



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

LATE SUMMER 2024

Kristine Howard

167TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

WEBSITE: www.RepKHoward.com

Greentree Office Plaza • 40 Lloyd Ave., Suite 309 • Malvern, PA 19355 • (610) 251-1070

107 East Wing • P.O. Box 202167 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2167 • (717) 783-4088

  @RepKHoward

Dear Neighbor,

As this legislative session winds down, I find myself looking back on some of our achievements over the past two years, both of the legislature as a whole and as an individual legislator.

This summer, the General Assembly updated the Slayer Statute, preventing those convicted of elder abuse from profiting from their wrongdoing. We cut governmental red tape by allowing for the electronic submission of municipal plans and ordinances. We expanded access to telemedicine services for residents across the Commonwealth by requiring health insurers and managed care plans to pay for covered health care services provided through telemedicine. We also modernized the Uniform Commercial Code, accounting for digital assets.

Individually, Act 112 of 2022, which creates the Pollinator Conservation Registration Plate and the Pollinator Habitat Program Fund, was based on legislation I introduced in the House. Sales of the specialty license plate support a new program to foster the migration of pollinators by creating native grass and perennial wildflower-filled habitats along our state highways. This will help reverse the declining numbers of honeybees, among many other pollinator species. This program was bolstered by the signing of Act 37 of 2022, which requires PennDOT to use native plants along roadways.

The federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) enacted regulations almost identical to measures proposed in my own H.B. 1122, which would prohibit

the sale, distribution, and manufacturing of any food packaging containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), so-called “forever chemicals,” within the commonwealth.

Additionally, my bill modernizing juvenile DNA data collection (H.B. 841) passed the House and now awaits action in the Senate, as does a package of anti-hate crime legislation incorporating language from my bill H.B. 1119, which would protect those with disabilities from violent assaults and other crimes.

Further, I continue to collaborate extensively with other offices to protect and improve the lives of Pennsylvanians. I have collaborated with the Department of Human Services to raise awareness of endometriosis amongst medical practitioners, I have advocated for meaningful regulations surrounding artificial intelligence and excessive speculation on the crude oil market on the federal level, and I have researched and referred numerous issues, ranging from combating xylazine trafficking to price fixing cartels, to the proper authorities.

I have introduced over three dozen pieces of legislation this session and am working every day to get them signed into law. Our commonwealth deserves a very active and responsive legislature, and I have no intention of resting any time soon. It is an honor to serve you.

Best wishes,

Kristine C. Howard

NEW LEGISLATION

ENDOMETRIOSIS AWARENESS

Endometriosis is a disease afflicting hundreds of millions of women worldwide, or an estimated 10%. It is the underlying cause of approximately 85% of cases of pelvic pain in women, and the cause of approximately half of all cases of female infertility. That is horrible by itself, but endometriosis goes further still, accounting for high percentages of cases of gastrointestinal issues, and potentially spreading to vital organs, such as the liver, lungs, and even the brain. The myriad symptoms of endometriosis can lead to permanent disability, agony, and years of life effectively lost.

So why do we hear so little about it? Endometriosis is a disorder that, despite its shocking commonality, can be extremely difficult to properly diagnose and, because treatment often involves difficult and time-consuming low-reimbursement surgery, is not especially profitable or available. While hormones are often used, with debated effects, there are no drugs approved specifically for endometriosis.

However, the current state of treatment is likely due to the lack of public awareness, resulting in comparatively little research. The disease is not heavily discussed,

so few researchers are conducting studies on endometriosis, and the problem continues.

This leads to the average American patient suffering up to ten years before receiving a diagnosis, with many taking far, far longer. You likely know somebody with this disease right now, even if they don't know that it's the cause of their problems.

It's time to change that, and therefore I have introduced a resolution (H.R. 490) calling for an "Endometriosis Awareness Month," requesting that Congress do the same, and that Congress dedicate substantial funding to this disease.



THE FALSE CLAIMS ACT

Originally meant to address contractors defrauding the government during the Civil War, the False Claims Act allows the federal government to recover money wrongfully paid through federal programs and to penalize fraudsters.

While Medicare and Medicaid are very important, efficient, and popular programs, both are subject to wrongful billing, whether due to error or actual fraud. Thankfully, most false claims are ultimately corrected by zealous enforcement of the False Claims Act.

However, Pennsylvania does not have a state counterpart to the federal False Claims Act, despite Congress incentivizing us to make one by offering an additional 10% of any recovery on Medicaid fraud when states match this statute in their own laws. This means Pennsylvania potentially leaves hundreds of millions of dollars on the table each year, while other states get their fair share by having their own state versions of this law.

To address this shocking lack of action, I will soon introduce a bill to create that equivalent.



REP. Kristine Howard ANNOUNCES

2023-2024 Grants Awarded

including...

\$535,000	East Whiteland TWP	\$400,000	East Whiteland TWP
\$176,001	East Goshen TWP	\$1.23M	West Pikeland TWP
\$963,945	East Whiteland TWP	\$1.5M	West Goshen Sewer Authority
\$250,000	West Vincent TWP		
\$177,417	Charlestown TWP		
\$117,975	West Pikeland TWP		

Kristine¹⁶⁷
HOWARD
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

VOIDING PREDATORY CONTRACTUAL LANGUAGE

Every website, app, and home electronic device includes a boilerplate contract you must agree to in order to use, the obligatory “Terms of Service.” Studies have repeatedly shown the great majority of consumers do not read these long contracts, and further evidence shows even those who do read them rarely understand the terms.

While it’s not the flashiest topic, these generic “shrink-wrap” contracts frequently impose restrictions or waivers of rights that would come as a legitimate surprise. Buying a toaster should not mean a person has agreed to have the toaster serviced only by the toaster manufacturer, and signing up to use a social media site should not mean a person has agreed to waive their privacy or agree they have no copyright to the photos they post. However, courts have consistently found these contractual clauses are consented to, valid, and enforceable.

To address these absurd abuses, Rep. Scott Conklin and I introduced H.B. 2290 specifying that certain non-negotiated terms in consumer contracts are presumed unenforceable if not reasonably related to the purposes of the sale or service agreement. We can all benefit by making the law work in a manner that is more intuitively obvious and fair to the average person while preventing legal surprise.

REINING IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence (AI) has ballooned in capacity at an alarming rate. This explosion of technology has led to innumerable calls for regulation, often from the AI companies themselves. Thus far, very little has been done to address the myriad issues raised by the rapid development and adoption of the technology.

This technology is radically shifting every aspect of our society. We must update our laws to reflect this new frontier. Of particular concern are the copyright ramifications of AI-generated work. Can it be copyrighted? If it’s trained on copyrighted works, is that itself copyright infringement? Quite simply, we don’t know, and Congress is the only body with the power to change copyright law.

And so, I have introduced a resolution (H.R. 496) calling on Congress to amend the copyright law to clarify that works generated by machine are not copyrightable, that only works made in majority part by human hand can be copyrighted, and that “scraping” copyrighted works for the purposes of training AI is intrinsically not covered under Fair Use, and therefore, the creator of the work must be compensated.

2024-2025 PA Budget

A step forward for Pennsylvania

- ◆ **No new taxes**
- ◆ **Historic \$11B funding for Pre-K through 12 education**
- ◆ **\$100M increase for Special Needs Education**
- ◆ **Brand-new Grow Pennsylvania Scholarship Program**
- ◆ **Over \$550M for economic development programs**
- ◆ **\$161M for investment in transportation & multimodal projects**
- ◆ **\$14.7M increase for veteran support programs**
- ◆ **\$75M increase for skilled nursing facilities**
- ◆ **Over \$25M for state parks, forests, and preservation**

Representative

Kristine Howard



With every passing day, more companies are building businesses upon AI-generated content, and they desperately need clarification regarding rights and potential liabilities. The courts cannot be relied upon to resolve these questions quickly or correctly. Therefore, Congress needs to give the necessary guidance, and must act fast.

CONSERVATION CORNER

STOPPING HABITAT LOSS

The Pennsylvania Constitution grants us the right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the environment. It is toward that end that PA correctly enacted laws prohibiting the direct killing or harming of individual members of threatened and endangered species. Yet a major blind spot in these legal protections persists – there are no strong regulations protecting these species from more indirect harm to the species as a whole.

Protecting nests, mating grounds, and feeding areas should be at least as important as stopping poachers, yet current law has little to say on the matter. The deliberate killing of a protected animal carries a penalty; the destruction of a protected animal's habitat does not.

To rectify this, I introduced H.B. 840, and I continue refining that legislation to ensure our native species and natural environment are adequately protected. My legislation would require that before a municipality may issue a permit for most construction (additions or modifications of residential buildings exempted), an assessment must be made to mitigate possible impact to threatened or endangered species. After substantial feedback, I will introduce a refined version of this bill soon.

By taking the existing habitats of our flora and fauna into account before development, we can protect and preserve our beautiful commonwealth.



UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE 167TH

FREE SHREDDING EVENT

Saturday, Sept. 14 • 9 a.m. – noon

West Whiteland Township Building

101 Commerce Drive
Exton, PA 19341



CHESTER COUNTY ART WALK

Saturday, Sept. 28 • 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

East Goshen Township Park



SATELLITE OFFICE HOURS

Members of my staff will be on site at locations across the district on the following days:

- **Chester Springs Library** – 1st Tuesday of each month, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- **Henrietta Hankin Library** – 2nd Tuesday of each month, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- **East Caln Township Building** – 3rd Tuesday of each month, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. (starting Sept. 17)
- **Chester County Library** – 4th Tuesday of each month, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

SENIOR FAIR

Thursday, Oct. 17 • 10 a.m. – noon

West Whiteland Township Building

101 Commerce Drive
Exton, PA 19341



CONSTITUENT SERVICES

UNCLAIMED PROPERTY AT PA TREASURY

Did you know that the Pennsylvania Treasury is currently holding onto \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property?

Did you know that one in 10 Pennsylvanians is owed unclaimed property?

Did you know the average claim is worth about \$2,000?

My office is hard at work on trying to notify constituents of their unclaimed property, but you don't have to wait for us to reach out: you can search Treasury's online database at any time to see if you or friends and family have property waiting to be claimed. You don't need to pay anyone a fee to search for or claim property from the state. Learn more at www.patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property.



PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE PROGRAM

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians aged 65 and older; widows and widowers aged 50 and older; and people with disabilities aged 18 and older.

Governor Josh Shapiro signed a new law, Act 7 of 2023, to expand the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. With expanded income requirements, nearly 175,000 more Pennsylvanians are eligible to receive the Property Tax/Rent Rebate in 2024. The majority of the 430,000 past claimants may see increased rebates as well.

The income limit is \$45,000 a year, with half of Social Security income excluded. Spouses, personal representatives or estates may also file rebate claims on behalf of deceased claimants who meet all other eligibility criteria. Visit www.revenue.pa.gov for more information.

Applications are due by Dec. 31, 2024.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES AND DEATH CERTIFICATES

My office can help you obtain copies of birth and death certificates. Certificates cost \$20 each, paid via check or money order made payable to "VITAL RECORDS."



VISIT PAHOUSE.COM/HOWARD AND SIGN UP FOR MY EMAIL NEWSLETTER TO STAY UP TO DATE!

REPORT POTHOLES!

Potholes and other roadway concerns on state roads can be reported by calling 1-800-FIX-ROAD or visiting www.penndot.gov and clicking on "Submit Roadway Feedback."





Rep. Kristine Howard

P.O. Box 202167
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2167

lpo.km.0724

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Kristine Howard



CONSTITUENT SERVICES

**STATE GOVERNMENT CONCERNS?
CALL MY OFFICE**

My office is here to help you with any state-related issue. If you're having an issue, please call, and my staff will do all we can to serve as guides or champions, as needed, as you navigate your concerns through our government.

While most issues can be resolved by phone, many matters may require an in-person meeting. To minimize wait times while allowing us to research your issue and provide the best service possible without the need to rush our visitors, appointments are encouraged. To schedule an appointment, call my office at (610) 251-1070 or email RepHoward@pahouse.net.

Greentree Office Plaza • 40 Lloyd Ave., Suite 309 • Malvern, PA 19355 • (610) 251-1070
107 East Wing • P.O. Box 202167 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2167 • (717) 783-4088

  @RepKHoward