

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

JULY 2024

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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REAL ID Reminder

The enforcement of REAL ID will start May 7, 2025. A REAL ID is a federally compliant driver's license or ID card with enhanced security features. After May 2025, you will need a REAL ID or another federal form of identification (such as a passport or military ID) to fly domestically, enter a military base, or enter certain federal facilities.

To obtain a REAL ID, you must take proof of your identity, proof of your Social Security number, two proofs of your current PA address, and proof of all legal name changes to a REAL ID center. The exact documents needed can be quite stringent, however you no longer need to provide your Social Security Card as proof of your Social Security number. Instead, you can now use a W-2 form, a 1099 form or pay stubs that have your name and full Social Security number as proof.

Before you visit a REAL ID center, you should review the PennDOT REAL ID document checklist to make sure you have all the needed materials at www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID. The closest REAL ID Centers are in Media (1097 W. Baltimore Pike, 19063) and King of Prussia (43 S. Gulph Road, 19406). My office can assist in obtaining copies of Pennsylvania birth certificates or direct you to the proper agencies to obtain other needed documents.

PA Navigate

An Online Tool to Connect Pennsylvanians with Food, Housing, Childcare and More.

The Commonwealth has created a new online tool called PA Navigate to connect you with community organizations, county and state agencies, and health care providers for referrals to resources that help you meet basic needs like food, shelter, transportation and more.

Administered by the PA Department of Human Services, PA Navigate allows you to find services in your area and filter your results based on your needs, desired program specifications or financial eligibility.

Visit www.pa-navigate.org for more information or to find resources in your community. Always feel free to contact my office directly for help.

Was Your Health Insurance Claim Denied?

If you believe your health insurer wrongly denied a claim, you can now request an external review by the PA Department of Insurance.

The external review only applies to health insurance purchased through Pennie, directly from a health insurer, and commercial health insurance purchased by an employer.

You must complete the internal appeal process of your insurer before filing for an external review.

If you are eligible, the PA Insurance Department will assign your request to a certified independent review organization. External review requests are free, and decisions are final and binding.

External review requests can be submitted online by visiting www.pa.gov/reviewmyclaim or you may download a paper request form from this website. You may also call the PA Insurance Department at 1-877-881-6388 if you have questions or need further assistance.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program Deadline Extended

The deadline to apply for the 2023 Property Tax Rent Rebate Program has been extended to Dec. 31, 2024. The state began mailing rebate checks on July 1. This program provides a state rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2023 to income-eligible residents who are 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older.

This year, the maximum standard rebate has been increased from \$650 to \$1,000. To be eligible, your household income in 2023 would need to be \$45,000 or less for both renters and homeowners. An annual cost of living adjustment has also been established for the income level so that the program will keep pace with inflation and increases in Social Security benefits.

When applying, only count half of your Social Security or Federal Railroad Retirement Tier I benefits toward your total income. Applications can be submitted online at www.mypath.pa.gov or by mail with a paper application. You can obtain further information, a paper application and free help applying through my office.

Making Consumer Protection Complaints Online

The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection provides mediation services for individuals who have not been treated fairly in commercial transactions. Typical complaints include disputes with home contractors, problems arising out of the purchase or repair of cars, and health care coverage issues.

The quickest way to file a complaint is online at: www.attorneygeneral.gov/submit-a-complaint/.

You can also call the Consumer Protection Helpline at 1-800-441-2555 or contact my office.

SEPTA Senior ID Cards

SEPTA Key Senior ID Cards (SEPTA Key Cards) allow seniors (65 years and older) to ride for free on all SEPTA service lines in Pennsylvania. The cards expire four years after issuance.

Your Senior Key Card will expire the last day of the month listed on the card. You cannot renew the card until the first day of your expiration month.

My district office can submit first-time and renewing key card requests and take your photo. You will need to bring to my office identification containing your birth date, such as a Pennsylvania driver's license or non-driver ID, U.S. Passport or birth certificate, and your expiring SEPTA card if you are renewing. No appointments are necessary.

To replace a lost or stolen SEPTA Senior Card, you must call SEPTA Customer Service at 855-567-3782.

Improved District Office Services for Unclaimed Property

Recently, the PA Treasury has enhanced the ability of our district office to assist you in getting your unclaimed property.

Unclaimed property includes bank accounts, uncashed checks, insurance policies, contents of forgotten safe deposit boxes, and more. State law requires businesses to report unclaimed property to the Treasury three years after being unable to find or contact the rightful owner.

My office can now file on your behalf and receive notifications on its status and any issues that may arise. We also have a direct line to the unclaimed property department to speak to a live agent about any question we encounter. You can also visit www.patreasury.com to see if the state is holding your unclaimed property.

PA Bans Handheld Cellphone Use While Driving

Pennsylvania has recently enacted legislation to ban the use of handheld cell phones while driving. Texting while driving has been prohibited since 2010.

Cell phone use while driving is permitted with hands-free technology. For this first year the law is in effect, police will only issue warnings. After June 5, 2025, violators will incur a \$50 fine. Using handheld devices for contacting emergency responders is still allowed. Handheld cell phone use while driving is considered a primary offense, so you do not need to be guilty of another infraction to receive a citation.

Electronic Vehicle Fees Coming To PA

Beginning in 2025, owners of electric and hybrid plug-in vehicles will have to pay a road user charge. The new charge for electric vehicles will be \$200 for 2025 and increase to \$250 in 2026. Every year after that, the fee will be reset based on the consumer price index. Owners of plug-in hybrid cars will pay 25 percent of the EV fee, or \$50 in 2025. The fee will be assessed with the annual vehicle registration, by PennDOT. If it is not paid the registration will not be considered valid.

I voted against these changes. The purchase of electric vehicles should be encouraged. Electric vehicles provide the societal benefits of reducing CO2 emissions, conventional air pollutants, and our dependency on foreign oil.

Vitali Cryptocurrency Legislation Becomes Law

I am happy to report that the language of legislation I introduced earlier this legislative term was added to the Tax Code bill passed in conjunction with the Commonwealth's budget and has become law. Last May, I introduced H.B. 1282 to exclude cryptocurrency mining operations from the State's Sales and Use Tax Exemption for the purchase of data center equipment. The crypto mining industry is a massive energy user. Globally, crypto mining consumes more energy than countries like Argentina and Australia. This high level of energy usage increases demand for fossil fuels, placing more stress on the environment and accelerating the climate crisis. Cryptocurrency mining operations should not be incentivized by state tax breaks.

Office Notary Services

Many official government-related documents can be notarized for free in my district or satellite office. Please call ahead to make sure our notary is available and can notarize your type of document.

Our general policy is that the form must be going to a local, state, or federal government agency – like the school board, the state Department of Revenue, or the U.S. Treasury – and even then, there are limitations to some of the documents we are able to complete. **Some of the documents my office cannot notarize include birth certificates, car titles, wills, deeds, marriage certificates, mortgages, powers of attorney, personal financial documents, non-state pension documents, and the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9.**

The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in-person and provide proof of identity. If you are unable to climb the stairs to my district office, our notary can meet you at your vehicle, or you can visit my satellite office (144 Lawrence Road, Broomall, 19008) on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Join My Email Update List

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. To be added to that list, email RepVitali@pahouse.net with your name, address, and request.

Receive My Newsletter Electronically

To reduce postage costs and paper waste, you can opt out of receiving the paper version of my newsletter and receive only the electronic version. Just email your name, request, and address to my office at RepVitali@pahouse.net.

Follow Me on Facebook

You can follow me on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RepVitali. There you will find updates from Harrisburg, district news, and other important state-related information.

District & Satellite Office Hours

My Havertown district office is open to help with your state-related matters from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays.

You may also visit my Broomall satellite office, located at the Potter's House Church (144 Lawrence Road, 19008), on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This office is on the ground floor and disability accessible.