



REP. RYAN BIZZARRO'S

# BIZZ REPORT

WINTER EDITION, 2020

## PA HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE COMING IN 2020

This year, the Pennsylvania Insurance Department will offer a state-based health insurance exchange. The winner in all of this will be the state's insurance consumers, who will benefit from lower, more stable premiums. We know these kinds of plans work because they are already working to lower premiums in other states that have adopted state-run exchanges.



The new state system will afford Pennsylvanians access to quality health care and low premiums, and pay for itself. There is zero cost to the state's General Fund and zero cost to the taxpayer. It's a true win-win for everyone. I am excited to watch as the new system takes shape and begins to produce greater benefits – and fewer worries – for Pennsylvania's health care consumers.

As additional information becomes available, I will be sure to share it with you.

You can also visit my website, [www.pahouse.com/bizarro](http://www.pahouse.com/bizarro) for developments on the State-Based Exchange.

## UPMC & HIGHMARK COME TO 10-YEAR AGREEMENT

I was happy to report that UPMC and Highmark entered a 10-year contract providing Highmark customers continued access to all UPMC doctors and facilities. This agreement will help ensure that our friends and family have access to quality care without fear of surmounting medical bills.

This is a tremendous relief to me, and the millions of Pennsylvanians who will now remain in the care of medical providers they have come to trust with their well-being. Preserving continuous quality care is an important part of navigating medical issues; I was happy to fight alongside my colleagues and the attorney general to encourage these two providers to come together for the best interests of our family, friends and neighbors.

## HEALTH CARE NAVIGATORS AVAILABLE

The commonwealth offers excellent, **FREE** counseling to discuss health insurance options that can help you with your personal coverage decisions. Call my office at (814) 835-2880 to set up a meeting with a specially trained counselor.

Supporting our veterans is one of my top priorities and I was gratified when the Pennsylvania House of Representatives recently adopted my House Resolution 608 to designate November 22, 2019 as Veterans Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day.

Our nation's veterans have served our country and we have an obligation to serve and support them. I want each and every veteran to know there are resources available to help them heal from the scars of war.

I believe it is critically important to draw attention to this tragedy, and my resolution urges everyone to recognize there are free and confidential resources available,

including those from the Veterans Health Administration Providers through the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255, online at [veteranscrisisline.net/chat](http://veteranscrisisline.net/chat) or via text to 838255.

The United States loses more than 8,000 veterans to suicide each year – 22 every day. That is more than the number of veterans who died in combat deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq combined. We have to work earnestly to make sure these men and women who have given our nation so much know there is no shame in seeking help and make it easy for vets and their families to reach out.

## VETERANS' LIAISON

An expert caseworker from the state VFW holds office hours at my Millcreek office on the second Tuesday of each month from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. to help answer veterans' questions about state programs and services. Call my office at 814-835-2880 to schedule an appointment.



Rep. Ryan Bizarro attends the Erie Elks Lodge No. 67's 6th Annual Veterans Bingo Luncheon (Nov. 7, 2019).



## IMPROVING THE AFFORDABILITY OF LIFE-SAVING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Prescription drug costs are at an all-time high and are only continuing to rise. I am proud to support the Prescription Drug Affordability Act, which would establish an independent board to identify high-priced prescriptions, study those drugs and institute limits on what Pennsylvanians pay for medications.

Too many people in Erie are currently being forced to choose between paying for prescriptions or paying the bills for basic necessities like housing

and groceries. This is a choice that no human being should have to make. No person should have to jeopardize their health and safety because of astronomical health care costs with no relief in sight.

The bill is currently awaiting consideration by the House Health Committee. I look forward to continuing to push for its passage in Pennsylvania, as well as the benefits this Act will bring to everyone in our commonwealth.



Rep. Bizarro presents a citation to Sharon Inman, recipient of the Ray Kroc Award.

# WORKING TO SAVE THE SEAWOLVES, OTHER PA MINOR LEAGUE TEAMS

WWW.PAHOUSE.COM/BIZZARRO  
(814) 835-2880



Following a recent announcement from MLB that three of Pennsylvania's minor league baseball teams were facing elimination, I've been working to save the Erie SeaWolves, State College Spikes and the Williamsport Crosscutters.

These teams are a part of our community and have economic benefits across our community. It shocked me that the MLB would even consider eliminating the SeaWolves. They offer an affordable experience for baseball enthusiasts and families. Oftentimes, the minor league experience is a sport fan's only possible live encounter with the game. The economic impact of their elimination could result in more than \$10 million annually felt by downtown Erie, including restaurants, hotels, and jobs.

The state recently made a \$12 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant investment in UPMC Park, and it is important that this team stay open for our community to fully realize the benefits of that investment.

I will keep you posted on how this story unfolds. Please know I am working with local and state officials to ensure the MLB understands the far-reaching impact a decision like this would have on our community.



# ONE STEP CLOSER TO ESTABLISHING VETERANS COURTS

The Pennsylvania Senate recently approved legislation that would establish Veterans Courts in counties where they do not currently exist. The creation of these courts is an additional support to our veterans by giving courts the flexibility to address when struggling veterans face the criminal justice system. I have introduced this legislation in the House for several legislative sessions and I am happy to see it get one step closer to the governor's desk.

Pennsylvania's veterans willingly faced extraordinary danger, and once home they often face extraordinary challenges. We must do our part to support the needs of those who have given so much to protect our freedoms.

You can visit [legis.state.pa.us](http://legis.state.pa.us) and search SB976 to track the progress of this legislation.



*Rep. Bizzarro answers questions from students in Mr. Hoderny's criminal justice class at McDowell High School.*



*Rep. Bizzarro reviews Governor Tom Wolf's 2020-21 Budget Address.*



*Rep. Bizzarro attends the HANDS Annual Community Celebration to present a citation sponsored by fellow Erie Legislators Pat Harkins and Bob Merski.*

# GRANTS TO THE DISTRICT

WWW.PAHOUSE.COM/BIZZARRO  
(814) 835-2880



I work with state officials and agencies in Harrisburg to make sure that your tax dollars come back home and are improving our community. Here's a look at some of the many worthwhile projects and organizations here in Erie County that have been awarded state grant funding:

## 2019 TOTAL: \$23.33 MILLION

This total includes investments to 47 entities for clean drinking water; education from pre-K to apprenticeships and internships; fire and EMS grants; public safety initiatives; community revitalization; conservation; improved technological developments; and health care.

**2020: \$409,442** so far...

**\$120,000:** PA Department of Labor and Industry to bolster career readiness for Erie students by promoting school-business partnerships.

**\$105,000:** PA Department of Education's PAsmart grant designed to help schools introduce and expand computer science programming.

**\$184,442:** Office of the State Fire Commissioner's Fire Company Emergency Medical Service Grant Program, benefiting local fire and emergency medical service providers.

Keep an eye on my website and social media accounts where I share grant opportunities and announcements as they become available. If you have an organization who you think may qualify for state investments, stop by my office for more information or email me at [RepBizzarro@pahouse.net](mailto:RepBizzarro@pahouse.net).



*Rep. Ryan Bizzarro visits Ms. Schuster's class. Bizzarro delivered cookies and read a story to the children.*

# MAKE SURE YOUR VOICE IS HEARD! FILL OUT THE 2020 CENSUS

Every 10 years, the United States conducts a census. This count of U.S. residents helps determine how \$675 billion is spent by the federal government and how Pennsylvania is represented in Congress for the next 10 years.

Your response can help save lives by ensuring we get the resources needed to fund vital programs like CHIP, Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, road construction and infrastructure improvements.

If you need help filling out the 2020 Census, please contact my office. My staff and I are happy to help make sure your voice is heard and the needs of our community are represented in Harrisburg and in Washington.

This year, it will be even easier to make sure you and your family are counted. Respond online, by paper or over the phone. The census will be printed in English and Spanish, accommodations are available for those with visual or hearing impairments, and telephone assistance will be available in 13 languages.



*Rep. Bizzarro supports Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority's investments in community centers throughout Erie.*

# HOUSE DESIGNATES NOVEMBER AS NATIONAL EPILEPSY AWARENESS MONTH

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The Pennsylvania House of Representatives unanimously adopted my resolution designating November 2019 as National Epilepsy Awareness Month in the commonwealth.

Epilepsy is known for the recurring seizures this neurological disorder causes. More than 3.4 million Americans have epilepsy, and more than 50,000 people die each year as a result of epilepsy. I am happy to bring awareness to this serious but treatable condition. Awareness and knowledge can help save lives.

The resolution (H.B. 570) notes that the Epilepsy Association of Western and Central Pennsylvania and the Epilepsy Foundation Eastern Pennsylvania lead the fight to stop seizures, find a cure and overcome the challenges created by epilepsy. Even in today's world, misinformation and misperceptions about epilepsy remain. Education and awareness programs seek to combat stigma in the hope of improving the quality of life for people with epilepsy, and I am hopeful that with the adoption of this resolution we may contribute to that effort in some small way.



*Nick Sorenson and other advocates commemorate the passage of House Resolution 497 designating October Dwarfism Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. At the request of his constituents, Bizzarro introduced the resolution to challenge the stigma associated with individuals affected by dwarfism and ensure that they are treated with respect and dignity. Those affected by dwarfism deserve equal treatment and should be defined by their character, not by their condition.*

## SEE HOW MY OFFICE CAN HELP!

As your state representative, one of my most important jobs is helping you get the most out of your state government. The list below can help explain some of the many ways we can help.

- Car registrations, special tags, duplicate titles and license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Unemployment compensation problems
- Birth certificate applications
- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, welfare)
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information, student aid information, etc.
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Consumer complaints
- Complaints about road conditions
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Disability plates and placards
- Free notary service
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- Local government officials' problems with state agencies
- Fishing, boating and hunting information

Please remember that the list above is not exhaustive. Don't hesitate to call my office or stop in to see how we can help with any state government problem or question!

**WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU!**



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# RYAN A. BIZZARRO

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lpo.jc.0220



It's been a busy and productive legislative session. The numbers to the right are a snapshot of just some of the ways my staff and I are working for you in Harrisburg and in Erie. These accomplishments serve as inspiration to continue serving you!

**LEGISLATION**  
 INTRODUCED  
 11 BILLS  
 12 RESOLUTIONS  
 CO-SPONSORED  
 65 BILLS  
 361 RESOLUTIONS

**TWELVE MONTHS OF PROGRESS**  
 A LEGISLATIVE LOOK AT 2019

**12,411**  
 CASES CLOSED

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**RYAN BIZZARRO**  
  
 PROUDLY WORKING FOR THE  
 PEOPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA

**\$22.3 MILLION**  
 BROUGHT BACK TO THE REGION

**9,813**  
 SERVICES PROVIDED TO  
 CONSTITUENTS