

State Representative | 34th Legislative District

SUMMER LEE



DEAR NEIGHBOR,

Our society is undergoing a test of character during this unprecedented health crisis. Now is the time to show your neighbors some extra love and care, especially to those who might be vulnerable to this illness.

We must practice social distancing in our daily lives until we see some decline in the spread of the virus, but that does not mean we must practice social isolation. Staying connected with our loved ones is imperative, and modern technology has made possible instantaneous communication without physically being present. The options for communicating are endless and can summon the need for some creativity. We can call, instant message, video chat, or play a virtual game. This can be a time to rediscover a lost passion or discover a new one.

However, many of us have not experienced a new bout of free time, but are hustling even harder to make ends meet, while risking their health to continue working. Many do not have access to technology that has eased the burden of school and business closure. If you able, it is vital to use this time to check on neighbors who are struggling, and offer any help you can. We will continue doing our best to connect you with vital government, non-profit, and

private resources that can assist you in getting necessities during this time of uncertainty.

To our medical workers, police, EMS, and firefighters, we sincerely thank you for your bold courage in the pursuit of saving lives when most people have been told to stay home.

To our workers in the hospitality industry, our grocery stores, pharmacies, and other essential businesses, we are fighting for your protection and rights in Harrisburg to secure paid sick leave, unemployment benefits if your hours have been reduced, a rent and mortgage freeze, moratoriums on evictions and foreclosures in Pennsylvania, and more.

To our volunteers of all kinds, you are choosing to put the needs of others before your own, and that is what makes us thrive.

We will persevere through this pandemic, and ultimately strengthen protections for our workers and their families. We invite you to explore the following pages to discover what we have been working on since the start of the new year.

Yours truly,



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Bills sponsored: 111

Resolutions sponsored: 22

HIGHLIGHTS:

Hair and Hairstyle Discrimination – *I'm working with other lawmakers to introduce legislation that would ban discrimination based on characteristics commonly associated with race, such as hair texture and hairstyles*

Social Workers in PA Prisons – *I've introduced a resolution calling for a study of the current access to social workers within state correctional facilities and to recommend a target number or ratio for the most optimal number of social workers to incarcerated individuals.*

Eviction Moratorium – *Before the state supreme court stepped in, my colleagues and I had taken swift action to introduce legislation to freeze the eviction process during major emergencies like the coronavirus crisis.*

I'm also supporting legislation to freeze student and small business loan payments; and increase labor law protections so that workers don't have to fight for workers' compensation during these types of events, along with other legislation.

No Cash Bail – *Pretrial bail costs taxpayers billions of dollars and infringes on the liberty and rights of millions of Americans each year. I'm working to introduce legislation that would end this system and return to non-financial release using standardized, validated risk assessments.*

Rent Freeze – *We are working with other members to freeze rent and mortgage payments for the duration of the emergency declaration.*

Halt Auto Repossession – *Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta and I are working on a bill that would forbid vehicle repossession for the duration of the state of emergency.*

As the legislative year has progressed, I have proposed several and added my name as a co-sponsor on over a hundred bills I believe would improve the lives of many people in District 34 and across the commonwealth. The full list of bills on which I am a co-sponsor is available on the Pennsylvania General Assembly website:
www.legis.state.pa.us

LISTENING TO YOU AND TAKING ACTION ON YOUR BEHALF

Earlier this year I held a telephone townhall with you, the residents of the 34th Legislative District. It was a wonderful opportunity to reach out to as many of you as possible and to answer your questions and hear from you about the issues impacting your families. My office also posted an online survey earlier this year, asking folks to tell us about some of the issues they would like us to focus on in the year ahead (if you missed it, please follow me on social media). Here are some of their responses.



We must embrace economic growth and revitalization efforts in our community. However, economic growth must include the voices of the community to ensure everyone is lifted up. For example, Hazelwood, Braddock, Rankin and Swissvale are already experiencing the effects of increased property values, businesses that offer pricey goods and services. We have been working with the municipalities, non-profits, and government agencies to improve public infrastructure, assist renting families to purchase their own homes, and support those who operate or wish to open small businesses.



No one should have to choose not to pay for medicine or ration doses due to exorbitant prescription drug prices. We are proud to sponsor legislation that would make prescriptions more affordable to all who depend on them by setting limits on the amount that pharmacies, providers, patients, health plans, and wholesalers pay for medically necessary drugs.



Everyone has a constitutional right to clean air and water, but as you all know we are not even close to fully enjoying that right in Western PA. We are committed to improving quality of life for our communities, and so we have hosted townhalls, increased public awareness of poor air quality in the Pittsburgh region, and sponsored legislation to increase accountability of major polluters to neighboring and host municipalities.

We know that PA must improve its correctional system, and so we've also authored and co-sponsored bills that would reduce our prison population, expand access to social workers for incarcerated persons, and increase protections for incarcerated women.



Over the years, our working class has been faced with increased costs of healthcare and housing while wages have stagnated. We are fighting alongside workers here and in Harrisburg to guarantee paid family and medical leave, increased wages, and comprehensive tax reform to boost funding for state programs.

Investing in our community

Last year my office helped secure more than \$2 million for local projects, development and programs – everything from road safety improvements in Swissvale and Edgewood, to park development funds for the old Churchill Valley Country Club and Hays Woods areas. We've also helped capture state financing for economic development projects, brown field redevelopment and other important programs.

So far this year, grants to our communities include:

- Nearly \$40,000 for local historical organizations
- \$70,000 to fund technology and training for area schools
- Close to \$85,000 to promote and encourage Census participation in Allegheny County

We're also working with local municipalities to promote outdoor activities, watershed improvement projects, and economic development initiatives – including improving river access – and hope to have more news to announce soon!

Have an idea? We can help.

In our office, we have copies of the annual PA Grant Resource Directory available upon request. We also have an electronic copy that can be found on our website. If you have an idea for a project in the community and would like to apply for funds, please reach out to us! We can help you find appropriate grant programs and communicate between you and the corresponding state agency.

Working for you in the Mon Valley...



Pathways to Pardons: Braddock & Hazelwood

Our office worked with Rep. Jake Wheatley to outline the pathway to receiving a clemency for certain offenses, and explain the overhaul of the process in the past two years. Representatives from the Allegheny County Department of Court Records, Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons, and the Office of the Lt. Governor presented their role in the process and assisted attendees in gathering their documents and applying for a pardon. For more information, please contact us!



Senior Connect Card Registration at Pittsburgh Association of the Deaf

We partnered state Rep. Jake Wheatley to register seniors at the Pittsburgh Association of the Deaf for their Port Authority ConnectCards. We sincerely thank Chris, a retired teacher at the Western PA School for the Deaf, who approached our office with the idea. He hopes that attendees of the 2021 Deaf Senior Citizens of America Conference at the David Lawrence Convention Center can use their new bus passes to attend the multiple-day conference.



Medicare for All Townhall

We worked with physicians, union leaders, and members of our community who outlined the case for Medicare for All at Pittsburgh Mennonite Church in Swissvale. The panel outlined the proposed system of healthcare that would eliminate private insurance companies, expand coverage to everyone, improve health outcomes, and save the government trillions in the long run.

Senior Valentine Soiree

We know that Valentine's Day is a time when we need to show love to one another, so we hosted a Senior Soiree with food, dancing, live music, and information on state services! We would like to thank Aunt Cheryl's Café for the delicious food, and our wonderful seniors who made the event a blast.

Forest Hills Townhall

We updated the district on our legislative progress and plans for 2020 at our townhall discussion at the Forest Hills Borough Building. It brings us joy to listen to such thoughtful and engaged community, as it helps to craft our legislative priorities moving forward. We covered a diverse array of topics, from ensuring quality education to fighting the opioid crisis.

... and beyond

Property Tax Rebate Assistance Available

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program applications for the 2019 tax year are available online – and my staff can help you file yours remotely for free!

You can get your application at www.revenue.pa.gov or by calling 1-888-222-9190. The deadline to file is Dec. 31, but the sooner you file, the sooner you can receive your rebate!

While our office is currently closed, we are still available by phone or email to help people fill out their applications.

The rebate 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. Half of Social Security income is excluded, and the maximum standard rebate is \$650.



HAS YOUR JOB BEEN AFFECTED BY COVID-19? You may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits if:

Your employer temporarily closes or goes out of business because of COVID-19

Your employer reduces your hours because of COVID-19

You have been told not to work because your employer feels you might get or spread COVID-19

You have been told to quarantine or self-isolate, or live/work in a county under government-recommended mitigation efforts

WE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Port Authority Senior ConnectCard applications
- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Information about federal, state and local government agencies

If you need help with any state or government-related services, please feel free to contact our office at 412-273-3400 or send mail to 501 Braddock Ave., Suite 105, Braddock, PA.

✓ Important Election Update



Pennsylvania's Primary Election has been moved to June 2

More info | www.votespa.com | Register online | Apply for mail-in ballot

More ways to vote



No-excuse mail-in voting
New option to vote by mail
Without providing an excuse



Permanent mail-in ballot list
Receive applications for
mail-in or absentee ballots
for all elections



More time to register
Deadline to register to vote is
now 15 days before
an election



Extended voting period
Request a mail-in or absentee
ballot up to 50 days before
an election

Extended deadline

Submit mail-in or absentee ballot by 8 p.m. on Election Day

In tough times, we're here for you!



Even in these tough times, my office is here for you!

Inside this newsletter you can find a full list of things we can help you with, as well as information about other services we provide.

Our most popular services during normal operation are PA Property Tax/Rent Rebates, Port Authority Senior ConnectCards, and Unclaimed Property forms.

But in these tough times, we can also help with questions about unemployment, social services, or other resources to help families and businesses address their needs.

Our physical office will remain closed to walk-in traffic during the COVID-19 crisis, but you can reach us by phone at (412) 273-3400, by email at RepLee@pahouse.net, or using the form at www.pahouse.com/lee/contact.

My staff and I are also using social media to alert folks to the latest updates and the resources that the local community, state and federal government are coordinating to help.

You can find me online at:

@RepSummerLee @RepSummerLee

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SUMMER LEE

SPRING UPDATE

INSIDE:

- ✓ A message from Rep. Lee
- ✓ Legislation I'm supporting this year
- ✓ Grants and initiatives in our community
- ✓ Information and resources
- ✓ Events and updates

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Representing Pittsburgh (Parts of Greenfield & Hazelwood, Squirrel Hill South, Hays & Lincoln Place), Braddock, Braddock Hills, Chalfant, Churchill, Edgewood, Forest Hills, Homestead, North Braddock, Rankin, Swissvale, Turtle Creek, West Homestead and Wilkins Township.