



# State Representative **MAUREEN MADDEN**

Summer 2019

Representing the 115th Legislative District

***I STAND WITH YOU ... AND FIGHT FOR YOU.***



Rep. Madden applauds Gov. Tom Wolf for signing the \$23 million PA Farm Bill and investing in agriculture – our number one industry! Monroe County will certainly benefit with its 100+ farms. Investing in Ag. creates good-paying jobs, strengthens the economy, and moves PA forward! Rep. Madden is a proud member of the Pennsylvania House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

The law will also improve childhood nutrition and:

- Help agriculture business development and succession planning – which provides \$2 million to help farmers create a business plan to meet their needs and a realty transfer tax exemption for any transfer of preserved farmland to a qualified beginning farmer.
- Remove regulatory burdens and strengthen the state's business climate.

- Create more processing capabilities to accommodate a growing animal agriculture sector through the Pennsylvania Dairy Investment Program, Center for Animal Agriculture Excellence and incentivize access to meat processing inspections.
- Strengthen Pennsylvania's workforce to ensure the next generation is prepared to lead by establishing the Agriculture and Rural Youth Organization Grant Program and the Pennsylvania Farm to School Grant Program.
- Protect agriculture infrastructure with the Pennsylvania Rapid Response Disaster Readiness Account.
- Increase market opportunities and make Pennsylvania the nation's leading organic state – through the PA Preferred Organic Initiative, PA Preferred Program, state-level Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and urban agriculture.

***Inside:*** Keeping our children safe with safe school grants at Pocono Mountain School District; Women's expo a success; Military Museum opens; Rep. Madden named "Public Servant of the Year"; Gov. Wolf signs health exchange legislation to insure more people.

## ■ *Our state budget increases education funding for our children*

**R**ep. Madden voted for this state budget because it increases Basic Education funding for school districts in Monroe County, and puts \$300 million into the state's Rainy Day fund. While there is no "one size fits all" budget plan, Rep. Madden is comfortable with the outcome of this budget because it also secures funding to launch the new

Military Family Education Program for our PA National Guard families.

Rep. Madden said even though an increase in the minimum wage wasn't included in the fiscal plan, she will continue to fight for a wage hike.

## ■ *Rep. Madden brings home \$25,000 grant to keep our schools safe*

**T**he Pocono Mountain School District was awarded a \$25,000 Safe School Targeted grant to purchase safety and security-related equipment. Rep. Madden said when students go to school, parents should never have to worry about the safety of their children.



## ■ *Marijuana listening tour stop at ESU*

**R**ecently, Pennsylvania Lt. Gov. John Fetterman visited East Stroudsburg University as a part of his statewide recreational cannabis listening tour.

The tour's main purpose was to foster a civil discussion among residents on both sides of the cannabis legalization issue.

Rep. Madden attended the event, and while in support of the legalization of adult cannabis use, she was pleased to hear from constituents who are opposed to it to address some of their questions and concerns.

Rep. Madden is a co-sponsor of House Bill 50, which would legalize adult use of cannabis. In addition, the bill would generate upward of \$580 million in new tax revenue for the Commonwealth, provide for social justice reforms, return both professional and driver's licenses to those who lost them due to a conviction of cannabis use or possession, incentivize cannabis businesses to partner with PA farmers, as well as invest in student debt forgiveness, after school programs and affordable housing.



## ■ *Legislation to modernize marriage officiants is in the works*

**R**ep. Madden and Rep. Movita Johnson-Harrell, D-Phila., plan to introduce legislation that would update the current list of religious leaders that perform marriages in Pennsylvania to include civil celebrants and Muslim leaders known as "imams."

Rep. Madden said other states are adding "civil celebrants" to the list of people who can legally solemnize marriages. Civil celebrants are professional wedding officiants who are educated in philosophy, history, ceremonial structure, and ceremonial presentation. These professionals help couples create meaningful, personalized weddings in a secular environment.

Rep. Madden said adding civil celebrants as legal wedding officiators will help create new careers, grow our economy, make Pennsylvania a more appealing wedding destination, and give couples another choice when choosing an officiant.





## ■ *New state-based insurance exchange a huge win for our health insurance consumers*

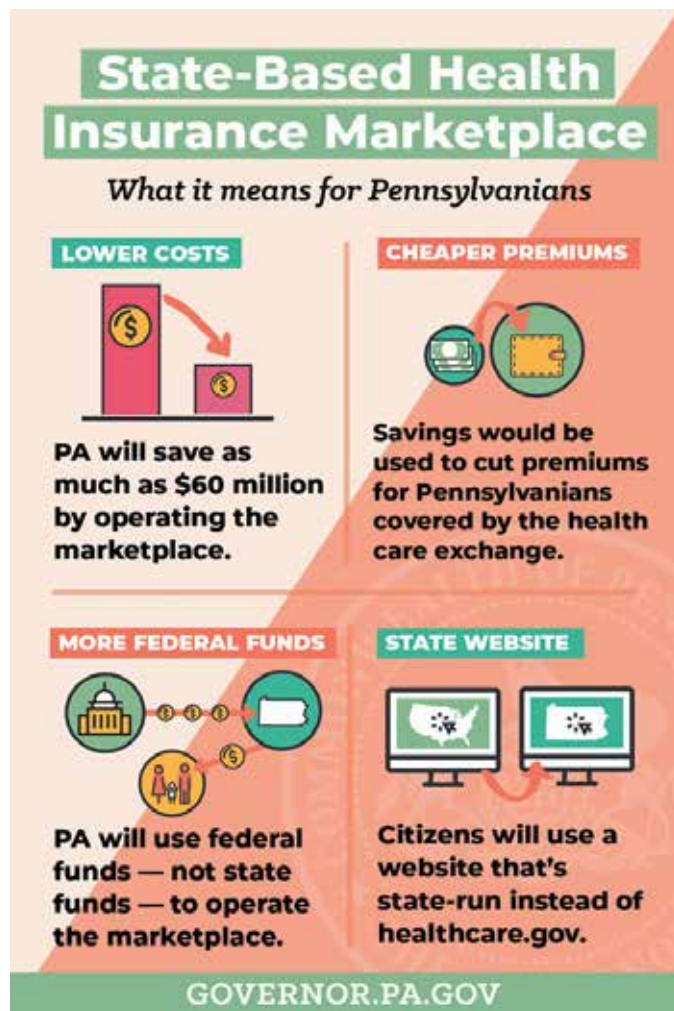
**R**ep. Madden lauded Gov. Tom Wolf's signing of legislation she co-sponsored that will create a state-based insurance exchange for private plans under the Affordable Care Act.

Approximately 400,000 people in Pennsylvania who depend on private insurance under the ACA and have been dealing with increasing premiums will now save money. Pennsylvania having its own state-run exchange, will result in a more efficient program.

Rep. Madden said Pennsylvania can operate its own insurance exchange at about one-third cheaper than the amount the federal government collects. The state can then use those millions in "user fees" no longer being paid to the federal government to create a re-insurance plan that will help insurers defray their risk. Consumers are expected to save money on their premiums.



## ■ *A supported community is a healthy, safe and successful community*



## ■ *Soaring crowds at the Annual Aviation day*

**M**emorial Day weekend is full of festivities in remembrance of the brave women and men who died while serving in the U.S. military.

The 24<sup>th</sup> annual Community Aviation Day helped families and children access the services they need. The Drive-in Fly-in tradition took place at the Pocono Mountains Municipal Airport where families gathered for a hot breakfast cooked by community members. The most thrilling highlight for children, besides the fresh pancakes, was the opportunity to ride a helicopter or airplane and to view the wide variety of aircrafts.

United States Congressman Matt Cartwright also attended the event and discussed veteran-related issues with local veterans and talked about their time serving in the U.S. military.





# Rep. Madden's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Women's Expo a success!

Rep. Madden's Women's Expo was an excellent venue to reach women and families about state and local programs available to them and to speak with health care professionals. There are programs available to women and families but sometimes it is difficult, especially for new residents and new mothers, to know where to look.

Rep. Madden was thrilled with the turnout and said it was a wonderful opportunity to speak with constituents and to not only listen to their concerns but offer real solutions face-to-face. Rep. Madden plans on continuing this tradition and looks forward to hosting the next year's summer event.



Rep. Madden's district staff working at the Women's Expo include left to right: Maria Andrews, Lashawna Griffith, Rep. Madden, Collin Devries, Erin DeRosa, and Latisha Griffith.



## ■ Rep. Madden: Fighting for Workers' Rights

Along with state Rep. Tom Mehaffie, Rep. Madden reintroduced her Workplace Freedom Act legislation that would allow public sector workers to form a union with a simple majority card check vote, rather than the lengthy bureaucratic process that workers currently experience.

Last year, Reps. Madden and Mehaffie first introduced the

legislation in response to the Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court decision, an unprecedented attack on the right to organize.

Rep. Madden said in the face of continued attacks, she is more committed than ever to strengthening and expanding the rights of Pennsylvanians to join unions.

The Workplace Freedom Act was reintroduced as H.B. 1178.

## ■ **Rep. Madden receives JNESO Public Servant of the Year award**

JNESO, the professional health care union, honored Rep. Madden for her ongoing support and commitment to health care, safe staffing and labor issues in her district and in Pennsylvania.

Rep. Madden is a strong proponent of the Safe Patient Limits in PA Hospitals Act (H.B. 867) which would address nurse-to-patient ratios in Pennsylvania hospitals. The bill would fix the minimum ratio of patients to nurses to better correspond with the nature of the hospital unit to help improve patient safety. Rep. Madden also supports and is a co-sponsor of the Workplace Freedom Act, which would ease and streamline the process of establishing a union. The union represents 5,000 hospitals and clinical workers, including nurses, licensed practical nurses and most licensed technical employees.

Rep. Madden said unmanageable and unsafe staffing has a direct negative impact on healthcare outcomes and costs. She said quality care should not be negotiable.



## ■ **Keeping you informed of telephone scams**



**D**on't become a victim of a telephone scam that has targeted seniors and people with disabilities throughout Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue is warning of a scam that begins when a caller informs the recipient their application for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been approved. The scammer then informs the recipient they can deposit their rebate and requests the recipient's banking information.

Never give out banking information over the phone.

The Department of Revenue will contact applicants to CONFIRM APPROVAL only. It never requests an applicant's banking information over the phone.

Government agencies and legitimate businesses will not call you to verify account information, so always ask for a call back number.

## ■ **Constituents air concerns over lack of broadband internet**

### **Expanding internet access, expanding opportunities**

Can you imagine living without the internet? This is the reality for many people who live in rural communities across Pennsylvania.



Recently, constituents living in Cresco organized a rally to voice their frustrations about the slow or lack of internet connection in the area. Rep. Madden worked with representatives from the governor's office and Blue Ridge Communications, and is pleased to announce that Blue Ridge Communications has approved a project that would bring reliable high speed internet to the residents of Cresco. Constituents need the internet to apply for jobs, operate businesses, and complete their schoolwork. The program is part of Gov. Wolf's Restore PA initiative.



**STATE REPRESENTATIVE MAUREEN E. MADDEN**

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## ■ *Rep. Madden is proud of the newly opened Mt. Pocono Women's Military Museum*

### Saluting the unsung heroes in our backyard

**M**ount Pocono Borough Council President Claudette Williams served 30 years in the U.S Army, reaching the rank of Sergeant Major. She had the idea to take on an ambitious project of opening a Women's Military Museum – something she was wholeheartedly passionate about. With the support and help from her family and friends, she initiated the project and opened the museum within five months.

Williams' inspiration to start the museum was born from her experiences as a female veteran. She found it frustrating that when presenting her military I.D., she would be asked, "where did your husband serve"? Williams would answer this question by detailing her 30 years of service in the U.S. Army. In another case, Williams attended the Women's Veteran's

Policy Day in Congress and listened to the stories of female veterans. Williams realized that society was not aware of the important and influential roles women play in the military. These combined experiences

brought to fruition the need for a museum to recognize the accomplishments of the generations of brave women breaking barriers and serving our country.

Williams hopes this unique museum positively impacts the community

by educating attendees about the sacrifices women make while serving in the military. Through this understanding, the Women's Military Museum can foster a supportive relationship with the community and the families of the women who served.

The Women's Military Museum is located on 4 Fork St., Mount Pocono, PA 18344.

