



# Tonyelle COOK-ARTIS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 200<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

104 Irvis Office Building • P.O. Box 202200 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2200 ..... (717) 783-2178  
1536 E. Wadsworth Ave. • Philadelphia, PA 19150 ..... (215) 242-7300  
Email: [TArtis@pahouse.net](mailto:TArtis@pahouse.net) ..... Website: [www.pahouse.com/Cook-Artis](http://www.pahouse.com/Cook-Artis)

## FALL 2016

Dear Neighbor,

*It has been an honor serving you as state Representative for the 200<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. Since my swearing in on April 5, I worked hard to make critical decisions on issues in Harrisburg that impact you and your family, including providing more funding for education in this year's budget.*

*Locally, I partnered with city officials to bring our community together through town hall meetings and beautification projects to make our neighborhoods better places to live. I held several events to provide you and your family with important information on how to seek out higher education opportunities, make decisions on your estates and other future event planning, and how to navigate the state's pardon process.*

*While I am stepping down as your state representative, I am not going away. I will continue serving the community as a member of the board of directors for the Lupus Foundation of America Tri-State Chapter.*

*I invite you to stay in touch with me. You can email me at [tonyellecartis@gmail.com](mailto:tonyellecartis@gmail.com).*

*So this is not good-bye, but rather see you later. Be well!*



### Renovations coming to Philadelphia libraries, thanks to \$1 million grant

I helped secure a \$1 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant for the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation. The funding will be used toward the foundation's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Libraries Initiative.

The project will upgrade and modernize the main library location and four neighborhood libraries, including Lovett Memorial Library in my district. The Lovett location will be closed until October 2017 for renovations.

### Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program deadline expires Dec. 31

I want to remind you that the deadline to file a 2015 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program application is Dec. 31, 2016.

The Property Tax/Rent 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 and any COLAs are excluded. The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates can boost rebates up to \$975.

Earlier this month, Gov. Tom Wolf signed into law legislation that will remove veterans' disability payments from the definition of income that is used to determine eligibility for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

Please don't assume you are not eligible for the program. Half of Social Security income is discounted, and claimants are not disqualified from rebates solely because of Social Security cost-of-living adjustments.

To find out if you qualify, or for more information about the program, go to [www.revenue.pa.gov](http://www.revenue.pa.gov).

## Working to combat the opioid epidemic in Pa.

In late October, the General Assembly passed several bills that begin to fulfill the commitment it made with Gov. Tom Wolf earlier this year to attack the opioid and heroin epidemic in Pennsylvania. The governor signed the bills into law in November.

In addition to these bills, legislators also added funding in this year's state budget to implement opioid treatment centers across the state that will help 11,000 more people get treatment.

### THE LAWS PASSED WILL:

- Limit opioid prescriptions given to minors and require parents or guardians to sign a consent form and discuss the risks of addiction and overdose before opioids are prescribed.
- Require continuing education on opioid prescribing and addiction treatment for medical professionals. It also requires physicians and pharmacists to check the state's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database each time they prescribe an opioid or controlled substance; requires pharmacists to enter data into the database within 24 hours of issuing an opioid prescription; and requires all prescribers and dispensers of controlled substances to register with the database. Previous law did not mandate registration with the database, and only required doctors to check the database the first time they prescribed an opioid or controlled substance, or if they suspected a patient was abusing or selling drugs.
- Limit the amount of opioids prescribed in emergency rooms and urgent care centers to a 7-day supply without a refill, and require caretakers to refer patients to treatment if they exhibit signs of addiction.
- Require the state boards of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Optometry, Osteopathic Medicine and Podiatry to develop a curriculum on safe opioid prescribing for medical schools by August 2017.
- Allow all federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, hospitals, assisted living facilities, home healthcare agencies, long-term nursing facilities, hospices and licensed pharmacies to serve as drop-off locations for unused, unwanted or expired prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs.

These bills represent a significant initial step in the General Assembly's bipartisan effort to help victims of substance abuse disorder and relieve the tremendous financial, health and social burden the opioid and heroin epidemic has placed on families, healthcare providers and law enforcement agencies in communities across Pennsylvania.

## Home heating assistance program now open

The 2016-17 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program — LIHEAP — opened on Nov. 1.

LIHEAP offers cash grants of \$200 to \$1,000 that are sent directly to the utility company, and crisis benefits of \$25 to \$500 for households in immediate danger of being without heat. If you're living in a family of four and have a household income less than \$36,450, you qualify for LIHEAP.

Visit [www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov) for more information on the program or to download an application.

## You have more options to pay on the Pennsylvania Turnpike

The Pennsylvania Turnpike is now accepting payment by credit and debit cards at its toll booths. Turnpike officials said that it is not the best way to pay for tolls, because it takes longer and creates vehicle lines, but it is a viable option should you find yourself without cash or an EZ Pass transponder to pay for a toll.

A transponder is the best way to travel the Turnpike. You can find out more about EZ Pass by going to [www.paturndpike.com](http://www.paturndpike.com).

## Registration stickers no longer required starting in 2017

Beginning Jan. 1, 2017, registration stickers that go on your vehicle license plate will no longer be needed. The last registration sticker will be issued Dec. 30, 2016. However, you must still renew your vehicle registration and get it inspected when it's due.

If you renew your registration online, you will be able to save a copy of your registration card and print it to put in your vehicle.

PennDOT is proposing a grant program to utilize the savings from the elimination of the registration stickers. The program could provide grants to police departments to purchase and maintain license plate readers.

For more information, visit [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov).

# Happenings in the 50th Ward



We helped more than 300 people safely get rid of unwanted documents and electronics during the shredding and e-recycling event that I co-hosted with Councilwoman Cherelle Parker.



Thank you to the volunteers who joined me and Councilwoman Cherelle Parker for the Wadsworth Avenue Beautification Project.



I joined a great turnout for the Quality of Life meeting hosted by Councilwoman Cherelle Parker and held in the 50<sup>th</sup> Ward. Attendees joined in the discussion about public safety. It connected our youth of all ages to resources and economic development.



I was thrilled to join Mayor Jim Kenney, Councilwoman Cherelle Parker and other officials for a major revitalization for the Mt. Airy section of my district. The revitalization will include storefront façade improvements, installation of pedestrian-scale lighting and restoration of the recess lighting implanted in the businesses, streetscape enhancements, new signage and banners branding the community as Mt. Airy, and trash receptacles to encourage cleanliness.



## Tonyelle Cook-Artis

P.O. Box 202200  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2200

lpo.jc.1116

## Helping students get a leg up on a great career

Graduating high school seniors and adults searching for new career opportunities connected with representatives from several colleges, universities and labor unions during my College, Vocational and Labor Information Fair.



**I had a great time meeting so many students and their parents while they obtained information on higher education facilities that would be most suitable to them. The fair also provided information on how to pay for college, as well as managing life as a student.**

## Estate Planning Workshop a success!

We had a great turnout for my Estate Planning Workshop in October. More than 100 people attended to learn how to “get their house in order” with information about deeds and wills, the importance of a will and the difference between a will and a trust, long-term and whole life insurance, and the inheritance tax, and to discuss obtaining Property Tax/Rent Rebates for deceased loved ones.



**I would like to thank the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance, Pennsylvania Bar Association, Philadelphia Department of Records, Philadelphia Register of Wills, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging and the Social Security Administration for participating in this important event.**

## Students, parents: You can now file 2017-18 FAFSA

Please be aware that anyone who will be attending college in the 2017-18 school year can now file their FAFSA — Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Previously, the applications were not available until Jan. 1 of the school year.

This is an important change, as the FAFSA must be filed each year for any college student who wishes to be considered for state or federal grants.

Along with the date change, families will use their previous tax year information, instead of the tax information that would be filed by April of the school year.

Both of these changes will make it easier to file the application in a more timely manner and will better coincide with the actual college application process for incoming students.

More information about paying for college is available at the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency website, [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org).

And remember, the first word in FAFSA is FREE, so there is no need to pay anyone to file the application on your behalf.