



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PETER G. SCHWEYER**22ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT**

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In February, I and other members of the House Appropriations Committee held hearings on the proposed budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year. These hearings help us determine how to best invest state resources and provide me the chance to make sure your state tax dollars are working for you and our community.

SENIOR FAIR

I joined with Rep. Mike Schlossberg to host our annual Senior Fair on Friday, May 18, at the East Side Youth Center. It was a great morning spent with area seniors and more than 40 vendors from various governmental and community organizations.

Our constituents appreciate the opportunity to learn about the many state and local programs that can benefit them, as well as the ability to have some valuable testing done, such as blood pressure, vision screenings and even balance testing!

This event is always a terrific opportunity for folks to come together to learn, and gives Rep. Schlossberg and me a chance to hear your concerns. We look forward to seeing you at next year's fair!



GREAT NEWS FOR OUR SCHOOLS!

I am pleased to share that during budget negotiations, Senate Appropriations Chairman Pat Browne, Rep. Mike Schlossberg and I worked closely to secure a \$10 million supplement for the Allentown School District's 2018-19 General Fund Budget. The work done to secure this money means that the school district budget will balance with no teacher layoffs or program cuts.

It's good news for students and their families, the faculty and the taxpayers of Allentown School District. Sen. Browne, Rep. Schlossberg and I had some honest and

difficult conversations with the school district's leadership about its fiscal struggles. By putting aside our partisan labels and developing a real trust with Superintendent Parker and School Board President Thiel, we were able to do what was right for our community.

More importantly, as a proud ASD parent, I have great confidence in knowing that my daughters will continue to have teachers in the classroom and the resources needed to ensure that they can have another successful school year.

REBATE DEADLINE NOW EXTENDED

Good news! The deadline to apply for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2017 under the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program **has been extended to Dec. 31, 2018.**

The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. For purposes of calculating income, half of Social Security income

is excluded. Spouses, personal representatives or estates may also file rebate claims on behalf of claimants who lived at least one day in 2017 and meet all other eligibility criteria.

The maximum standard rebate is \$650, although supplemental rebates for certain qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975.

You can pick up an application at my office. It costs nothing to apply, and my staff can help you determine if you're

eligible and fill out the paperwork.

Please bring proof of local (county, borough and school) property taxes and proof of income, such as a 1099 form.

If you've already applied for a rebate, my staff can assist you in checking the status of your rebate. Just give my office a call at 610-791-6270.

If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to check it out and see if you're eligible!

LEARN TO AVOID TELEMARKETING SCAMS

Every day across the United States, fraudulent telephone scams are at work. Losses are estimated at \$40 billion a year and the costs are rising. Callers often target older Americans who have accumulated savings for retirement. How can you avoid being a victim of these scams?

- Ask for printed material through the mail that includes the company's name, address, phone and charity registration number or business registration number.
- Contact the Attorney General's Office at 800-441-2555 (Toll-Free Helpline) to verify the information sent to you.
- Never send cash through the mail or give it to someone at your door.
- Never reveal your credit card number or bank account information over the phone unless you initiated the call.
- Put your phone number on the state's Do-Not-Call list.

And, please remember: entering a contest or signing up for a promotion cancels your Do Not Call registration with that business, since authorization to call you was given and a business relationship has begun.

My staff can assist you with either enrolling in or verifying that your number is on the Do Not Call list. We can also help you file a Do Not Call complaint. You can reach my office at 610-791-6270.



HELPING OUR VETERANS



Far too many of our veterans suffer deeply from both visible and invisible wounds. I know my father, who served in Vietnam, certainly did.

In 2015 (which is the most recent information we have), 230 veterans who were Pennsylvania residents are known to have taken their own lives — with the highest number being between ages 55 and 74. These are mostly men from the Vietnam era. This is an unacceptable situation for our community. But hope is not lost. We can do something to address this tragic situation.

This March, testifying before the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I highlighted my legislation, H.B. 985, which would establish a Veterans' Suicide Prevention Grant Program to be administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

I have proposed that we create a permanent funding stream through a \$2 increase in the fee for birth and death certificates, which would generate about \$800,000 for these programs every year. This would ensure that no matter what happens with future state budgets, this much-needed funding would be protected. The health and well-being of our service men and women should never become a political football. We can and must do better for them.

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Kinship caregivers (grandparents and other relatives, 55 or older who are primary caregivers raising children younger than 18) face a variety of emotional, legal and financial challenges. The National Family Caregiver Support Program helps to relieve the caregiver burden by offering qualified primary caregivers up to \$200 per month in reimbursements for approved out-of-pocket expenses. Under special circumstances, some kinship caregivers can receive up to \$500 per month in approved

reimbursements. If qualified, the program also provides up to \$2,000 in pre-approved reimbursements to modify a home or purchase assistive devices or technologies.

Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for additional information on eligibility and to apply for the program. You may also visit the Aging Department website at www.aging.pa.gov for more information about programs to help kinship caregivers.



GirlGov is a civic engagement program sponsored by the Women & Girls Foundation, which trains girls to be our next generation of leaders. I was proud to meet and talk with group members about how important it is for young women to get involved with government, during GirlGov Days at the Capitol this year.



In April, members of Pennsylvania's Muslim Community, including many folks from Allentown and the Lehigh Valley, traveled to Harrisburg to celebrate their culture. I was happy to join them in a fellowship luncheon and hear their perspective on Harrisburg happenings.

CAPITOL VISITS

A favorite component of my job as state representative is welcoming groups to the Capitol and to help them see state government in action. I especially enjoy meeting with our future leaders. This past spring I had the chance to welcome and spend some time with students from Lehigh Parkway Elementary School (including Sarah, my oldest daughter!) as well as a youth group from Union Baptist Church. There may be a few future legislators in the pictures below!



TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY

As part of Take Your Child To Work day in April, I had the opportunity to bring my daughter Sarah to the Capitol. While there, she and other children learned about state government and the legislative process, and staged a mock debate in the House chamber. The weighty question of the day: What should be the official candy of PA — Peeps or Hershey Kisses? The activity taught real lessons to tomorrow's leaders.



PERSIAN GULF VETERANS' BONUS PROGRAM DEADLINE AUG. 31

I want to thank all veterans who have served and continue to serve our country so that we may enjoy the freedoms we have today as an independent nation.

To veterans of operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, I want to point out that the deadline for the Persian Gulf Veterans' Bonus Program is Aug. 31, 2018.

Those who served on active duty between Aug. 2, 1990, and Aug. 31, 1991, may qualify for the bonus.

The program pays \$75 a month for qualifying, active-

duty service members, up to a \$525 maximum. For those whose death was related to illness or injury received in the line of duty in the operations, an additional \$5,000 is available to the surviving family. Service members who were declared prisoners of war also may be eligible for an additional \$5,000.

For more information about this program or other state programs that benefit veterans, please visit the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs website at www.dmva.pa.gov or contact my office and speak to a member of my staff.

MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH...

- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Unemployment compensation problems
- Birth certificate applications
- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Complaints about road conditions
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Disability plates and placards
- PACE cards for senior citizens

- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Problems or questions about the state lottery

Any question regarding state government!

GET ALL THE LATEST UPDATES

Connect with Rep. Schweyer on social media!

You'll get the latest updates on community news, local events and legislative happenings:



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MY OFFICE IS HERE TO HELP: OUTREACH FOR SENIORS AND VETERANS AVAILABLE MONTHLY

For our seniors: Each month, I host an APPRISE counselor in my district office to assist seniors with questions about Medicare and other health care-related programs. The APPRISE counselor can help you with Medicare Part A and Part B enrollment, prescription drug plans, Medicare Advantage plans and other health insurance options.

The APPRISE benefits counselor is typically available to meet with you from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month. However, during the open enrollment period that runs from October through December, he will be at my office EVERY Monday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For our veterans: On the third Friday of every month between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., a representative from the American Legion is available in my office to answer questions from veterans and their loved ones. This person has great knowledge about pension benefits, survivor benefits and VA-related health care issues, as well as other veteran-related benefits to which you may be entitled.

To meet with either the APPRISE counselor or the American Legion representative, you must schedule an appointment. To arrange a time, please contact my office and speak with any member of the team at 610-791-6270.

COLLECTION OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES UNDERWAY



My staff and I are again leading an effort to collect school supplies at my Allentown office, 1912 S. Fourth St.

As a strong supporter of public education, I believe we should do everything possible to ensure that all students have adequate school supplies, regardless of where they attend school.

To that end, throughout the year my office serves as a collection point for school items such as pencils, pens, notebooks, backpacks, crayons or anything else students need for their classroom.

If you would like to help local schoolchildren, please consider dropping off a few supplies when you're near my office. Let's do our part to help every student in the Allentown School District be equipped to succeed.

For more information, contact my office at 610-791-6270.

SAVE THE DATE! JOB FAIR SEPT. 6

Have you ever wondered how to land a good, family-sustaining job in the Allentown School District or Lehigh County? Do you know how to become a state police officer or a bus driver for LANTA?

Well, I'm pleased to announce that I will be bringing back our popular public-sector jobs fair with my co-hosts Reps. Mike Schlossberg and Jeanne McNeill. This year, it will be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 6 at the Boys and Girls Club Gym at 501 E. Susquehanna St. in Allentown.

The goal of this free event is for you to learn about employment opportunities with state agencies, local school districts and agencies. The County of Lehigh, the City of Allentown, the Allentown School District and LANTA will be on hand, along with the PA State Civil Service Commission, the Allentown Housing Authority, the PA State Police and other agencies to provide information about employment opportunities.



It's important that we properly match the quality workforce that we have in the Lehigh Valley with the good jobs that are available in the public sector.



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BILL WOULD PROHIBIT INSURERS FROM DENYING COVERAGE BASED ON PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Imagine if your health insurance company dropped you because you had high blood pressure. Then imagine if no other insurance company would write a policy for you because of that pre-existing medical condition.

Under the Affordable Care Act, health insurers are prohibited from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions. However, a lawsuit filed earlier this year could allow insurers to do that if they so choose; and I'm working to stop that from occurring in Pennsylvania.

Earlier this year, 20 states filed a lawsuit against the federal government to challenge the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act. The lawsuit could render the entire ACA invalid.

If the lawsuit is successful, millions of people across the United States and in Pennsylvania may be left without health insurance or face paying exorbitant premiums to keep coverage. However, by passing a state law, we can preserve the pre-existing condition protection in the instance that the entire ACA is invalidated by the courts.

For this reason, I introduced H.B. 2552 that would prohibit

health insurers from using an individual's pre-existing medical condition to deny or exclude coverage under a health insurance policy.

The House Democratic Policy Committee was at the Lehigh County Government Center in late July for a public hearing on my legislation. It is my hope that my colleagues in Harrisburg will support this very important legislation, in an effort to protect the health and well-being of all Pennsylvanians.



At the July Policy Committee hearing on my legislation.