



Winter  
2022

State Representative | 157th Legislative District

# MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN

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## NEW LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS

Every 10 years, following the U.S. Census, the boundaries of Pennsylvania's state House and Senate districts are redrawn to maintain equal representation based on population growth – to ensure that everyone's vote counts equally. This important reapportionment process is underway now.

Pennsylvania's state House of Representatives and Senate districts are drawn by a Legislative Reapportionment Commission, as required by the Pennsylvania state constitution. Pennsylvania is divided into 50 Senate and 203 House of Representatives seats.

The commission consists of five members: the four caucus floor leaders, or deputies appointed by each of them, and a chairman selected by those members or, if they cannot reach agreement, by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

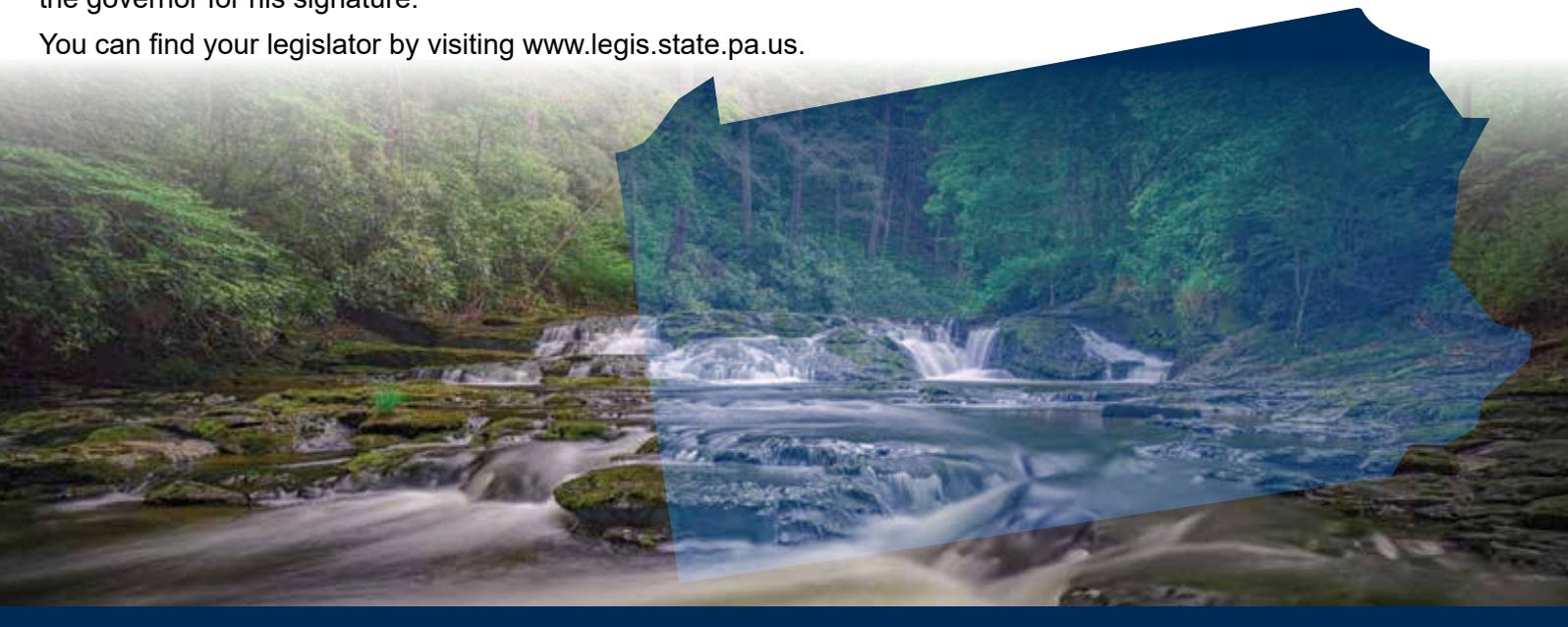
The Pennsylvania constitution requires that districts be composed of compact and contiguous territory of nearly equal population. It also stipulates that no county, city, incorporated town, borough, township or ward should be divided unless absolutely necessary.

The final maps will be used for the 2022 elections.

To view the preliminary maps and learn more about the reapportionment process, visit the commission's website at [www.redistricting.state.pa.us](http://www.redistricting.state.pa.us).

U.S. Congressional districts will also be updated ahead of the 2022 election. Congressional redistricting is done by legislative action, where the new districts are proposed in a bill, considered by the General Assembly and sent to the governor for his signature.

You can find your legislator by visiting [www.legis.state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us).



# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## STUDENT INCLUSION BILL

Last fall, I co-sponsored legislation that would make sure students with exceptionalities are involved in all aspects of school, including all before- and after-school events. On average, 17% of Pennsylvania students have an Individualized Education Program, but many report no integration into extracurricular activities. The bill would amend the School Code to require schools to report the participation rate for students with exceptionalities in their extracurricular activities starting in sixth grade. Schools would not collect personal information. The information gathered would help the commonwealth identify any areas of concern that could be addressed either through state or local action.

## EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE BILL

Many in Pennsylvania are still struggling and in need of emergency financial relief. To help those in need, I co-sponsored a bill to reinstate funding previously provided through the General Assistance program. Eliminating the General Assistance program has had a negative effect on thousands of Pennsylvanians who were relying on that temporary help to achieve stability and self-sufficiency. This bill would help those Pennsylvanians pay for life's basic needs, toiletries, transportation, shelter, utilities or medication. It would once again provide \$200 on average a month to those who were unable to work, those caring for loved ones who were sick or disabled, veterans, women fleeing domestic violence and adults receiving substance abuse treatment.

## SMALL PLASTIC BOTTLE BAN BILL

The world produces about 300 tons of plastic per year and only recycles 9%. Nearly 150 tons of this plastic is for single-use items. To help prevent significant plastic waste, I am the prime sponsor on legislation to ban small plastic bottles in lodging establishments. This bill would prohibit establishments from offering guests personal care items in small plastic bottles. This move would not only be good for the environment, but it would also save businesses money, by opting for bulk dispensers for personal care items. Across our commonwealth and our country, we face significant challenges in recycling plastic materials. I believe that simple, money-saving solutions like this bill would help make a substantial impact. Consumers and businesses alike can benefit from reducing single-use plastics and establishing more sustainable standards for travel and lodging.

*To view all legislation, I have sponsored or co-sponsored, and to view my voting record, please visit [www.legis.state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us).*

## HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE

Applications for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are now open. LIHEAP helps families living on low incomes pay their heating bills in the form of a cash grant. Households in immediate danger of being without heat can also qualify for crisis grants. The cash grant is a one-time payment sent directly to the utility company/fuel provider to be credited on your bill. These grants range from \$500 to \$1,500 based on household size, income, and fuel type. Remember, this is a grant and does not have to be repaid. There are two ways to apply for LIHEAP. Submit applications online using COMPASS, or my office can provide a paper application to be returned to the Department of Human Services. You can contact my office at (484) 200-8260 or visit: <https://bit.ly/3GOhE34>



# PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND ELECTION REFORM BILLS

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**H.B. 2207:** A proposed constitutional amendment that would change the reapportionment process. It would dissolve the Legislative Reapportionment Commission. Instead, an 11-member citizens commission would create our maps. This amendment does not ask for public input. It would not provide constituent drawn maps and it would not require public hearings. After a map is selected, if the House majority does not like the proposed map, they can vote and approve their own map with a simple majority without getting approval from the Senate or governor. This proposed process would serve the politicians in power and not the people of this commonwealth.

**H.B. 38:** Another proposed constitutional amendment that would change the way we elect appellate judges. This bill would create seven geographic districts, making the courts more partisan and less representative of the commonwealth as a whole. Instead of being able to vote for candidates for each of the 31 appellate seats, voters would only be able to vote for three, one Supreme Court judge, one Superior Court judge, and one Commonwealth Court judge. Having a fair and independent court is a major keystone of our democracy, and we should keep the courts out of the hands of politicians and leave the decision to the voters statewide.

**H.B. 2044:** Would further attempt to manipulate our election system. This bill would hinder our county election boards from facilitating free and fair elections and would significantly reduce funding for elections in the biggest counties of the state. This bill was introduced with the intent to make it more difficult for “voters in blue counties” to vote, as revealed by supporters of the bill during the House chamber debate. All citizens 18 or older have the right to vote, regardless of where they live or party affiliation. Our democracy rests on elections that are fair, accessible, and funded for all, not only for some. Let’s make sure we keep them that way. In December, I voted against this bill.

**S.B. 106:** Aims to amend the state constitution in several ways, including:

- Reducing the power of the Secretary of State by putting the General Assembly in charge of election audits and requiring the Auditor General to conduct the audits.
- Requiring voters to present ‘valid identification.’
- Limiting executive orders or proclamations by the Governor or executive agency to 21 days without the approval of the General Assembly.
- Allowing the General Assembly to veto regulations.
- Changing the role of the Lieutenant Governor, allowing for the Lieutenant Governor to be chosen jointly with the Governor.

The House of Representatives is a place where the voices of all Pennsylvanians should be heard. Individuals with competing ideas coming together to make legislation that improves lives of ALL Pennsylvanians is what democracy is all about. These bills go directly against this value. The majority party in Harrisburg has decided that, instead of working for all Pennsylvanians, they would rather rig the rules in their favor, so they only cater to the extreme few. The House of Representatives is the People’s House, not the house of the few powerful majority leaders.

The fact is these rule changes do not reflect the values of anyone in my district. My office takes calls daily from Democrats and Republicans in opposition to these power-grab rule changes that would bring an end to our democracy. I will continue to oppose any bill that would weaken our democracy.

# \$1.2 MILLION IN GRANT FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION AND PARK PROJECTS

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources recently awarded Community Conservation Partnership Program grants totaling \$1,165,000 to three projects in Chester County. The grants will be used to improve parks, create a countywide trail, and update the county's River Conservation Plan.

This funding will have a lasting impact on our communities. When we invest in developing green spaces, we invest in the health and wellbeing of everyone in our community. I am thankful that we have secured this funding and will now be able to invest in our region's future.

The grants are:

- Tredyffrin Township, \$1,025,000: For the rehabilitation and further development of Wilson Farm Park. Work to include renovation of amphitheater, seating area, pavilions, concession stand, baseball field and pond area; construction of spray park, tennis and pickleball courts, pedestrian walkways and stormwater management measures; installation of play equipment with required safety surfacing, lighting and utilities; ADA access, landscaping, project sign and other related site improvements.
- Chester County, \$60,000: To prepare a Countywide Trail Plan for Chester County.
- Chester County Commissioners Water Resource Authority, \$80,000: To prepare an update to the 2002 River Conservation Plan for multiple watersheds in Chester County.

In 2021, we were able to bring \$5.5 million in state funding back to the 157th District. Here's a look at the investments we made into our community this year:

**INVESTMENTS**  
*in Our Community*

**Tredyffrin RACP - \$2,000,000**

**Senior Housing Tax Credit - \$1,200,000**

**Rehabilitation and Development of Wilson Farm Park - \$1,025,000**

**Valley Forge National Historical Park Paving - \$690,000**

**Upper Providence Township Roadway Improvements - \$212,330**

**Historic Phila Inc. - \$150,000**

**River Conservation Plan Update for Multiple Chester County Watersheds - \$80,000**

**Chester County Trail Plan - \$60,000**

**Phoenixville PCCD - \$58,726**

**Phoenixville Senior Center HVAC System - \$50,000**

**Mt. Zion AME Church - \$35,000**



# AROUND THE DISTRICT



*Phoenixville School Board Members: Blake Emmanuel, Christopher Caltagirone, and Jeeseley Soto.*



*675 pounds of donations collected for Phoenixville Area Community Services! Thank you to Senator Carolyn Comitta for co-hosting this great event and thank you to all who donated.*



*Tredyffrin/Eastown School District Board Members Rev. Scott Dorsey, Rev. Kyle Boyer, Tina Whitlow, and Mary Garrett Itin.*



*Each year, my office comes together to host a veterans appreciation event with the help of several local individuals and organizations. This is a longstanding tradition in the 157th District, and I feel fortunate for the opportunity to continue it.*



*Phoenixville Fire Department Volunteer (of 50 years!) David Meadows.*



*A Phoenixville staple, Larry's Tailor Shop, owned by Larry Buruschkin and his family, is commemorated for many successful years of business. The shop and Larry's exceptional service will be sorely missed!*



State Representative  
**MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN**

42 E. Lancaster Ave., Unit A  
Paoli, PA 19301

## Keeping Up with Shusterman!

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 RepShusterman.com

lpo.ad.0122



*Retiring Schuylkill Township Police Chief James Fetterman with an official House citation. Thank you, Chief Fetterman, for your devoted years of service to our community!*

# Dear Neighbor,

As is the case every 10 years, the state's redistricting and reapportionment process is underway, and I have more about the process in this newsletter. It is an honor representing you. I promise to continue working for you and everyone in this legislative district.

Enclosed, you will find multiple resources that I hope will be useful to you, a recap of my legislative priorities, and my thoughts on some of the legislation that could drastically alter our elections and our democracy. Please remember, I am here to work for you. My office can help you with any state-related matter. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

**Rep. Melissa Shusterman**

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Website: RepShusterman.com/contact