

State Representative

MIKE SCHLOSSBERG

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GREETINGS!

During the COVID-19 pandemic, information for services and assistance is in high demand. This newsletter is intended to provide you with commonly requested information about Pennsylvania and local agencies that can help you.

Of course, my office is here to help you with a variety of state government-related matters. If you aren't sure about something, just call and ask. We hope you have a safe and healthy winter.

HOW MY OFFICE CAN HELP

My office continues to be here to serve you, but we have to do it somewhat differently right now. If you need assistance with any state government-related matter, please call my office (610-821-5577). While we are working in the office, we are trying to limit the number of people in the office and are therefore requiring appointments. Still, we're learning that most of our services can be provided over the phone or through the mail. We can mail forms. We can complete forms and prepare for your signature. Please, before making a trip to the office, call so we can keep you as safe as possible.

PLEASE WEAR YOUR MASK

PENNSYLVANIA PHOTO IDENTIFICATION CARD

For a variety of reasons, people opt to stop driving. In Pennsylvania, it is possible to surrender your license before it expires and receive a free non-driver identification card if you



permanently surrender your driving privilege for health reasons that affect your ability to safely drive. If you have any interest in doing this or need assistance in obtaining a photo identification card from PennDOT, please contact my office by phone (610-821-5577). We'll be happy to get you the form to complete and give directions to make sure you get your replacement identification quickly.

REAL ID DELAYED BY PANDEMIC

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced it would delay the implementation of REAL ID until October 1, 2021. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, PennDOT paused REAL ID processing at its Driver License Centers but has resumed processing. Same-day, over-the-counter REAL ID processing is available at the PennDOT Driver License Center at 1101 MacArthur Road in Whitehall during normal operations. Check with my office (610-821-5577) before going to make sure circumstances have not changed.



Beginning on October 1, 2021, REAL ID-compliant identification will be required for boarding a domestic airline flight, entering a federal building or visiting a military base. If you plan to utilize your Pennsylvania photo identification or driver's license, you will need to take steps to upgrade to REAL ID. A U.S. Passport is considered REAL ID. REAL ID is not needed for driving, voting or general identification purposes.



PROPERTY TAX RENT REBATE DEADLINE EXTENDED

The deadline for Pennsylvania's 2019 Property Tax/Rent Rebate has been extended to December 31, 2020 and my office is ready to help you file.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is open to:

- Eligible seniors 65 or older;
- Widows and widowers 50 or older; and
- People with permanent disabilities 18 or older.

To qualify, applicants must earn less than \$35,000 per year (for homeowners) or \$15,000 per year (for renters) – and only HALF of Social Security or railroad retirement income counts toward eligibility. Residents of assisted living facilities may be eligible if they reside in a facility which pays property taxes and meet the income limits for renters.

We've learned that we can help most people with the rebate forms over the phone. Call my Allentown office at 610-821-5577 to get started, set up an appointment or request the forms to file on your own.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS

LANTA BUS PASSES FOR SENIORS

LANTA provides free fares to seniors 65 or older to ride city transit buses (not LANTAVan/Metro Plus vans). To apply for a Senior ID card, give my office a call and we'll mail you an application or download an application at www.lantabus.com/lanta-senior-citizen-id-card.



SEPTA SENIOR PASS

Do you use the SEPTA regional rail or bus system while traveling in the Philadelphia metro area? If you are 65 or older, you can do so for FREE using the SEPTA Senior Fare Card. This includes all transit routes (bus, trolley, trackless trolley, Broad Street/Broad Ridge Spur, Market Frankford Line/Norristown High Speed Line). To apply, call my office to make an appointment. Applications must be done in person so we can take a picture. SEPTA will process the application and mail a Senior Fare Card to you directly. Please plan on giving yourself 2-3 weeks before you make your next trip to ensure adequate processing time.

RETIREE DISCOUNTED REGISTRATION

PennDOT offers a \$10 reduced registration for retirees who earn less than \$19,200 per year. This includes all income from Social Security, retirement benefits such as pensions and annuities and any other earnings such as capital gains, dividends, interest, unemployment and life insurance/death benefits. If you think you qualify for the discount, give my office a call (610-821-5577). There is a special form that needs to be submitted. If you have received this discount in the past, your registration renewal form will ask to verify your income.

SURRENDERING LICENSE PLATES

It is important to know license plates on a car may continue to be your responsibility even after transferring the title. This means you may be responsible for anything that happens with that license plate, including things like parking tickets or tolls.

When selling a car, if you don't plan to reuse the license plate, the safest thing to do is to retain possession of the license plate and return it to PennDOT through my Allentown office. We'll ensure safe delivery to PennDOT at no expense to you. If you have any questions about a plate you still hold, please give my office a call (610-821-5577).

PENNDOT

Assistance for those Seeking Disability Parking Placard

My office often helps people obtain a disability placard from PennDOT. Did you know, even if you don't have a car or driver's license, you can still have a disability placard? If somebody is giving you a ride to the grocery store or the doctor, you can still have the placard available for your use on those trips. For more information, contact my office at 610-821-5577 to learn more about obtaining a free disability placard. My office can also help by submitting placard renewal requests and replacing lost/damaged placards.



Reminder: Keep your disability placard ID with your photo identification or driver's license just in case you are asked to produce proof that you are the owner of the placard.

UNUSED MEDICATION DISPOSAL

Drop boxes for unused medications have been installed at police departments throughout the region. In the 132nd District, this includes:

- Allentown Police Department, 1005 W. Hamilton St., Allentown. Open 24 hours, 7 days a week.
- The South Whitehall Township Police Department is temporarily unavailable for medication disposal while the municipal complex is under construction, but will resume collections when work is complete.

Items that are accepted are prescription and over-the-counter medications, samples, vitamins, prescription ointments, prescription patches and pet medications.

Items that are NOT accepted are syringes, needles, sharps or other sharp objects, medications from businesses and clinics, lotions or liquids, aerosol cans, inhalers, hydrogen peroxide and thermometers.



PHONE ASSISTANCE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED

CAPTION TELEPHONE RELAY SERVICE

Captioned Telephone (CapTel) is a service that allows a user to read word-for-word captions of what's said to them during phone conversations. Through the use of a uniquely designed CapTel phone, users speak directly to the other person and listen while reading what's said to them on an easy-to-read display screen. CapTel is available at low or no cost through Hamilton Relay. It is a program of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. To obtain a CapTel phone, call 888-267-7477 or visit www.pactrs.com.

PENNSYLVANIA RELAY

PA Relay makes it possible for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or have difficulty speaking to make and receive telephone calls. When you connect with PA Relay, an assistant will facilitate your call promptly, professionally, accurately and confidentially. Calls are conducted through the use of an assistive communications device such as a TTY, deaf-blind communicator or other specialized equipment. PA Relay is a program of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission with the service provided by Hamilton Relay.

To place a call, simply dial 711 or call from a TTY (800-654-5984) or voice phone (800-654-5988).



LEGAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

My office frequently gets calls requesting legal advice about a variety of issues important to seniors. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide legal advice of any kind, but the PA Department of Aging helps to fund organizations that do. Below are some of those organizations, which you can call or visit their website to review information they have already researched for your benefit.

PA SeniorLAW Helpline

1-877-PA SR LAW (1-877-727-7529)

www.seniorlawcenter.org

North Penn Legal Services

1-877-953-4250

www.NorthPennLegal.org

PA Legal Aid Network

Phone inquiries should be directed to North Penn Legal Services

www.palegalaid.net

PA Law Help

Phone inquiries not available

www.palawhelp.org

PINEBROOK WARMLINE FOR LEHIGH COUNTY ADULTS

Social distancing and staying home are important ways to slow the spread of COVID-19. For many residents, keeping distance from other people during stressful times can create feelings of loneliness and isolation. Pinebrook Family Services, a Lehigh County nonprofit organization, offers a Warmline (610-820-8451) for adults challenged by loneliness, isolation, stress and anxiety or who need information about available services. Staff members offer Warmline callers someone to listen and care about the caller's feelings. Workers aren't counselors, but are trained to actively listen, provide referral support and assist Warmline callers. Warmline accepts calls between 6 AM and 2 AM seven days a week. Staff does not discriminate based on age, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

FREE CREDIT REPORT

My office receives many calls about how consumers can get credit reports.

These reports can have an impact on employment and your ability to buy a home, car or insurance.

Thanks to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, you are entitled to receive a free credit report from each of the three nationwide credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) every 12 months.

You can order your credit report from all three credit agencies at the same time or spread those requests over the course of the year to better monitor your credit. These reports will not include your credit score.

Be cautious of websites that claim to offer free credit reports. Some of these sites will only give you a free report if you buy other products or services. Others give you a free report and then bill you for services you have to cancel.

When you apply online, you should be aware that you will be asked questions for security reasons.

THREE FREE WAYS TO GET YOUR CREDIT REPORT

- 1) Online at www.annualcreditreport.com.
- 2) By phone at 1-877-322-8228.
- 3) By mail, just print out the form available online and send it to:
Annual Credit Report Request Services
P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta GA 30348-5281.

MY OFFICE HAS THESE FORMS AVAILABLE. CALL 610-821-5577 AND WE'LL MAIL THEM TO YOU.



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2021 SENIOR FAIR

One of the biggest disappointments for 2020 was having to cancel the annual senior fair I host with Rep. Peter Schweyer. We enjoy being able to share information about state government and nonprofit agencies, catching up with friends and answering questions you might have. Unfortunately, given the uncertainty of the pandemic and wanting to ensure safety, the Senior Fair for 2021 will not be held in May. We are not canceling entirely, but we know the planning required to host it in May presents too many challenges. We hold some hope that we might be able to host one in the fall of 2021, but it is too soon to say right now.



Keep an eye out for my late summer newsletter for an announcement.