



State Representative to the 50th Legislative District

Pam SNYDER



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Fall 2013

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

Welcome to my first newsletter as your state representative!

Part of my promise to residents of the 50th Legislative District was to keep the community informed.

This first edition includes information on the Pennsylvania budget – its bright spots and shortfalls. It also highlights key legislative decisions as well as events and issues in the district.

The year has been issue-filled, from the contamination and cleanup of Ten Mile Creek and the deal to rebuild the dam at Ryerson Station State Park, to the planned shutdown of the Hatfield's Ferry Power Station in Greene County.

Through it all, my staff and I are here to serve you. The newsletter contains

information about my three district offices in Carmichaels, Brownsville and Waynesburg. We're also expanding our constituent outreach with planned monthly visits throughout the district.

Please stop by the offices or attend one of the outreach events if you need assistance or have questions on state government issues or programs.

I was appointed to four significant committees: Environmental Resources and Energy, Aging and Older Adult Services, Game and Fisheries and Labor and Industry. The appointments are a great match for the district, as I will be dealing directly with issues that have a direct impact locally.

Information, including news releases and links to key state resources, is available online at www.pahouse.com/Snyder. You may also sign up for e-mail alerts for up-to-the-minute news from the capital and around the district. You can also follow me on Facebook and Twitter.

Please feel free to reach out to us. My staff and I are here to serve YOU!

All the best,

Dismal state budget has a few bright spots

Despite spending increases, the state's new \$28.4 billion budget plan is a measure of mediocrity, offering very little to address Pennsylvania's most pressing problems like education and economic development.

The 2013-14 budget fails to find solutions and reinforces poor policy decisions of the past. I was most disappointed in the lack of consideration to both create and retain jobs within the state. Pennsylvania is rated near the bottom on such efforts, and the spending plan does little to change dismal unemployment and economic development numbers.

Rep. Snyder speaks out for better funding for job creation and public education during a Capitol news conference.



Inadequate school funding

Only nine states contribute a lower percentage to education than Pennsylvania. Failing to provide the state funding needed to maintain a “thorough and efficient” education system puts the fiscal burden on the backs of property taxpayers. This is unfair to our hardworking, middle-class families and retirees.

I was not a member of the House of Representatives when almost \$900 million was cut from the education budget three years ago. The state budget restores too little to begin undoing the harms.

Below are the decreases in basic education and education block grant funding as compared to three years ago and the cuts PER STUDENT that they represent:

West Greene	\$337,902 less	\$402 less per student
Southeastern Greene	\$599,257 less	\$973 less per student
Bethlehem Center	\$565,583 less	\$433 less per student
Carmichaels	\$833,395 less	\$737 less per student
Albert Gallatin	\$2,067,386 less	\$546 less per student
Central Greene	\$1,067,039 less	\$553 less per student
Jefferson Morgan	\$423,294 less	\$500 less per student
Brownsville	\$1,139,094 less	\$608 less per student

I fought for a better plan that included restoring the cuts to basic education, accountability block grants, charter school reimbursements and other educational programs over the next three years without increasing taxes.

I will continue the fight to provide adequate and responsible funding for public education. The current situation – inadequate funding and an unfair reliance on property taxes – is untenable.

Coal country will fight back

FirstEnergy Corp.’s plans to shut down the Hatfield’s Ferry Power Station in Greene County and the Mitchell Power Station in Washington County pose a significant blow to the region’s coal industry.

Citing environmental costs and low coal prices, the utility said that about 380 employees at the plants and in generation-related positions are expected to be affected.

I understand the economics behind the decision to close the plants. What I question are the regulatory policies that put at risk the economic survival of regions that have given their life bloods to power the nation.

I will never accept the reasoning that a low-cost, abundant resource like coal does not have a cornerstone in our energy foundation. The coal and power industry has made great strides addressing environmental concerns, and “clean coal” technologies have never been given more than lip service.

The two plants produce 10 percent of FirstEnergy’s power, but would have required 30 percent of the company’s estimated \$925 million cost of compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency’s Mercury and Air Toxics Standards.

Imagine what could be done in the region if some of that money was devoted to clean coal technology or enhancing the use of waste coal. In many respects, coal remains a “miracle mineral” that should not be doomed to the slag heap.

Seeing such strident policies hit home is a bitter pill indeed.

We must not forget that coal still will constitute 56 percent of its energy supply despite the announced closing of 11 coal-

fired plants since last year.

Yes, coal will survive, as will coal country. However, the repercussions of these shutdowns must be addressed in Harrisburg and Washington.

I am working with the state Department of Labor and Industry’s Rapid Response team to make sure assistance will be available to displaced workers.

And I will continue to work to ensure coal’s cornerstone in our nation’s energy foundation.



I joined hundreds of area workers for a rally this summer protesting FirstEnergy Corp.’s plans to shut down Hatfield’s Ferry Power Station in Greene County and the Mitchell Power Station in Washington County.



I take the helm of a barge in the Monongahela River – Pennsylvania’s river of the year! – in Greene County. My river sojourn was part of a state House Coal Caucus visit in September to the region.

BUDGET BRIGHT SPOTS

MINING CENTER: It didn't make a lot of headlines, but Pennsylvania's budget for 2013-14 includes almost \$1 million for the Mining Training and Technology Center in Washington Township, Greene County. I went to bat forcefully for the funding for the training center because the facility fulfills a vital mission in coal-rich southwestern Pennsylvania by training the next generation of America's coal miners and mine rescue teams. One life lost in a mine is one too many.

HEALTH: The budget restores funding for diabetes programs, biotechnology research, epilepsy services, lupus and other programs involving chronic diseases.

The budget also includes \$19.9 million to provide community waiver services for 1,180 intellectually disabled citizens in 2013-14, including 380 people on waiting lists.

STATE POLICE: The budget provides \$210 million for state troopers, an increase of \$15 million or 7.6 percent. This will allow the state police to hire 290 cadets, vital because more than 1,200 state troopers were eligible to retire this summer.

SENIOR PROGRAMS: The commonwealth can thank its successful Pennsylvania Lottery for a record investment in programs for older state residents in the 2013-14 spending plan.

The budget provides an additional \$50 million for senior programs, including:

- \$49 million to expand home- and community-based services for 4,528 elderly and disabled Pennsylvanians;
- \$2 million in grants to senior centers to modernize facilities and programs; and
- \$5 million in enhanced support to Area Agencies on Aging.

Missed Opportunities

MEDICAID EXPANSION: The governor continues to balk at the federally funded Medicaid expansion, even though more than half the states have seen the wisdom in doing so.

Medicaid expansion would provide more than half a million Pennsylvanians with health care – including 30,000 veterans – and would create 40,000 good-paying jobs.

Denying Medicaid expansion also will cost us existing jobs at hospitals across the state that are struggling with uncompensated care.

TRANSPORTATION: A plan that would have adequately and fairly funded transportation infrastructure – our roads and bridges – was a late and unfortunate casualty of the budget process. The plan, which had bipartisan support, also would have fast-tracked needed projects in the region while creating jobs.

Transportation funding could be revisited soon, and I will continue to work in a bipartisan fashion to pass a proposal that addresses the needs of the 50th Legislative District and all of Pennsylvania.

Misguided Priorities

LIQUOR PRIVATIZATION: At one point during the budget deliberations, an attempt was made to tie passage of the budget to privatization of the liquor stores. I support modernizing our liquor system and not the outright selling of a proven revenue producer. Infighting among the majority party led to a standstill on this issue, which could be revisited soon.

LOTTERY PRIVATIZATION: An effort during the budget process to privatize our Pennsylvania Lottery collapsed. However, the attention given to the privatization scheme detracted from attention to the budget.

Little support exists in the legislature for selling operations of the lottery, which consistently provides more than \$1 billion yearly to benefit seniors.

Unfortunately, the ink had barely dried on the budget when the first of several contract extensions with a British firm that wants to buy the lottery was announced. The misguided and revenue-draining quest to sell off the lottery continues, despite an earlier ruling by the state attorney general that the legislature must have a say in such a sell-off.

PENSION REFORM: Unconstitutional changes proposed for public employee pension plans impeded progress on a better budget.

The pension shortfalls the state faces were not caused by teachers and state workers, but a short-sighted decision by the state to underfund pensions when investment returns outpaced projections in the early 1990s.

One proposal still under consideration would cost more than \$37 billion to transition to a new, 401(k)-style system, which would outpace any projected savings. Stay tuned.



State Reps. Mike Sturla (left), committee chairman, and Brandon Neuman of Washington County, join me for discussions about energy policies and looming coal-plant shutdowns during a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing in Jefferson.

How Does Redistricting Affect You?

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court earlier this year upheld a redistricting plan that redraws the boundaries of all 203 state House and all 50 state Senate districts.

Effective December 2014, the plan moves various townships and boroughs into and out of the 50th Legislative District, which I currently represent. Depending on where you live, you could be in a different legislative district and represented by a different state representative – but not until late next year.

All the statewide maps are available on the Legislative Reapportionment Commission's website, www.redistricting.state.pa.us.

Most of the current 50th Legislative District will not be affected by the changes. All of Greene County will remain in the 50th District. Also remaining in the 50th District will be East Bethlehem Township and Brownsville and Masontown boroughs in Washington County, and Luzerne Township, Fayette County.

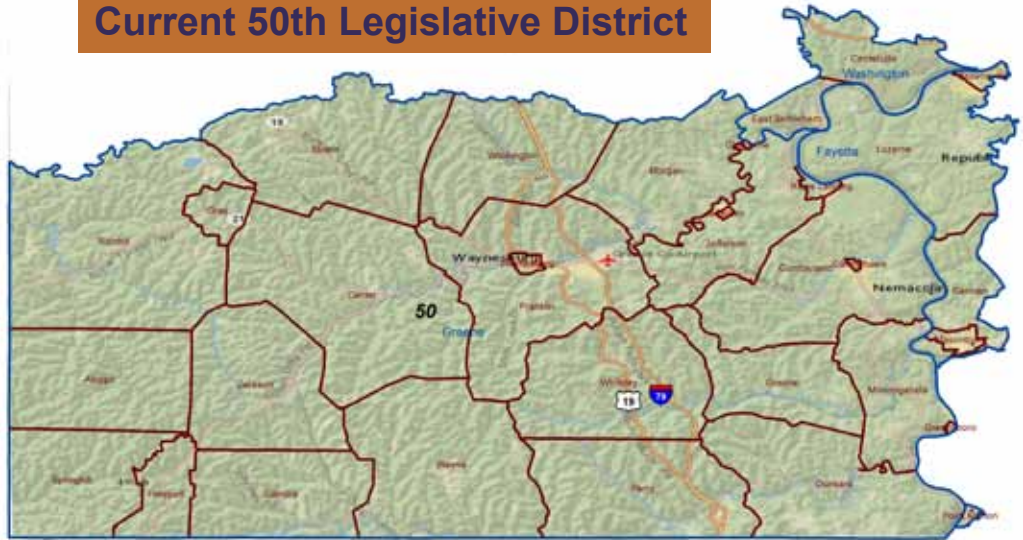
However, there are changes to the 50th Legislative District involving municipalities in Fayette County. All of German Township and Point Marion Borough will move to the 51st Legislative District in December 2014.

Brownsville and Redstone townships, currently in the 49th Legislative District, will move to the 50th in December 2014.

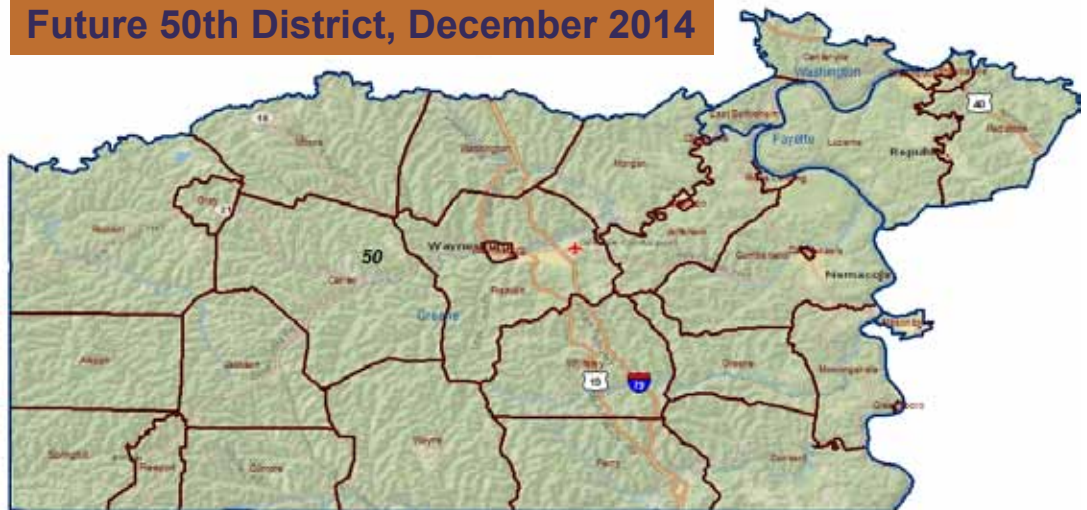
It is important to note that these changes do not affect your township, borough or school district affiliation. Again, the transition will take effect in December 2014. No matter the changes, I remain committed to providing the best of service to ALL citizens.

As always, my offices are available for any questions you may have.

Current 50th Legislative District



Future 50th District, December 2014



I was all smiles as I took the oath of office on Jan. 1st to represent the 50th Legislative District in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. At right, my family joins me for the ceremony in the House chamber.



I share a lighter moment with Alice Souders of Waynesburg during the free document-shredding event that I helped sponsor at the Greene County Fairgrounds. In July, I helped sponsor an electronics recycling event, also at the fairgrounds.



I made many a friend while stocking trout in Ten Mile and Browns creeks in Greene and Washington counties on a sparkling spring day, along with members of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, volunteers, and local anglers.



It was an honor to help introduce the reigning Pennsylvania Bituminous Coal Queen – Ashley Avolio of South Strabane Township, Washington County – around the state Capitol in Harrisburg. Ashley was crowned the 59th Pennsylvania Bituminous Coal Queen last August at Carmichaels Area High School. I was joined in the presentation of a citation to Ashley by House Speaker Sam Smith; Ashley’s parents, Armando and Kathleen Avolio; and state Rep. Brandon Neuman.

Veterans' Corner

Pennsylvania vehicle owners can show their support of veterans with the new “Honoring Our Veterans” license plate available through PennDOT. The plate features images of the American flag and a bald eagle with the words “Honoring Our Veterans.” The plate is available for cars and light trucks. It costs \$35, and \$15 from each sale goes to the Veterans Trust Fund, which provides grants to veterans’ service organizations and other organizations assisting Pennsylvania veterans.



Please call or stop by my offices for a form to obtain the new plate or for help with any other PennDOT driver or vehicle service.

It’s a banner day when you can join members of the American Legion in Waynesburg to celebrate Flag Day. We also had another reason to celebrate – a reprieve until February 2013 on the requirement that veterans’ groups and fraternal organizations file burdensome reports on the small games of chance they operate. The moratorium provides time to revamp the Small Games of Chance law so the organizations can continue to help our communities.



My House Bill 1002 would name the new state Route 88 bridge over Ten Mile Creek after Marine Lt. Gen. William M. Keys, a highly decorated military veteran and a native of Fredericktown, Washington County. In June, the House unanimously approved naming the span the Lieutenant General William M. Keys Bridge, which connects Jefferson Township, Greene County, and East Bethlehem Township, Washington County. It awaits action in the state Senate. After winning acclaim during the Vietnam Conflict and Desert Storm in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Keys became president and CEO of Colt Manufacturing Company and resurrected Colt from the brink of bankruptcy to an international leader in defense production. He remains on the board of directors of Colt Defense LLC.

Earlier this year, I helped to pass House Bill 159, which would establish the Veterans First Tax Credit for small business. The measure would provide a \$4,000-a-year tax credit to businesses with fewer than 100 employees to hire veterans who are currently unemployed. The bill is expected to create 12,500 jobs for state veterans who have been out of work for more than six months.

I am proud to support H.B. 159. The bill is now before the Senate for consideration.



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Rep. Pam Snyder

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INSIDE:

- A few bright spots in dismal Pa. budget
- Fighting for coal jobs
- News for veterans

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Let us help with Property Tax/Rent Rebates

Free assistance with filing applications for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is available in my district offices. The program, primarily funded by the Pennsylvania Lottery, has contributed \$4.8 billion in rebates for older Pennsylvanians and those living with disabilities.

The program provides rebates on property taxes paid in 2012 to eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities age 18 or older. The annual income limit is \$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters. Half of Social Security, Supplemental Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I income is excluded.

The deadline to apply has been extended to Dec. 31, 2013.

NEED HELP WITH YOUR JOB SEARCH?

The Employment Center on my website offers a one-stop resource for job seekers. Get advice on searching for a job, writing a resume, interview tips, and how to dress for success, as well as information about job-training programs and transportation options.

To access the Employment Center, visit www.pahouse.com/Snyder.



Constituent outreach!

Can't make it to one of my offices?

No problem. My staff is now making regular monthly visits to Washington and Fayette counties!

In Fayette County, my staff will be available on the following days and locations:

- From 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at the Hiller Volunteer Fire Dept., 937 First St.; and
- From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Masontown Borough Municipal Center, 1 E. Church Ave.

In Washington County, staff will be available on the following days and locations:

- From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at the Fredericktown Area Public Library, 38 Water St.; and
- From 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Richeyville Volunteer Fire Co., 14 Firehall Road.

I want to ensure that the people of the 50th Legislative District are fully aware of all the state programs available to them. No appointments are necessary, and my staff will be able to assist with any state program, from the state's prescription drug assistance programs, to property tax and rent rebates and everything in between.

The monthly outreaches will not affect my regular offices at 104 S. Market St. in Carmichaels, at 33 Market St. in Brownsville and at 93 E. High St. in Waynesburg. Contact information is available through my website, www.pahouse.com/Snyder.

Please call my Carmichaels office at 724-966-8953 with any questions.