



State Representative | 157th Legislative District

MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN



District Office:

42 E. Lancaster Ave., Unit A | Paoli, PA 19301 | (484) 200-8260

Capitol Office:

114 Irvis Office Building | P.O. Box 202157 | Harrisburg, PA 17120-2157 | (717) 787-7524

Winter
2024

📡 RepShusterman.com | @RepShusterman

Dear Neighbor,

Greetings neighbors! I am thrilled to announce that 2023 was an incredibly successful year for the 157th Legislative District. My office was able to help more people than ever with their questions and state government needs – in fact, we helped almost 5,000 of you! We were particularly delighted that over 500 seniors visited our office for a SEPTA pass.

On the legislative front, being in the House Majority matters! During the 2023 session, I introduced or co-sponsored 49 bills, seven of which passed the House and TWO bills were enacted into law. HB 1259 was folded into the Fiscal Code bill passed by the General Assembly and signed in to law by Gov. Shapiro to become the expanded Child & Dependent Care Enhancement Tax Credit. The work of HB 1118 was completed by the Shapiro administration when they terminated state funding of crisis pregnancy centers.

While it is always satisfying to look back and celebrate our achievements, there is still more work to be done for the people of Pennsylvania. Looking ahead, we are excited to continue serving our community and making 2024 another successful year for the 157th Legislative District.

2023-24 BUDGET FINALIZED

At the end of 2023, Governor Shapiro signed Act 34 into law, a bipartisan package of fiscal bills that completed the 2023 state budget. This means more money for our schools, safer communities, smart criminal justice reform, and expansion of the child and dependent care tax credit. This will put more money back into the pockets of working families.

JOBS/APPRENTICESHIPS

■ \$23.5 million was earmarked for workforce training and vo-tech programs to prepare students for family-sustaining skilled trade careers and \$6 million for pre/apprenticeship programs so Pennsylvanians can earn-while-they-learn.

EDUCATION FUNDING

■ The Tredyffrin-Easttown, Great Valley, and Phoenixville School Districts saw an average increase of 10.1% in funding received from the state thanks to the 2023-24 budget.

■ The PA State System of Higher Education institutions, as well as community colleges, also saw an increase in funding.

EXPANDED PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE

■ The income eligibility limit for both homeowners and renters is now \$45,000, and the maximum rebate has been increased to \$1,000, enabling more people to afford basic necessities and stay in their homes.

Property Tax / Rent Rebate 2024 Program Expansion
 MORE people eligible, MORE money back!

Homeowner & Renter Income	Max Rebate
Up to \$8K	\$1,000
Up to \$15K	\$770
Up to \$18K	\$460
Up to \$45K	\$380

REPRESENTATIVE SHUSTERMAN

INVESTMENT in Our Community

\$4,019,581

State grants awarded to the 157th District throughout 2023.

Grants

157th District AWARDED IN 2023

- \$2,200,000 - Tredyffrin Township
- \$800,000 - The Timothy School
- \$486,226 - Willistown Township
- \$300,000 - Valley Forge Sewer Authority
- \$200,000 - Easttown Township
- \$19,941 - Surrey Services for Seniors
- \$13,414 - Historic Sugartown

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

GOVERNOR SHAPIRO TOUTS TAX CREDIT IN BERWYN

I was honored to welcome Gov. Shapiro to our district to celebrate the expansion of the Child & Dependent Care Enhancement Tax Credit. This tax credit will put money into the pockets of working families by relieving some of the financial burden of childcare. Expansion of the tax credit is a personal matter for me. When I was raising my son as a single, working mother, access to reliable and high-quality childcare was critical for me to pursue my career and provide a better life for us. Representative Tina Davis and I initially introduced this legislation, and it took a coalition of legislators, working parents, and business chambers led by Laura Manion of the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry to make it a reality. Incorporating this tax credit in the Fiscal Code means that working women are being SEEN for their important economic role in our Commonwealth.



TACKLING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Many young people are facing homelessness due to various factors that are entirely out of their control. This situation can have a devastating effect, especially on young individuals who are still developing and trying to find their place in the world. As a result, my colleagues and I have introduced several bills (HB 127, HB 729, HB 730, HB 1175) to provide youth with the necessary resources to learn, be safe, and succeed. I introduced HB 1175 for colleges, which would create an on-campus pilot program to ensure homeless students have access to secure housing, food, laundry facilities, technology, and other services. This initiative aims to enable them to concentrate on completing their education without having to worry about basic needs.

UNIFORM FAMILY LAW ARBITRATION ACT

A constituent in my district was going through a messy divorce because her ex-husband had the means to manipulate our legal system. Through an extraordinary number of court filings, court dates, and legal fees, he continued to harass his former partner. This kept her from work, from her education, and - most importantly - away from raising their daughter. None of this benefited their child or aided the legal process. It only added an extra and unnecessary burden on our already strained family court system. Sadly, this is very similar to my own personal experience.



I testified before the State Senate Judiciary Committee urging them to pass HB 917, legislation I introduced because Pennsylvanians should have a choice in how they settle their family disputes. The Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act will level the legal playing field, saving families time and money, while reducing stress on our court system and our children.

COMMONSENSE GUN LEGISLATION

The House Judiciary Committee recently voted to advance a package of five commonsense gun bills, including my legislation, HB 1190, which would update our laws to regulate 3D-printed guns like standard firearms. This legislation is essential to reducing gun violence in our communities and will give law enforcement the tools they need to keep our families safe. These bills have been sent to the full House for a vote.

ANTI-HATE CRIME LEGISLATION

One look at the headlines, and it's evident that hate crimes are on the rise. These crimes aimed at individuals based on their race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic, have devastating effects on the victims and their communities. Everyone has the right to live each day without fear. That's why I voted for a package of Anti-Hate Crime legislation (HBs 1024, 1025, 1027) that would add penalties for perpetrators if a crime is motivated by hate. I also voted to invest in the safety of our communities by increasing security funding (HB 1772) for groups that may be targeted.

PENNSYLVANIA'S NEW WOMEN'S SERVICE PROGRAM

The PA Dept. of Human Services has launched a new statewide program dedicated to providing accessible and inclusive health care to pregnant and parenting women. The Women's Service Program will receive funds formerly allocated to deceptive crisis pregnancy centers. Since 1995, unregulated crisis pregnancy centers received over \$135 million in taxpayer dollars and yet did not provide adequate medical care services, nor contraceptive care, to the women of PA. Moving forward, for Chester County and the SEPA region, the Maternity Care Coalition will be granted these state funds to provide reproductive health services. This is a huge victory for women in PA and I am proud that legislation I introduced, HB 1118, was a catalyst for getting women the care they really need.

ABORTION SHIELD BILL - HB 1786

Since the Supreme Court Dobbs decision, women living in states with abortion bans have been forced to travel to other states to access essential healthcare. Rep. Mary Jo Daley and I were prime sponsors of HB 1786, which would protect patients and reproductive healthcare providers in Pennsylvania from out-of-state prosecution. This bill passed with bipartisan support and is a significant victory for women, as it has been more than a decade since the PA House passed legislation to safeguard abortion rights.



NO PELVIC EXAMS WITHOUT CONSENT ACT

Until now medical students have been able to perform invasive pelvic, rectal and prostate exams without consent on patients who are under anesthesia for medical training purposes, not for the health of the patient. I voted in favor of HB507, introduced by Rep. Fiedler, to protect patients' rights, and I am proud this important legislation was signed into law by Gov. Shapiro.

PROTECTING REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM - HB 1888

The House Judiciary Committee also heard compelling testimony from women and doctors about their deeply personal and painful experiences with medically complicated pregnancies. They chose to share these powerful stories in support of HB 1888, introduced by Rep. Danielle Friel Otten, a proposed state constitutional amendment guaranteeing reproductive liberty in Pennsylvania. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I voted "Yes" on this amendment because women deserve the right to necessary healthcare.

OPEN PRIMARIES - HB 976

When I first ran for election, people would say, "I love what you are doing, but I am never going to join your political party, and I want to be able to vote for you." Because of that experience, I voted YES on HB 976, introduced by Rep. Brown, which would create "Open Primaries" in Pennsylvania. This would allow more than 740,000 registered unaffiliated voters, many of whom serve in our military, to participate in the democratic process.

BOOK BAN HEARING

When I was a child, I spent countless hours at my local library, where I was introduced to a diverse array of opinions that helped shape my worldview as an adult. Being exposed to many, sometimes challenging, perspectives didn't indoctrinate me as a child or cause me to develop radical views as an adult. Instead, weighing opposing opinions enabled me to hone a more informed and nuanced approach to the world around me. Recently, I had the opportunity to express my opposition to banning books during a policy hearing. In my opinion, the freedom to read and access information is essential for leading a well-rounded, enriched life.

IMPROVING THE THE AIR WE BREATHE

A TASKFORCE would explore FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- Discounts to Purchase Electric Equipment
- Rebates & Tax Credits
- Business Loan Programs

IMPROVING THE THE AIR WE BREATHE

Operating a commercial leaf blower for 1 HOUR emits as much pollution as driving a car 1,100 MILES.

A map of Pennsylvania with a blue dashed line tracing a path across the state, likely representing the 1,100-mile equivalent distance mentioned in the text.

LEAF BLOWER TASK FORCE

Did you know operating a commercial 2-stroke gas leaf blower for one hour releases the same amount of air pollution as driving a car for 1,100 miles? PennEnvironment recently published a new study on the impact of this gas-guzzling equipment, and the data is staggering. As a result, I am proposing a taskforce to work with lawncare industry stakeholders and scientists to develop financial incentives to phase out gas-powered equipment without impacting businesses and jobs.

IN THE DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS



Coffee & Conversation – Thanks to everyone for making my coffee talk session at Tredyffrin Library so successful.



Fall Shredding – Gloomy weather didn't stop us from shredding documents and collecting donations for the Chester County Food Bank.



Dom Fixes Bikes Grand Opening – I was proud to attend the grand opening of Dom Pecora's new shop, Dom Fixes Bikes! Dom continues to be a treasure to our community by raising funds to gift bikes to children in need and has been instrumental in the creation of a new bike park in Tredyffrin Township.



An Evening at the Arboretum – Executive Director Tom Smarr guided us around the gardens, then taught us about indigenous Pennsylvania plants and how fostering their growth benefits local fauna. We wrapped up the evening with an informed State Government Q&A session. I was happy to answer questions about moving the primary election, supporting open primaries, and the danger of banning books in our schools.



Light the Night – I want to thank the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County for kindly inviting me to speak at the Light the Night ceremony in Schuylkill Township. Events like this highlight the power of our community and the robust support network available to help victims escape from difficult life situations.



Roughwood Seed Collection – Dr. William Woys Weaver and the Devon-based Roughwood Center has collected more than 5,000 heritage seed varieties from across the world, many of which cannot be found anywhere else. Thank you to Roughwood for safeguarding our agricultural and cultural history.



Veterans Day Breakfast – Thank you to everyone who made my Annual Veterans' Breakfast at the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge a huge success! See you at our BBQ in July!



Footlighters Theater – The Footlighters Theater troupe of Berwyn is a 100% volunteer-run nonprofit, and they recently kicked off their 94th season!



PennDOT Meeting in Tredyffrin – My office coordinated a PennDOT onsite visit to North Valley Road in Tredyffrin Township to address persistent stormwater concerns and recurring flooding that often endangers drivers and damages property in this area.

HARRISBURG UPDATE



Tredyffrin/Easttown Jr Model UN Visits the Capitol – Mr. David Hardy and the Tredyffrin/Easttown Middle School's Jr. Model UN club were my guests of honor in Harrisburg. These brilliant young minds work together to create promising solutions to some of the world's most significant challenges.



Taiwanese Ambassador Visits Harrisburg – I had the pleasure of welcoming Ambassador James K.J. Lee from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York to our state Capitol to recognize Oct 10th as National Day of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Pennsylvania and celebrate the cultural and economic ties between our nations.

WHOLE HOME REPAIRS

The Whole Home Repairs Program is now open to residents of Chester County. Up to \$25,000 in financial assistance is available to help eligible households make necessary home repairs. Applications must be for a primary residence and demonstrate a household income at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Priority will be given to homes requiring accessibility modifications and repairs directly affecting the health and safety of the dwelling. If you have an interest in the Whole Home Repairs Program, please call 610-713-8088 or visit www.goodworksinc.org/whrp.

SAVE THE DATE!

MARCH

6

SEPTA SIGN UP EVENT
Tredyffrin Library

MARCH

12

SEPTA SIGN UP EVENT
Upper Mainline YMCA

MARCH

28

COFFEE & CONVERSATION
Cup of Dreams, Paoli

MAY

4

**SHREDDING &
CANNED FOOD DRIVE**
Penn State Great Valley

MAY

9

**WALK & TALK
WITH WILLISTOWN
CONSERVATION TRUST**
Rushton Farm, 911 Delchester
Rd., Newtown Square – from
5:00-6:30pm



State Representative
MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN

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

Keeping Up with Shusterman!

 @RepShusterman

 /RepShusterman

 RepShusterman.com

lpo.ts.0224

REPRESENTATIVE SHUSTERMAN

"IT SHOULD BE A LAW" ESSAY CONTEST

Deadline: April 12, 2024

Open to ALL 4th Grade students who live or attend school in the 157th District.



MORE INFO

 SCirno@pahouse.net

 484-200-8260

 RepShusterman.com

State Representative | 157th Legislative District

MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN

District Office: 42 E. Lancaster Ave., Unit A
Paoli, PA 19301
(484) 200-8260

Capitol Office: 114 Irvis Office Building | P.O. Box 202157
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2157
(717) 787-7524

 RepShusterman.com |    @RepShusterman

DISTRICT OFFICE SERVICES

WE CAN HELP!

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