



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

SUMMER 2023

Kristine Howard

167TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

WEBSITE: www.RepKHoward.com

Greentree Office Plaza • 40 Lloyd Ave., Suite 309 • Malvern, PA 19355 • (610) 251-1070

107 East Wing • P.O. Box 202167 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2167 • (717) 783-4088

  @RepKHoward

Dear Neighbor,

With summer in sight, I am hard at work on many projects for my constituents, including several pieces of legislation to protect and benefit the district and the Commonwealth as a whole, and look forward to accomplishing much before the summer recess.

Of course, passing Pennsylvania's budget for the upcoming fiscal year will occupy much of our time in Harrisburg. I am eager to secure important funding and ensure our district receives everything we need.

Finally, in addition to providing an update on Harrisburg, I want to ensure everyone is aware of the resources available right here at home.

Here's to a fun and relaxing summer!

Best Wishes,

Kristine C. Howard



NEW LEGISLATION

KEEPING FOREVER CHEMICALS OUT OF OUR FOOD

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries since the 1940s. PFAS chemicals accumulate over time, both in the environment and in the human body, and have been shown to lead to adverse health effects in humans, such as increased cholesterol levels, thyroid problems, fetal development issues, and weakened immune systems. Research also suggests these so-called forever chemicals can lead to further reproductive issues, liver issues, asthma, and cancer.

Food is often contaminated with PFAS through the unnecessary addition of these chemicals to the packaging. To address this issue, I have introduced HB 1122, a bill prohibiting the sale, distribution, and manufacturing of any food packaging containing PFAS within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Eliminating PFAS from food packaging is a small but significant step we must take in protecting our citizens and our environment from these harmful and eternal chemicals.



MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS



A dire lack of access to mental and behavioral health treatment persists across the Commonwealth. Obstacles such as budget cuts, low wages, and high caseloads often lead to burnout among mental and behavioral health workers, making it difficult to maintain a sufficient workforce to meet the growing demand.

Ensuring these services are widely available is, as we are all aware, imperative.

The pipeline of new recruits to the fields of social work and mental health services is sadly drying up. We must enrich the pool with new candidates.

We must do this while maintaining standards of excellence and should not consider changes that downgrade capabilities or qualifications, such as accepting bachelor's degrees where master's degrees are currently required.

To help offset this worrying trend, I plan to introduce two bills aimed at cultivating the next generation of mental and behavioral health workers. These bills would help support students pursuing careers in mental and behavioral health and provide incentives to keep them in the field.

By acting now, we can recruit, retain, and show continuous support for our behavioral and mental health workers across the Commonwealth, thereby ensuring no one goes without the help they need.

LIBRARY SATELLITE OFFICE HOURS

Members of my staff will be on site at libraries across the district on the following days...



State Representative
KRISTINE HOWARD

MOBILE OFFICE HOURS

Chester Springs Library
1st Tuesday of each month | 10 am - 1 pm

Henrietta Hankin Library
2nd Tuesday of each month | 10 am - 1 pm

Chester County Library
4th Tuesday of each month | 10 am - 1 pm



BIRTH CERTIFICATES & DEATH CERTIFICATES

My office can help you obtain copies of birth and death certificates. Certificates cost \$20 each, and must be paid via check or money order made payable to "VITAL RECORDS."

Visit www.pahouse.com/howard and sign up for my email newsletter to stay up to date!



PROPERTY TAX/ RENT REBATE

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians aged 65 and older; widows and widowers aged 50 and older; and people with disabilities aged 18 and older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and 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 2022 and meet all other eligibility criteria. Visit www.revenue.pa.gov for more information.

UNCLAIMED PROPERTY AT PA TREASURY

Did you know that the Pennsylvania Treasury is currently holding onto \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property?

Did you know that one in 10 Pennsylvanians is owed unclaimed property?

Did you know the average claim is worth about \$2,000?

My office is hard at work on trying to notify constituents of their unclaimed property, but you don't have to wait for us to reach out: you can search Treasury's online database at any time to see if you or friends and family have property waiting to be claimed. You need not pay anyone a fee to search for or claim property from the state.

Learn more at www.patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property.



SEPTA CARDS

Pennsylvanians 65 and older can apply for a free SEPTA Key Senior ID Card through my district office. Senior cards can be used on SEPTA trains, buses, trolleys, and subways. Current turnaround time is roughly five weeks. Please call to schedule an appointment or to renew your card.



VISIT A STATE PARK THIS SUMMER!

As the weather gets warmer, I want to remind everyone about our wonderful state and national parks, many right here in southeastern PA.

Pennsylvania parks boast a wide variety of activities, ranging from active pursuits like hiking, biking, and fishing, to more leisurely ones, such as peaceful walking trails and secluded campsites. Even visiting a park only for a brief time can have a positive impact on wellness and mood.

Many Pennsylvania parks, like Valley Forge, also have a historical element, which can add an educational component to your excursion.

We are fortunate to have many beautiful parks so close to home, including Chester County's Marsh Creek State Park, with its 535-acre lake, a perfect destination for bass fishing, Chester County's French Creek State Park, where visitors can spend the night in one of the many campsites, and Delaware County's Ridley Creek State Park, a haven for wildlife and home to the extremely rare Franklin Tree.

Summer is perfect for spending time outdoors with family or friends, and I encourage everyone to explore Pennsylvania's parks this summer and celebrate the beauty of our natural open spaces.

If you wish to learn more about nearby Pennsylvania parks, visit www.dcnr.pa.gov

REPORT POTHOLES!

Potholes and other roadway concerns on state roads can be reported by calling 1-800-FIX-ROAD or visiting www.penndot.gov and clicking on "Submit Roadway Feedback."



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lpo.kw.0623

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Kristine Howard



CONSTITUENT SERVICES

**STATE GOVERNMENT CONCERNS?
CALL MY OFFICE**

My office is here to help you with any state-related issue. If you're having an issue, please call, and my staff will do all we can to serve as guides or champions, as needed, as you navigate your concerns through our government.

While most issues can be resolved by phone, many matters may require an in-person meeting. To minimize wait times while allowing us to research your issue and provide the best service possible without the need to rush our visitors, appointments are encouraged. To schedule an appointment, call my office at (610) 251-1070 or email RepHoward@pahouse.net.

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