



Frank Burns

State Representative

72nd Legislative District



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Summer 2014

Consumer Protection Seminars planned

Do you have questions about telemarketing scams or dealing with utilities?

Rep. Frank Burns is hosting two consumer protection seminars aimed at older residents, but everyone is invited.

Experts from the Public Utility Commission and Office of Consumer Advocate will address concerns about utility companies and general telemarketing scams.

NOON
THURSDAY, JULY 31
PATTON SENIOR CENTER
405 Park Ave.
Patton, PA 16668

NOON
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27
PORTAGE SENIOR CENTER
505 Farren St.
Portage, PA 15946

Please RSVP for either of these seminars by calling Rep. Burns' office at 472-8021.



Reps. Frank Burns and Gary Haluska spearheaded their annual non-perishable food collection event over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The two legislators set up collection boxes at more than 30 locations in the region. Local residents and businesses donated approximately 20 boxes of non-perishable food items, which included more than 1,500 canned goods, to two local food pantries. Cash and gift cards also were donated. The legislators are pictured with Brother Martin Zatsick from the Dorothy Day Center.

Firefighter for the day



Rep. Frank Burns spent a day at the Cambria County Fire School this spring to see firsthand what kind of training firefighters go through. He put on the turnout gear, learned how to use some of the equipment and even knocked down a fire in the controlled-burn structure.

“I had a good time, but it was just pretend. My hat is off to the brave men and women who put on the gear and do

this every day. I have nothing but respect for the dedication and willingness of volunteer firefighters to protect lives and property for others,” Rep. Burns said.

It also happened to be the fire school’s 60th anniversary, and Rep. Burns presented officials at the school with a legislative citation on its anniversary.

Hit-and-run penalties increased

Rep. Frank Burns voted for a new law that toughens the penalty for hit-and-run violations to a three-year mandatory minimum sentence.

Previously, fleeing the scene of a fatal accident carried only a one-year minimum sentence, but accidental death while driving intoxicated carried a minimum three-year sentence. This law puts both sentences on par with one another and discourages drunk drivers from fleeing the scene.

This law is known as Kevin’s Law, named after a 5-year-old boy who was killed by a hit-and-run driver while crossing the street with his family in December 2012.



How to avoid electricity bill spikes

This winter, thousands of Pennsylvanians were shocked when their electric bills doubled or tripled in one month. Those customers who had a variable-rate contract with an electric supplier or who had a fixed-rate contract that expired, were subject to the price spikes. To avoid this problem, be sure to check the terms and conditions of your contract with your electric supplier.

You can obtain information regarding the current status of your contract, including whether your rate is fixed or variable, and any cancellation fees, by calling the supplier. The name and phone number of your supplier, along with the current rate you are paying can be found on your monthly bill.

As a result of the price spikes, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission has approved new rules to help consumers.

One rule, which took effect in June, requires competitive energy suppliers to clearly disclose the details of their offers, especially the risks of variable-rate offers. In regard to fixed-term contracts, suppliers must notify customers by mail if their contracts are expiring or if there are changes to terms of service.

Another rule will shorten the time to switch suppliers. Currently, it takes up to 40 days; however, the new rule, which is expected to take effect by the end of the year, will require the change to occur within three days of the request.

You can learn more about shopping for electricity suppliers, or choose another supplier by visiting www.papowerswitch.com, a website maintained by the PUC.



2014-15 state budget is unfair to Pennsylvanians

State Rep. Frank Burns said it was an easy decision to vote against the \$29.1 billion 2014-15 state budget in June.

“Many people in the district are troubled that Governor Corbett raised taxes on gasoline earlier this year, forcing us to pay more at the pump, but has refused to enact a reasonable severance tax on the Marcellus Shale industry which has some of the largest companies in the world. Because Pennsylvania is a major exporter of natural gas, the cost would not be passed down to us but passed on to the states importing the gas.

“It’s just one indication that the governor’s policies are unfair, and this budget is no different.”

He said public schools again are significantly underfunded.

“This is the fourth budget that perpetuates the \$1 billion in cuts for public education, which has led to skyrocketing property taxes as middle-income families and those on fixed incomes are forced to pick up the tab.

“Yet, while these cuts have continued, Governor Corbett has wasted hundreds of millions of dollars defending such failed policies as lottery privatization, while giving \$2 billion in tax breaks to big corporations and refusing to close tax loopholes that benefit big business,” Rep. Burns said. “This year’s spending plan is more of the same.

Rep. Burns said the budget takes money from worthwhile programs to balance the budget, including the Volunteer Fire Company Loan Fund and programs to help senior citizens, just to name a few.

“Overall, this budget is unfair to most Pennsylvanians and I could not in good conscience support an unfair plan that shortchanges education and places the burden on working Pennsylvanians.”

Burns votes for drug monitoring bill

Legislation is pending that would institute a Prescription Drug Monitoring system to track prescriptions of controlled substances so that law enforcement can access this data to intercede in the selling of prescription drugs to unauthorized users.

Rep. Burns voted for H.B. 1694. The database would track such controlled substances as oxycodone, amphetamines and cough medicines containing codeine. The information collected would include the names of the prescribing physician and patient, the drug dosage and the source of payment. To address privacy concerns, the bill includes a provision that would require law enforcement to obtain a search warrant before accessing individual information.

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Burns legislation to name Windber bridge after fallen state trooper becomes law

The governor has signed into law a bill that pays tribute to a local Pennsylvania state trooper who lost his life in the line of duty.

The provision was introduced by Rep. Frank Burns and amended into another bill, which recently unanimously passed both chambers before being sent to the governor.

The law renames the bridge carrying 17th Street over state Route 56 in Windber in honor of Pennsylvania State Trooper Joseph J. Sepp Jr., who died after being shot by a fleeing suspect in a high-speed chase in Ebensburg in 2002.

“Naming this bridge the Joseph Sepp Memorial Bridge is one way we can honor this trooper for his service, and I am glad to see my proposal become reality,” Rep. Burns said.

Born in Wilksburg, Sepp was raised in Windber and graduated from the high school in 1986. After graduating from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, he enlisted with the state police on Feb. 24, 1992. He was stationed in Montoursville and Somerset before transferring to Ebensburg for duty in October 1996.

He is survived by his wife Jenny, daughter Amanda Jo and sons Joey and Andy, as well as his parents Joseph and Lana Gay Sepp, and sister Tina.

Sepp was a 10-year veteran of the state police and was the 89th member to be killed in the line of duty.

My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, 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 Public Welfare (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
- PACE prescription-drug 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

Any problem with state government!

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