$500
\$15,001 - \$18,000	\$300
\$18,001 - \$35,000	\$250

Renters Receive:

Income	Max Rebate
\$0 - \$8,000	\$650
\$8,001 - \$15,000	\$500

SOME ADDITIONAL SERVICES MY DISTRICT OFFICE CAN ASSIST WITH:

- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Problems with the Department of Human Services, Department of State, or any other state agency
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, information on starting a business, senior citizen information, student aid information, etc.
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Concerns or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the State Capitol for individuals or groups
- Disability plates and placards