



STATE REPRESENTATIVE RYAN BIZZARRO

PROUDLY SERVING THE 3RD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



SUMMER EDITION

LOCAL DISTRICT OFFICES



Peninsula Plaza ■ 1101 Peninsula Drive, Suite 209 ■ Erie, PA 16505 ■ (814) 835-2880
Open Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Extended office hours: Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

Edinboro Office ■ 124 Meadville St., Suite 222 ■ Edinboro, PA 16412 ■ (814) 734-2773
Open Monday - Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Closed Friday)

McKean Township Municipal Building ■ 9231 Edinboro Road ■ McKean, PA 16426 ■ (814) 835-2880
Open by appointment

Dear Neighbors,

I hope you've had a great summer with friends and family, and are looking forward to the fall season. The past few months have been busy in Harrisburg and in our region, so I wanted to update you on several important issues and events. It is my sincere hope that you find this newsletter informative and helpful!

In addition, if you have any questions or need help with a state-related program or service, please contact one of my constituent service offices. My staff and I are happy to serve you!

All the best,



I enjoyed welcoming members of Erie Firefighters Local 293 to the state Capitol in Harrisburg. These dedicated first responders were on hand to support my H.B. 1113, the Community Paramedicine Services Act.

INSIDE:

- Legislative information
- Updates on state programs and resources
- Photos from Harrisburg and around Erie

What you need to know about the state budget

Though far from perfect, the 2016-17 state budget has been finalized. It makes major investments in important areas like education and human service programs, while avoiding another costly budget impasse. However, we still have more important work to do to help make up the massive structural deficit and implement long-term solutions to put our state back on sound fiscal footing.

The budget increases education funding to schools by \$250 million over the previous fiscal year, including an extra \$200 million for K-12, \$30 million for pre-K and Head Start, and \$20 million for special education. As a result, General McLane School District is receiving a basic education funding increase of over \$148,000, and an increase of over \$15,000 in special education funding. Millcreek Township School District's basic education funding will increase by over \$493,000, while its special education funding will increase by over \$50,000. And while the Erie City School District is not located in my legislative district, many constituents have inquired about its finances under the state budget, so I wanted to let you know that the district will receive a roughly \$3.3 million increase in basic education funding and over \$234,000 in special education funding increases.

The plan also allocates another \$15 million to help combat the opioid and heroin addiction crisis ravaging Pennsylvania. Part of this funding will be used to establish Centers of Excellence throughout the state, which will integrate both behavioral health and primary care to comprehensively treat a person



In February, I listened with my colleague, state Rep. Pat Harkins of Erie County, as Gov. Tom Wolf outlined his state budget plan for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

suffering from addiction. I am proud to report that Esper Treatment Center in Erie County has been named one of 20 Centers of Excellence statewide, and is expected to start treating patients in this way in the fall.

While I am glad that the state budget proceedings have wrapped up in a timely manner, the

commonwealth's fiscal challenges must be addressed soon so they will not affect Pennsylvanians for years to come. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the future to help get the state's finances back in order.

Get health insurance questions answered at my office

I am proud to announce my office has launched a new program to help people learn more about their health insurance options. **From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month, a trained health insurance navigator visits my office at 1101 Peninsula Drive, Suite 209, in the Peninsula Plaza in Millcreek.** While walk-ins are welcomed; appointments are recommended. To make an appointment, please call my office at (814) 835-2880.

The health insurance navigator sits down with residents one-on-one to assess their needs and determine which Health Insurance Marketplace plan will best meet their needs. The navigator can also enroll a person in a plan right on site.

Health insurance is an important part in keeping medical costs down for our communities, so please spread the word about this new initiative!



Legislative Update

I have continued to sponsor and co-sponsor important bills that will help to improve the lives of those around Pennsylvania. Here is some legislation I have supported:

Medical marijuana: Earlier this year, Gov. Tom Wolf signed S.B. 3 into law as Act 16 of 2016, making Pennsylvania the 24th state to legalize marijuana for medical purposes. Some of the qualifying conditions to obtain medical marijuana include cancer, HIV/AIDS, glaucoma, sickle-cell anemia, autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy and multiple sclerosis, among others. Regulations are still being developed to help bring relief to adults and children who need it, but you can find updated information on the program at www.health.pa.gov and clicking on "Pa. Medical Marijuana" under "Hot Topics." If you have further questions, you can also contact my office.



Liquor modernization: The governor signed a law that recently took effect, making the sale of wine and liquor more convenient for Pennsylvania consumers. The new law allows customers to purchase up to four bottles of wine at restaurants, grocery stores and hotels; direct shipment of wine to a consumer's home; more state stores to be open Sundays and holidays, and have longer hours; and some gas stations with restaurant licenses to sell beer to go. The law saves 4,000 jobs across the commonwealth while modernizing

our system, which provides significant revenue for the state. Pennsylvanians should see wine in grocery stores, select restaurants and hotels by the end of the year.



Preventing animal cruelty: As a legislator, I am proud to provide a voice for the voiceless, so I am pleased to report that the House passed my H.B. 869 in April. This legislation is designed to curb and prevent animal cruelty by requiring anyone convicted of animal abuse with a first- or second-degree misdemeanor, or a felony, to forfeit their animals to shelters or similar organizations, among other things. It would not only cut down on further seizure costs, but also would ensure our animals find the loving homes they deserve. I am hoping the Senate takes up the measure soon.



Government transparency: I have introduced H.B. 1981, which would prohibit public officials and employees from receiving any salary or compensation for serving on a corporate or nonprofit board. (The public official or employee still would be permitted to receive reimbursement for actual expenses that are provided to other board members.) Unfortunately, the growing influence of money in elections and government has often made the wealthiest voices the loudest. I believe public servants have an obligation to constituents to ensure that they are responsive to their needs, instead of those of special interests. The bill is part of a legislative reform package being offered by House Democrats to improve transparency in government.

Community paramedicine: In April, the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee held a public hearing at the state Capitol in Harrisburg on my H.B. 1113, which would expand community paramedicine throughout Pennsylvania. The legislation would direct the state Health Department to establish regulations to certify community paramedicine providers, require insurance coverage and medical reimbursement for services, and allow emergency medical services providers to deliver health care in patients' homes or other settings. Community paramedicine already exists in Erie, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, and provides an efficient alternative to the emergency room for patients with chronic illnesses or who need follow-up care. The hearing reinforced the advantages community paramedicine would bring to our state, and I urge the legislature to take up the issue soon.



Testifiers at a House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee public hearing on my legislation to expand community paramedicine in Pennsylvania included representatives from the following organizations: Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania Inc.; Geisinger Health System; Highmark Inc.; EnergyCare; Pennsylvania Emergency Health Services Council Community Paramedicine Task Force; Ambulance Association of Pennsylvania; and Insurance Federation of Pennsylvania.

Out and about in Erie and Harrisburg



In March, I supported members of Alliance of Bikers Aimed Toward Education of PA at a rally at the state Capitol to lobby for tougher penalties for distracted driving accidents. I was proud to vote for the House passage of H.B. 853, which would bring the penalty for distracted driving accidents in line with drunken driving offenses.



In June, I stood with Gov. Tom Wolf and a bipartisan group of legislators in the Capitol Rotunda to support efforts to combat the growing opioid crisis in Pennsylvania. The governor outlined a special legislative session to take place this fall, several joint House Democratic and Republican Policy Committee public hearings, and other legislative actions to help eradicate this addiction.



Earlier this year, my colleagues, state Reps. Pat Harkins and Flo Fabrizio, and I met with Erie-area educators in Harrisburg to discuss their concerns about education funding.



In April, I had the opportunity to shadow the dedicated direct support professionals and the residents of Erie Homes for Children and Adults Inc. at the organization's community support home in Millcreek.



In February, I had the pleasure of welcoming students from Edinboro University to my Harrisburg office to learn more about the legislative process.



I was proud to honor local resident Dr. Wei-Shin Lai, who was presented with the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2016 Award in the Retail and Consumer Products category in the Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia Region by Ernst & Young. Dr. Lai is the CEO of AcousticSheep LLC, an Erie-based company which strives to help people get a good night's sleep with its SleepPhones – headphones specifically designed for sleeping.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program accepting applications through Dec. 31

The deadline to file a 2015 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program application has been extended through Dec. 31, 2016.

This program provides a state rebate on paid 2015 property taxes or rent to income-eligible residents 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older.

To be eligible, your household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter.

When applying, you only have to count half of your Social Security or federal railroad retirement Tier I benefits toward your total income.

You can obtain information about the program, an application and free help applying through my constituent service offices or on the state Department of Revenue's website at www.revenue.pa.gov.



Over the past few months, my staff and I have enjoyed preparing Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program applications for eligible residents.

My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial aid for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Getting answers to your Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature – 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
- PACE/PACENET prescription-drug 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



Stay in the know!

You can stay updated on legislative activities in Harrisburg and issues affecting our region by signing up for email alerts on my website at www.pahouse.com/Bizzarro. Just click on the envelope icon at the top of the page.

On my website, you can also find links to helpful state-related websites and services, the latest legislative news, and information about my office.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Ryan A. Bizzarro

P.O. Box 202003
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2003

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- Updates on state programs and resources
- Photos from Harrisburg and around Erie

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I always enjoy visiting with students and faculty members from my alma mater, Edinboro University! Here we are pictured in the House chamber at the state Capitol in Harrisburg.