



STATE REP. JENNIFER O'MARA

WINTER 2021

165TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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Dear Neighbor,

After closing out a year that was full of hardship and loss, I'm filled with hope for a better new year. Although we are still in the beginning of 2021, we are already off to a reassuring start as COVID-19 cases steadily decline and we begin distributing the vaccine throughout our commonwealth. However, it is no secret that our country is still suffering both from the lasting effects of COVID-19 and deep political division.

Before we are Democrats or Republicans, we are Americans. I am hopeful that as Americans, we can come together, as we have done in the past, to work on creating a more peaceful, compassionate country. Positive change begins with each of us bearing the weight of understanding and helping our neighbors as best we are able. I know that we all share in the hopes of a successful nation, and in order to achieve this dream we need to work together, not against one another.

I remain committed to working for you, regardless of political affiliation or differing policy opinions. I hope that in 2021 we can overcome the deep divide throughout our country and instead unite over the things that bring us together. This year, I challenge everyone to use our commonalities and our differences as the basis for much-needed, difficult conversations that will help us push for the country we know we can be.

Please know that my office is here to help you with any state-related matter. Even if you're not sure if what you need help with is state-related – ask anyway, as we may know who can assist you. We are here to serve you.

Kind regards,

Jennifer O'Mara

Update from Harrisburg

On January 5, I was sworn in for my second term as your state representative. The following week, I received my committee assignments, which are reflective of some of my top priorities as a legislator, such as supporting first responders and making fiscally responsible choices. I was also humbled to accept my nomination as chairwoman of the Southeast Delegation.

The Southeast Delegation is a regional collective of Democratic representatives from Berks, Bucks, Chester, Dauphin, Delaware, Lancaster, Montgomery and York counties. As the largest delegation within the Democratic Caucus, consisting of 35 members, we come together to advance policy issues that matter most to our region of the commonwealth.

I hope to use my new platform as chairwoman to call for unity and the willingness to listen to differing viewpoints, and to advocate for the unique needs of Southeastern Pennsylvania. We are living through times of great division and crisis, and to overcome it we must work together and uphold the democracy we swore to protect.

Legislation introduced

Although the 2021-22 legislative session just began, I'm already hard at work authoring bills based on input from residents throughout the district. Here are the bills that I am currently circulating:

- **Study on nursing homes:** To ensure that nursing home residents and their families are protected from substandard care, my resolution would direct the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a comprehensive study to remedy inadequacies brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study would examine important factors, such as nurse staffing competency and ratios, emphasis on person-centered care, and the recruitment and retention of quality nursing home leaders.

(continued on page 2)

Update from Harrisburg: Legislation introduced *(continued)*

- Reducing the mental health stigma: An average of 2,000 Pennsylvanians lose their lives to suicide every year. Due to the stigma associated with suicide, many experts believe this statistic is inaccurate, and suicide is underreported. In an effort to reduce this stigma, my resolution would urge the use of terms such as “died by suicide” and “fatal suicide behavior” instead of “committed suicide,” “completed suicide,” and using the words “successful” or “failed” when describing suicide attempts.
- Student Borrowers’ Bill of Rights: It is estimated that 2.1 million Pennsylvanians carry an average of \$38,521 in student loan debt. My bill would increase awareness of affordable repayment options, ensure borrowers receive accurate information on their loans and implement stronger oversight on lenders from the Department of Banking.
- Early voting: Following the 2020 presidential election, Pennsylvanians learned that our state’s election laws need to be modernized. To cut down on long wait times at the polls and ensure those who work on Election Day can cast their ballots, my bill would permit Pennsylvanians to vote up to 30 days before an election. Early voting would take place at the county board of elections and at designated polling places chosen by the county board.



- Increasing donations to the Veterans’ Trust Fund: The VTF provides grants to charitable and service organizations that help veterans thrive in the civilian world. To increase contributions, my legislation would create a space on individual tax returns to allow for donations of at least \$5.

I’ve also already signed on as a co-sponsor to 195 House bills and resolutions. Legislation I’m supporting includes strengthening the rights and inclusion of Pennsylvanians living with disabilities, property tax reform and fairly funding our commonwealth’s public education system.

Working for you in 2020

Last year was unique to say the least, but despite all of the mud that 2020 dredged up, I am proud of what my office accomplished for the residents of our community. My staff and I are happy to be of service and we will always keep fighting for the people of Delco through good times and bad.



Bringing home \$5 million last year

Throughout my first term, I worked hard to bring your tax dollars back to the district. In 2020, I'm pleased to share that I helped secure \$5 million to benefit residents from Radnor to Morton.

Grants that I've helped to secure from 2019-20 include financial support to strengthen schools' safety and security, fund volunteer first responders, prepare young adults to enter the workforce, protect our environment and so much more.

Here's just a glimpse of how state funding has helped neighborhoods throughout the 165th Legislative District:

- ✓ \$348,660 to provide local frontline health care workers with hazard pay.
- ✓ \$859,598 awarded to Delaware County Community College, Villanova University, Valley Forge Military College, Eastern University and Cabrini University to implement public health and safety plans so they may resume coursework.
- ✓ \$179,354 to benefit six local fire and emergency services organizations, helping offset the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ \$137,463 awarded to the Delaware County Workforce Development Board to provide seasonal internship opportunities through the State/Local Internship Program.
- ✓ \$425,000 to rehabilitate Marple Township's storm sewer system to prevent overflows which have caused sinkholes, flooding and deposition of sediment into Darby Creek.
- ✓ \$500,000 to restore and rehabilitate the Springfield Trail and Meadowgreen Park.

Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation Program Progression

Understanding the Programs & How to get Benefits

1. Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation – Up to 26 Weeks of Benefits

- Regular Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits are available to individuals who have lost their job or had hours reduced through no fault of their own and are found financially eligible. Visit www.uc.pa.gov and select "File an Initial Claim" to apply.
- Eligible to receive \$300/week (FPUC) until March 13, 2021 (beginning after December 26, 2020).

2. Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) – 24 Weeks

- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) becomes available after regular UC benefits are exhausted. Visit www.uc.pa.gov/PEUC to learn about applying.
- Weekly Benefit Amount based on regular unemployment claim.
- Eligible to receive \$300/week (FPUC) until March 13, 2021 (beginning after December 26, 2020).

3. Pennsylvania Extended Benefits (EB) – Up to 13 Weeks

- Extended Benefits becomes available after regular UC benefits and PEUC benefits are exhausted.

- Weekly Benefit Amount is based on regular unemployment claim.
- Number of Extended Benefit Weeks are typically 50 percent of the amount of regular UC claim weeks you were financially eligible to receive (e.g. regular UC claim eligibility for 23 weeks, means you'll receive 11.5 EB weeks of benefits.)
- There is no application, EB-eligible claimants will receive a letter in the mail after their PEUC claim is exhausted.
- EB claimants will simply file their weekly certification as they did for regular UC and PEUC.
- Eligible to receive \$300/week (FPUC) until March 13, 2021 (beginning after December 26, 2020).

4. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) – Up to 50 Weeks

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) is payable for weeks of unemployment, partial unemployment, or inability to work caused by one of the 11 COVID-19 related reasons set forth in the CARES Act, beginning on or after January 27, 2020. Visit www.uc.pa.gov/PUA to apply.
- Weekly Benefit Amount is based on 2019 taxes, 1099's, W-2, or any additional documentation that will verify 2019 earnings.
- Eligible to receive \$300/week (FPUC) until March 13, 2021 (beginning after December 26, 2020).

The U.S. Department of Labor directs the order of Unemployment Compensation programs. You will need to apply, and exhaust all benefits available under each of the programs before being eligible to apply for the next program.

If you have questions or need help, please reach out to our office at 610-544-9878 or email at RepOMara@pahouse.net

911 system upgrade

I know that many Delco residents experienced difficulties when calling 911 over the last several years. This is an issue that lawmakers from every edge of the county and across the aisle worked together to fix. Last December, we were proud to announce that \$1.5 million will be dedicated to this project.

This funding will strengthen the security and reliability of the county's public safety communication system. This includes 24 tower upgrades, shelter structures, an ice bridge, grounding, electric, HVAC, core work additions and 911 center equipment to communicate effectively in emergency situations with citizens, first responders and with surrounding counties in southeastern Pennsylvania. Thanks to this funding, new radios were recently distributed to our county's police force.

I was so proud to see legislators work together, Democratic and Republican, representatives and senators, to provide for our first responders and the people we represent.



REAL IDs are now available



October 1, 2021
is the deadline
to get a REAL ID.

Pennsylvanians will need a REAL ID to:



Board a domestic flight



Enter a federal building



Enter a military base

Ready for a REAL ID? Get pre-verified.

ONLINE

If you got your first license **AFTER** September 2003

IN PERSON

If you got your first license **BEFORE** September 2003

PennDOT.gov/REALID

PENNSYLVANIA AND THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE

As of the beginning of February, thousands of Pennsylvania's frontline healthcare workers and nursing home/long-term care facility residents have received the coronavirus vaccination.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health continues to provide updates on its vaccine distribution plan, which you can find at health.pa.gov.

Curious about when you will be able to receive the vaccine? According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, it might be several months until the public receives the vaccine, but my office will be sure to keep you updated as more information becomes available. I know this is a slow and confusing process, so I am doing all that I can to ensure vaccine distribution throughout Delco is efficient and those who are eligible can quickly be inoculated. My staff has received several questions regarding the vaccine's rollout and distribution order, but I encourage anyone seeking further information to consult the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

Veterans, did you know that you can get the coronavirus vaccine at the VA? Check out this FAQ for servicemen and women regarding the vaccine!



COVID-19 VACCINATION PHASES IN PENNSYLVANIA



Phase 1A

- Long-term care facility residents

Health care personnel including, but not limited to:

- Emergency medical service personnel
- Nurses
- Nursing assistants
- Physicians
- Dentists
- Dental hygienists
- Chiropractors
- Therapists
- Phlebotomists
- Pharmacists
- Technicians
- Pharmacy technicians
- Health professions students and trainees
- Direct support professionals
- Clinical personnel in school settings or correctional facilities
- Contractual HCP not directly employed by health care facility
- Persons not directly involved in patient care but potentially exposed to infectious material

- People age 65 and older
- People age 16-64 with high risk conditions causing increased risk for severe disease

Phase 1B

- People in congregate settings not otherwise specified as LTCF and persons receiving home and community-based services
- First responders
- Correctional officers and other workers serving people in congregate care settings not included in Phase 1A
- Food and agricultural workers
- U.S. Postal Service workers
- Manufacturing workers
- Grocery store workers
- Education workers
- Clergy and other essential support for houses of worship
- Public transit workers
- Individuals caring for children or adults in early childhood and adult day programs

Phase 1C

Essential workers in these sectors:

- Transportation and logistics
- Water and wastewater
- Food service
- Housing construction
- Finance, including bank tellers
- Information technology
- Communications
- Energy, including nuclear reactors
- Legal services
- Federal, state, county and local government workers, including county election workers, elected officials and members of the judiciary and their staff
- Media
- Public safety
- Public health workers

Phase 2

- All individuals not previously covered who are 16 and older and do not have a contraindication to the vaccine (note that at this time, only the Pfizer-BioNTech product is approved for those age 16 and 17)

This chart is accurate as of 2/01/2021, but is subject to change. Please visit health.pa.gov for the latest information regarding vaccine phases.

CAN I GET MY VACCINE AT THE VA?

If you are already receiving VA services: YES! Your level of personal risk will help determine when you can receive your vaccine. Veterans already receiving care through the VA should contact their nearest VA clinic for more information.

WHAT ABOUT RESIDENTS OF VETERANS HOMES?

Residents of the six PA Veterans Homes will have their vaccines arranged through the homes in the same phase as residents at all long-term-care facilities.

WHAT IF I'M NOT RECEIVING CARE THROUGH EITHER?

All other veterans should refer to Department of Health guidance to learn when vaccines will be available.

NOT ALREADY ENROLLED OR WANT MORE INFO?

Contact your local County Director of Veterans Affairs Office for assistance: bit.ly/2MWWWiR

HELPFUL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

We are almost one year into this pandemic, and I know that people are struggling. Whether you're in need of COVID-19 testing, food assistance or help with your rent or mortgage, help is available.

COVID-19 testing sites

Patient First

417 Baltimore Pike, Springfield, PA, 19064 | 484-470-2600

PM Pediatrics

527 Baltimore Pike, Springfield, PA, 19064 | 484-470-6767

Personic Health Care LLC

St. Kevin Community Parish Parking Lot, 200 W. Sproul Road, Springfield, PA, 19064
215-709-0254

Quest Diagnostics

1001 Baltimore Pike Ste 112, Springfield, PA 19064
1-866-MYQUEST

Main Line COVID Testing

1 N. Malin Road, Broomall, PA, 19008 | 484-450-6781

IM/Health

372 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne, PA, 19087 | 610-688-8807
Register online: <https://im-health.com>

Rite Aid

127 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne, PA, 19087 | 610-293-1496
Register online: <https://www.riteaid.com/pharmacy/services/covid-19-testing>

Delaware County COVID-19 Call Center

Delaware County recently opened a COVID-19 Call Center to answer questions from individuals, organizations, and businesses. Call 484-276-2100 Monday through Friday with questions about the vaccine, testing sites, quarantine guidelines or any other general coronavirus-related questions.



DELAWARE COUNTY'S
**COVID-19
CALL CENTER**

Call Center staff will assist residents with COVID-19-related questions including testing and vaccination.



MONDAY - FRIDAY | 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
(484) 276-2100

OR CONTACT US BY EMAIL
Covid19Resources@co.delaware.pa.us

PROTECT YOURSELF AND THOSE YOU LOVE FROM COVID-19

Housing

Legal Aid of Southeastern PA

LASP.org

877-429-5994

Legal Aid of Southeastern PA provides free, high-quality legal representation to low-income and vulnerable people living in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties. Representatives are available to help those in need with housing and eviction issues.

PA 211

uwp.org/programs/2-1-1/

Call 211 or text your zip code to 898-211

Calling or texting this United Way service connects you with a resource specialist who will provide you with information on community programs that could benefit you for free. Through 211, Pennsylvanians can connect with resources to help them cover utility bills, avoid homelessness and even job counseling and youth programs. They offer a wide variety of services and have helped individuals through many different crises.

Food assistance

Holy Cross Catholic Church

651 Springfield Road, Springfield, PA, 19064
610-626-3321

Shorter AME Church

111 Pennington Ave., Morton, PA, 19070
610-543-6773

Saint Mark's United Methodist Church

2220 S. Sproul Road, Broomall, PA, 19008
610-356-1199

Wayne United Methodist

210 Wayne Ave., Wayne, PA, 19087
610-688-5650

FREE MEDICARE COUNSELING AVAILABLE

If you have questions regarding Medicare, a counselor from APPRISE is available to help you better understand your health insurance options. APPRISE is the free State Health Insurance Program created to provide Medicare beneficiaries, and those who will soon be eligible for Medicare, with free, unbiased information.

To schedule an appointment, contact Apprise directly at (484) 494-3769.

Please note that during the pandemic all sessions will be held remotely.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Fireside chats

Join me on Facebook Live on Thursdays following a week of session to learn about what we accomplished in Harrisburg. I encourage viewers to submit questions that I will answer in real time!

Telephone Town Hall

Feb. 25, 7 p.m.

Participate in a town hall from the comfort of your home. I'll share information of legislative significance and answer your questions on how what happens in Harrisburg affects our community. Register your cell phone to receive the call by calling my office.

Pot of Luck Unclaimed Property Week

March 15 – 17

One in 10 Pennsylvanians has unclaimed property waiting for them. Find out if you're that lucky one and claim your pot of gold at the end of the rainbow during my St. Patrick's themed event.

Please note that this is a remote event. Call or email my office to begin your property search.

Spotted Lanternfly Virtual Town Hall

April 13, 6 p.m.

Join me and master gardeners from the Penn State Extension to learn how to identify spotted lanternfly eggs on your property and brace for their hatching in May. This event will be held on Facebook Live.

Shred Event

April 24

Securely dispose of your personal documents containing sensitive information at my free shred event. Details for this event are pending and I'm planning on hosting another one in the summertime. Follow me on social media for further information!

FOLLOW ME

   **@RepOMara and subscribe to my bi-weekly emails by visiting RepOMara.com for information on future events I'm planning!**