



State Representative | 157th Legislative District

MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN



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Fall
2023

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Dear Neighbor,

In only six months, the House passed more than 100 BIPARTISAN bills focused on important issues that affect all Pennsylvanians. From guaranteeing the right to organize, improving workplace protections, raising the minimum wage, to investing in our schools, funding mental health services, and improving community safety, House Democrats are committed to working for you!

The House spent much of the summer fighting for a state budget that was fair for all and after some unnecessary delays by the state Senate, we can proudly say we have a budget that works for all Pennsylvanians. This budget takes important steps in the right direction, including:

EDUCATION - Basic Ed, Special Ed, and Level Up: \$717 million increase. School food services: \$46 million increase for universal free breakfast & free lunch expansion. Career and technical education: \$23.5 million increase. Community colleges: \$5.1 million increase.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - Historically Disadvantaged Business Assistance: \$20 million in new funding. Whole Home Repairs: \$50 million in new funding.

HELPING SENIORS - House Bill 1100 was also signed into law, which expands the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. Starting in 2024, income limits for applicants will be raised to \$45,000, and for those who qualify, rebates will increase to \$1,000.



The 2023/24 Budget
Increases Funding for Schools in our Community



Tredyffrin-Easttown School District	\$7.8 million (10.9% ↑)
Great Valley School District	\$5.6 million (9.7% ↑)
Phoenixville School District	\$8.6 million (9.9% ↑)

REPRESENTATIVE SHUSTERMAN

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is Getting Better

575,000 seniors will qualify for a Property Tax/Rent Rebate with a top rebate of **\$1000.**

Helping more seniors stay in their homes.



NEW DISTRICT OFFICE STAFF

I want to wish a very warm welcome to my newest staffer, Summer Cirino. Summer recently graduated from American University in Washington, D.C., where she majored in Political Science and Spanish. She loves chatting with constituents and event planning, which are tremendous assets for our district office!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

SPENDING TAXPAYER DOLLARS RESPONSIBLY

Women have the right to unbiased, professional health care but for decades, Pennsylvania taxpayer dollars have funded deceptive Crisis Pregnancy Centers. These organizations lure pregnant people to their facilities with the promise of prenatal care. However, CPCs have no obligation to provide medically accurate information or even present all available health care options, with the aim of pressuring individuals into not having an abortion.

In a major victory for Pennsylvanians, Gov. Josh Shapiro announced that the state will allow its contract with Real Alternatives, a prominent crisis pregnancy services organization, to expire in December and will, instead, seek bids from medical providers to receive state funding to address women's health needs. This ends a 30-year misuse of taxpayer dollars to fund crisis pregnancy centers.

Like Gov. Shapiro, I am unequivocal in my commitment to keeping abortion and all reproductive health services safe, legal, and accessible in Pennsylvania. Thank you to Governor Shapiro and my House colleagues for supporting my legislation (H.B. 1118) to end state funding to these dangerous centers for good.



WHITE HOUSE VISIT

I was honored to join fellow State Rep. Jennifer O'Mara, State Sen. Judy Schwank, and legislators from 41 states at the White House to discuss our nation's childcare crisis. Our roundtable discussion highlighted successful legislation and programs that help families make ends meet and find quality childcare. First Lady Dr. Jill Biden also provided words of encouragement; it's reassuring to know that state legislators who are working to move families forward have support at the highest level of our government.



PATIENT SAFETY ACT PASSED

Nurses are some of the hardest-working people in the world, but strained health care resources have made their jobs even more difficult. The House stood for nurses and their patients by passing H.B. 106, the Patient Safety Act, with bipartisan support. This bill would require PA hospitals and nursing homes to maintain safe staffing levels to protect everyone's health and enable nurses to provide the quality care all patients deserve.



PROTECTING STUDENT JOURNALISM

A free press is fundamental to safeguarding our democracy. Students have unique insight and report on often overlooked stories that are important to our communities. That's why I've been working with State Sen. Carolyn Comitta and students from across the commonwealth on the Student Journalism Protection Act (H.B. 1309/S.B. 622). Currently, Pennsylvania's education regulations ensure students have the right to express themselves but still allow principals and school administrators to review and have the final say on pieces of student journalism. Our legislation would allow school districts to

implement policies that place administrative review of student publications and communications in the hands of student editors to help ensure journalistic integrity.

I have a lot of hope for in the next generation of young people because they are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in. Thank you to Conestoga High School Spoke journalists for making their voices heard at the Capitol in support of this vital legislation.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS



SUMMER INTERNS

This summer, my office was delighted to be joined by interns Suzie Ahn and Alexander Hallam. Suzie is attending Georgetown University, where she is double majoring in Government and Psychology. Alexander is studying International Affairs with a concentration in Conflict Resolution at George Washington University. And they are also both Conestoga alums!

They have been hard at work researching legislation for constituents and planning upcoming events in our district. They also spent the day in Harrisburg, where they sat in on Judiciary and Health committee hearings, then observed debate and voting on the House floor!

COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

Throughout the summer, our community saw an unsettling uptick in antisemitic activity. Nazis shamefully attempted to intimidate and harass residents throughout Chesco and Delco with hateful graffiti, flags, and leaflets. I am very thankful that our strong-knit community has been outspoken on this issue and will not tolerate such hatred and bigotry.

Our community's proactive response has been heartening. I had the opportunity to meet with T/E Jewish Connections, led by Board Chair Dr. Julie Gosse. The group worked with supervisors from both Tredyffrin and Easttown township to pass resolutions condemning antisemitism and all forms of hate. T/E Connections also held a well-attended rally in Chesterbrook, where antisemitic graffiti was discovered. Young people in our community are also leading the way; student journalists for the Conestoga Spoke wrote a detailed piece about recent activities to raise awareness.

I am proud that we have come together as a community and as a legislator, I will continue to fight for the safety of our families. In Harrisburg, I joined the newly formed Jewish Caucus and co-sponsored State Rep. Dan Frankel's package of anti-hate legislation that will strengthen and modernize Pennsylvania's hate crime laws.

SUMMER VETERANS BARBEQUE

Thank you to everyone who attended my Annual Veteran's Barbeque and made it a great success. It was an honor to meet so many veterans and their families.

My gratitude goes to the Office of U.S. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, Chester County Veteran Affairs, Surrey Services for Seniors Veterans Group, Legal Aid of Southeastern PA, Community Volunteers in Medicine, and TriCare for providing valuable information about benefits and services for veterans.

Special thanks to the Valley Forge Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for leading the pledge of allegiance and keeping everyone cool with refreshing water ice!

I look forward to seeing you all in the fall for our Veteran's Breakfast on Thursday, Nov. 9!





VISITING DIAMOND ROCK ANIMAL REHAB

I had the privilege of visiting the Diamond Rock Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic in Malvern with my summer interns Suzie Ahn and Alexander Hallam. The Director and Founder, Deb Welter, shared how she became involved in animal rehabilitation and her goals for the clinic. She is extremely devoted to caring for animals and seeing her bats up close was amazing!

As the founder and co-chair of the bipartisan, bicameral Animal Protection Caucus, I hope to support nonprofit rehabilitation clinics such as Diamond Rock through legislation and public education. We are so grateful for Deb and all her efforts to save wildlife in our community!



ELMWOOD PARK ZOO

My staff and I also visited Elmwood Park Zoo to learn about their new animal hospital, which will open in May 2024. The new animal hospital will feature viewing areas so the public can watch basic animal examinations and procedures. The addition of the hospital will also allow the zoo to expand its North American large cat habitats and provide University of Pennsylvania veterinary students a rare opportunity for hands-on experience.

More than 80% of the animals at Elmwood Park Zoo were rescued and would not survive on their own. These exhibits are valuable tools for education and species survival. The next generation of veterinarians might be inspired by Elmwood today. That's why I am proud that the Animal Protection Caucus works with these organizations that focus on rescue and rehabilitation to ensure they have resources to continue their important work.



COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Recently, I welcomed the community to join me at Easttown Library for coffee and conversation. The turnout was fantastic, and the discussion was decidedly lively. We touched upon school vouchers, the rise in antisemitism, open primaries, and even inheritance tax. Thank you to everyone who attended.

I look forward to meeting more of you on September 19th, when we will have one-on-one conversations about the government issues that personally matter most to you!

SAVE THE DATE!



SEPTEMBER
19

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Easttown Library | 10 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Join me at **Easttown Library** for one-on-one conversations about the state government issues that matter most to you! Grab a PA coloring book for the kids, sign up for a Senior SEPTA pass, and learn about the services my office can provide for you!



OCTOBER
07

SHREDDING & CANNED FOOD DRIVE

Penn State Great Valley | 30 E. Swedesford Rd.
9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Dispose of unwanted documents ecologically & securely at my FREE shredding event! The **Chester County Food Bank** will also be on hand to accept much needed canned food donations.



OCTOBER
10

AN EVENING AT JENKINS ARBORETUM

Jenkins Arboretum | 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Join me for an evening stroll through the **Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens**, followed by a talk about gardening with native plants led by Executive Director Tom Smarr. Learn tips for gardening in our region and resources for gardening with natives. We'll conclude the evening with state government Q&A. All ages encouraged to attend!



NOVEMBER
09

ANNUAL VETERANS' BREAKFAST

Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge
9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Veterans are invited to my Annual Veterans' Breakfast at the **Freedoms Foundation** at Valley Forge. Enjoy a nutritious breakfast & stay for a chat! Representatives from several veterans' organizations will be available to answer any questions you may have! RSVP required.



State Representative
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Keeping Up with Shusterman!

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DISTRICT OFFICE SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE PA-157
MELISSA SHUSTERMAN
Working for you!

WE CAN HELP!

- Senior SEPTA Key Cards
- Tax & PennDOT Forms
- Property Tax & Rent Rebates
- Disability Plates & Placards
- Birth & Death Certificates
- Unclaimed Property
- Driver's Licenses & Vehicle Registration
- Other State Government Services

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Office Services

My district office in Paoli is ready to help! If you need assistance with any state-related issues, you can contact my office at (484) 200-8260 or email RepShusterman@pahouse.net.

DEADLINE EXTENDED
DUE DECEMBER 31

PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE PROGRAM DEADLINE

What you need to provide:

EVERYONE
All earned income tax forms (1099 SSI, W2s, etc.)

HOMEOWNERS
Copies of all paid tax bills

RENTERS
Signed form from the landlord

\$35,000
household income for homeowners

&

\$15,000
household income for renters

For those on Social Security: half of SSI/SSD income is excluded for eligibility

Rent Rebate

The PA Property Tax / Rent Rebate deadline has been extended until December 31, 2023. Please contact my office at (484) 200-8260 if you need a form or assistance!