

BOB MERSKI

DEAR NEIGHBORS,

As we are enjoying the summer season, it's important for me to keep you informed of the remarkable work that we've been doing and the amazing things happening in the district! The 2nd Legislative District is experiencing a remarkable upswing, and as your state representative, I am eager to expand on this positive trend for the rest of 2024 and onwards.

Representing YOU in Harrisburg and bringing back resources to our district is so important to me. Since January, we have successfully secured over \$10 million for the Erie region! Further details about this, as well as information on new bills progressing through the legislative process, can be found in the following pages.

It is an honor to be your representative, and serving you is the cornerstone of the work we do. My skilled team and I are always here to assist with any state-related issues or concerns. Whether it's applying for the newly expanded Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, PennDOT issues, or acquiring essential records for you and your family, we are eager to help!

Please feel free to visit our office at 3921 Buffalo Road, reach out by phone at (814) 455-6319, or contact us via email at RepMerski@pahouse.net. We are committed to serving you!

Bob Merski

HERE'S A LOOK AT SOME OF LAST YEAR'S PROGRESS, BOTH HERE AT HOME AND IN HARRISBURG!



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SATELLITE OFFICES:
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Wednesday ONLY 12 p.m. –
4 p.m. or by appointment.

DISTRICT OFFICE:
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(814) 455-6319
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. M-F

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9333 Tate Rd., Room 102
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Erie was at the 'center of the universe' for the long awaited Total Solar Eclipse. This once-in-a-lifetime event did not disappoint! The entire day was full of excitement, and as the hour of the eclipse drew near you could feel the energy from both local Erie residents as well as the more than 200,000 individuals who traveled near and far for an up close and personal view of the eclipse.

This event was a boon for Erie's local economy, and having Gov. Josh Shapiro kick off the day's festivities at the Lake Erie Speedway was a tremendous honor.



Earlier this year, Harbor Creek Junior and Senior High School's Advanced Technologies Group (ATG) were chosen by NASA to engage with astronauts on the International Space Station.

Harbor Creek was one of only a few schools selected for this national honor, and it was the only school from Pennsylvania to be recognized.



The adage "once a teacher, always a teacher" holds true! It was delightful to visit the Barber National Institute and read to the children for Read Across America. My gratitude goes to BNI for the invitation and the incredible work they do for our families!



We heard your concerns about the lack of consistent, reliable cell service on Presque Isle and worked with both public and private entities to solve this problem. This will enhance the safety of everyone who visits this beautiful part of Erie, and I thank everyone who played an important role in delivering upon this shared initiative.



It was a privilege to assist in welcoming Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to Pennsylvania. As Pennsylvania's largest trading partner, Canada plays a pivotal role in diversifying the state's economy and providing key goods that enhance the daily lives of our residents.



We honored Stephen Stanbro on the grand opening of his new Bro Man's Sanniches restaurant on Glenwood Park Avenue. There was a line out the door as people were excited to get their fill of burgers, tacos, fries, and more. Best wishes for success!



I was proud to help secure funding for Wesleyville's Police Department to acquire Ke\$ha the K-9! Ke\$ha is a 2-year-old female Dutch Shepherd from the Netherlands and is nationally certified as a dual-purpose narcotics and patrol K-9.

The Erie Police Department's Saturation Unit received an equipment upgrade in the form of 10 new e-bikes! My colleague, state Rep. Pat Harkins, and I secured a grant to help purchase these e-bikes, helping these dedicated public servants continue keeping Erie residents safe.

These new e-bikes will allow officers to interact more with community members and cover a larger area of the city while on patrol.



I extend my gratitude to the Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania at St. Luke School for inviting me to discuss the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The girls posed insightful questions and shared brilliant ideas! With such scouts at the helm, our future is indeed promising!



Our valiant first responders put their lives on the line daily to safeguard our communities from fires, accidents, and various emergencies. They have earned our deepest thanks and support. In recognition of their bravery, we have successfully obtained over \$190,000 in grant funding for Erie County's fire and EMS departments since the start of 2024.



As vice chair of the PA House Game and Fisheries Committee, I work closely with outdoor enthusiasts, including the SONS of Lake Erie, on ways to support and enhance fishing on Lake Erie and its tributaries.



The Boy Scouts of America do incredible work in encouraging young people to become the best version of themselves. I was honored to support Boy Scout Troop 1333 at their Spaghetti Dinner. I must say, the food was delicious. Great job!



Residents of Erie County deserve a public transportation system that is safe, clean, reliable, and affordable. We had a productive discussion with Jeremy Petersen, Executive Director of the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority, on shared goals and priorities to expand and enhance EMTA's offerings of public transit.



It was a tremendous honor to celebrate Edward J. Kuchcinski, a WWII veteran, on his 98th birthday. Not only did Ed turn 98 years young, but he also marked his 67th wedding anniversary with his beloved wife, Dorothy. Ed's military decorations and citations include the Army of Occupation Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal. Congratulations on your anniversary, and Happy Birthday, Ed!



Lt. Governor Austin Davis and Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Dr. Debra Bogen convened a roundtable discussion in Erie with local public health experts and community stakeholders to spotlight proposed investments aimed at tackling the gun violence epidemic and enhancing the safety of Pennsylvania communities and families.

BRINGING YOUR TAX DOLLARS HOME

Tax dollars should remain in Erie to be reinvested in enhancing resources for families and students, bolstering programs for veterans and seniors, supporting small businesses, developing infrastructure, and ensuring community safety.

In the first six months of 2024, I have worked to secure \$10 million, including:

- \$3.1 million to electrify Erie's fleet of refuse collection trucks.
- \$1.4 million for the installation of ADA-compliant sidewalks & ramps in Erie.
- \$1.4 million to bolster safety and mental health resources in Erie schools.
- \$835,000 for violence intervention and prevention efforts.
- \$710,000 to improve water quality.
- \$660,000 to improve access to safe, affordable housing.
- \$700,000 to bolster broadband access in Erie County.
- \$260,000 to protect and preserve Lake Erie.
- \$200,000 to bridge the digital literacy gap.
- More than \$190,000 for Erie fire and EMS companies.
- Nearly \$170,000 for the enhancement of Erie police, code enforcement vehicles.
- Nearly \$160,000 to support technical schools throughout Erie County.
- Nearly \$100,000 to improve Wesleyville Borough's police fleet.
- More than \$100,000 to bolster indigent defense in Erie.
- \$80,000 to fight veteran hunger, food insecurity.
- \$55,000 to illuminate the Bayfront Connector.
- \$40,000 to enhance student safety on college campuses.

DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE PROGRAM EXTENDED UNTIL DEC. 31

Great news! The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue recently extended the deadline to apply for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

Older adults and Pennsylvanians with disabilities 18 or older have until Dec. 31 to apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. The Department of Revenue began issuing rebates on July 1, so the sooner you apply, the sooner you will receive your rebate.

Starting this year, the maximum rebate is \$1,000 on rent or property tax paid in 2023, and the income limit is \$45,000 annually for both homeowners and renters. Those income limits will be tied to the cost of living moving forward, which means the people who receive a rebate will not have to worry about losing their eligibility through no fault of their own in the years to come.

For assistance in applying for the newly revamped Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, contact my office at (814) 455-6319.

BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

In addition to the bill details on the following page, I persist in advocating for initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians. Below is a list of bills and resolutions for which I am the prime sponsor.

Bills:

Resolutions:

HB 248

HB 256

HR 28

HB 249

HB 954

HR 170

HB251

HB 1151

HR 233

HB 252

HB 1395

HR 385

HB 253

HB 1396

HB 254

HB 1492

HB 255

HB 2436



SIGN UP TO STAY IN THE LOOP!

Don't miss out! Each week, I send out an e-newsletter to keep folks up to date on new state programs and services and the latest happenings here at home and in Harrisburg. You can sign up for my e-newsletter by visiting www.RepMerski.com and scrolling down to the sign up form.

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FIGHTING TO LOWER COSTS FOR SENIORS ...

My legislation making it easier for seniors to qualify for a reduced vehicle registration fee has been enacted into law! The proposal I championed and shepherded through the legislative process raised the qualifying income cap from \$19,200 to \$29,906, allowing more retirees to renew their annual vehicle registration for only \$10, with subsequent annual adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index.

The enactment of my proposal will ease the financial burdens associated with vehicle ownership for retirees living on a fixed income. The recent boosts to Social Security payments pushed many retirees above the income threshold to qualify for a reduced vehicle registration fee.

My legislation that was signed into law by Governor Shapiro fixes that problem, demonstrating our ability to work in a bipartisan fashion to solve the complex issues facing Pennsylvanians.



... AND TO ESTABLISH SAFEGUARDS FOR AI

Artificial intelligence is a rapidly evolving tool that is becoming increasingly prevalent in our day-to-day lives. While the technology holds great promise in areas such as medical research and diagnostics, it can also pose a dangerous threat in the wrong hands, especially when used to spread disinformation. To harness this powerful technology, we need to understand how to best manage it.

That's why I have been championing two bills that would establish crucial guardrails for AI.

The first would require a disclosure on any content generated by AI. People have a right to know whether the content they

are viewing was generated by a person or a computer. The bill passed the House and is currently in the state Senate.

I have also introduced legislation to protect the sanctity of our electoral process from false AI-generated content. Voters deserve accurate information about candidates before they go into a voting booth. My bill would impose civil liability and potential court penalties for disseminating an AI-generated impersonation of a candidate within 90 days before an election that is designed to misrepresent their words, actions or beliefs.

The bill recently passed out of committee and will head to the full House chamber for a vote.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

I would like your help. Please contact me at:

I would like you to speak to my group or organization

I would like to know your views on: _____

The issues important to me are:

- Education
- Property Taxes
- Unemployment
- Energy
- Healthcare
- Economy
- Environment
- Agriculture
- Voting/Elections
- Other: _____

Snip off this form, insert it in an envelope, affix postage and address it to:
State Rep. Bob Merski, 3921 Buffalo Rd., Erie, PA 16510.



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P.O. Box 202002
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2002

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MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Assistance getting and filling out state forms of all kinds
- Applying for state programs such as Property Tax/Rent Rebate and PACE
- Birth and death certificates
- Free notary service for most documents
- Filing unclaimed property applications
- Disability parking placards/plates
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) information
- Problems or questions about PennDOT, including car registrations, titles, and license applications
- Complaints about state road conditions
- Public benefit applications or issues, including SNAP and Medical Assistance
- Unemployment compensation questions
- Questions about utilities or the PUC
- Problems with Pennsylvania income taxes
- Tours of the State Capitol for individuals or groups
- Citations from the House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Consumer complaints
- PHEAA information
- Getting paper tax forms
- Issues with professional license applications

Contact my office by stopping in, calling at (814) 455-6319, or sending a message through my website at www.RepMerski.com for help with these or other issues.

SAVE THE DATE!

Senior Fair

September 27, 2024

10 a.m.

Harborcreek Social Hall