

# Rep. <sup>Rob</sup> MATZIE

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**MAIN OFFICE:**  
SEND ALL DISTRICT CORRESPONDENCE HERE  
1240 Merchant St.  
Ambridge, PA 15003  
(724) 266-7774 • (412) 565-3569

**ALIQUIPPA SATELLITE OFFICE:**  
DO NOT SEND MAIL HERE  
Franklin Center of Beaver County Inc.  
524 Franklin Ave.  
Aliquippa, PA 15001  
(724) 375-3052  
Thursdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Website: [www.RepMatzie.com](http://www.RepMatzie.com)

**THE 16TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT SERVING BEAVER AND ALLEGHENY COUNTIES**  
**Beaver County:** City of Aliquippa; Boroughs of Ambridge, Baden, Conway, East Rochester, Economy, Freedom, Monaca, Rochester and South Heights; and the Townships of Harmony and Hopewell.  
**Allegheny County:** Leetsdale Borough and Leet Township.

## Matzie bill brings safer voting to commonwealth

### MAIL-IN VOTING BRINGS SAFETY, CONVENIENCE FOR PA'S VOTERS

Among the sweeping changes to our voting laws enacted last October was a new vote-by-mail option based on a bill I introduced. For the first time, Pennsylvanians could cast their vote from the privacy and convenience of their own homes – with no excuse needed.

When voting by mail took effect in April, Pennsylvania joined a large number of other states offering this simpler, easier alternative for residents dealing with busy work schedules, child care, health issues and other obstacles making it difficult to get to the polls.

With the arrival of the pandemic, the new option also offered another obvious benefit: the opportunity to avoid the health risks associated with long lines and crowded conditions at the polls.

Vote-by-mail is simple, safe and incredibly secure.

To apply online for a mail-in ballot, simply visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com). At the top of the page, you will see a link titled "Voting in PA." From the drop-down menu, select "Mail-in and Absentee Ballot." From there, you will find complete instructions – including whether you should apply for a mail-in or an absentee ballot – and the online application.

After your ballot arrives, simply fill it in, seal it in the inner and outer envelopes provided, and drop it in the mailbox. You can also drop off your ballot at the county board of elections office.

Deadlines are approaching, however, so if you have not already done so, now is a good time to apply for your mail-in ballot. Exercising one of your most important rights has never been easier – or safer.



*In 2016, I first introduced legislation that became the basis of PA's mail-in voting law.*

### Remember these important dates

*As of this writing, these are the deadlines for registering to vote, applying for your mail-in ballot, and submitting your voted ballot:*

- **Oct. 19:** Deadline to register to vote in Nov. 3 election.
- **Oct. 27:** County must receive your application for mail-in ballot by 5 p.m.
- **Nov. 3 (Election Day):** County must receive your voted ballot by 8 p.m.

## Matzie bill will bring important new tool in fighting COVID-19

As we search for ways to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, an important new method is emerging – testing for the virus in wastewater samples.

Most wastewater treatment systems already have regulatory requirements to perform this kind of routine sampling. Sending a portion of these samples to a designated laboratory for testing for the presence of COVID-19 is an easy and cost-efficient means of monitoring the virus' prevalence within our communities.

I am introducing legislation to create a tracking network for doing this. My bill will bring a more coordinated, more focused and more cost-effective method for contact tracing by eliminating random efforts and allowing tracers to zero in on areas where the virus is found in wastewater. Knowing the virus is present before people feel ill and inadvertently spread it can be a critical way of containing clusters before major outbreaks occur.



*My colleagues and I looked a bit different this year but still got down to business in the House.*

## Deadline extended to file for property tax or rent rebate

The deadline to file for a rebate on property tax or rent paid in 2019 has been extended to Dec. 31.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program provides rebates for eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit is \$35,000 annually for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters, and half of Social Security is excluded.

Residents are receiving rebates sooner this year because of a new law passed in response to the impact of the pandemic that permits applications to be processed on a first-in-first-out basis.

My office can help you apply! Call (724) 266-7774 to set up an appointment.

## Census window narrowed; still time to reply

Earlier this summer, the U.S. Census Bureau unexpectedly announced it was cutting short the time available for collecting and counting state data, moving the deadline from Oct. 31 to Sept. 30. That means there is less time for everyone in our area to get counted – but it isn't too late.

The U.S. Census, which is mandated by Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution, occurs every 10 years and aims to count every U.S. resident. The data is used, in part, to determine how many seats each state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives.

But census data is also critical to determining whether each state and county receives its fair share of more than \$675 billion in annual federal funding.

Based on data from the 2010 Census, Pennsylvania receives nearly \$27 billion in federal funding for key programs and services.

With a new census count underway, that number will change, but it is up to us to determine the extent to which our community benefits. If we fail to fully respond, that funding – money for schools, infrastructure, transportation, hospitals and other critically important programs – goes elsewhere.

I'm urging all residents who have not already done so to visit [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov) and get counted. It's safe, secure – with data managed by high-level security experts – and takes just minutes. The payoff – in terms of resources back to our community – is tremendous.

## Matzie calls for state action to protect nursing home residents

One of the cruelest aspects of the pandemic has been its devastating impact on residents of our long-term care facilities.

In March, when it became apparent that conditions were deteriorating at Beaver County's Brighton Rehabilitation and Wellness Center and other facilities throughout the state, I called on the state to look into the mounting death toll and infection rates that were much higher than in the general public.

I also demanded an accounting regarding what facilities were doing to test residents and staff for COVID-19 and control the virus' spread.

With nursing homes accounting for nearly two-thirds of Pennsylvania's total deaths, inaction was not an option, and letter-writing was not yielding fast enough results.

In April, I introduced legislation requiring the state Department of Health to immediately inspect all long-term care facilities, assess infection control procedures, test every resident and worker, report all findings to the public and provide resources needed to deal with an outbreak in real time.

In addition, to address concerns about how patients were being treated at Brighton, I called on state Attorney General Josh Shapiro to launch a criminal investigation into the facility. He has since confirmed that an investigation is underway.

My bill brought action: The state announced that it was instituting universal COVID-19 testing and data collection in nursing homes and personal care facilities statewide.

Although much work lies ahead to bring better protections for our most vulnerable residents and those who serve them, I believe we are on the right path.

## Stopgap budget, federal spending plan

Business shutdowns and delayed tax filing deadlines implemented in response to the pandemic led to unprecedented revenue shortfalls that drastically complicated budget planning this spring.

To keep things running, the General Assembly passed an interim \$25.8 billion budget in late May that funds most state programs and agencies through the end of November. Public education – the exception – received flat funding for 12 months. We will return to the table this fall to work out a budget for the remainder of the fiscal year.

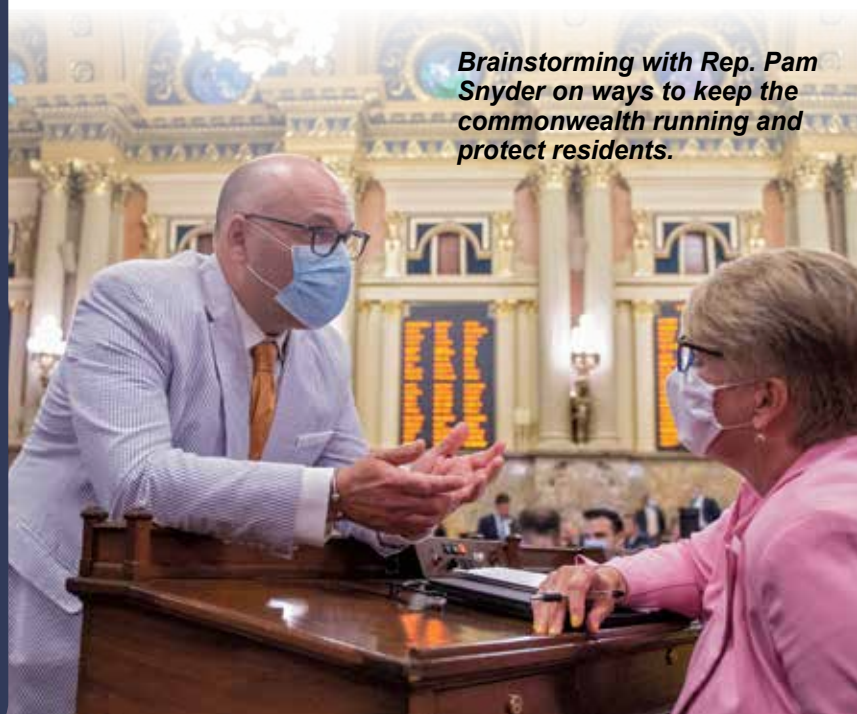
### *A look at CARES Act funding*

In addition to voting on a budget, my colleagues and I passed a spending package allocating \$2.6 billion of Pennsylvania's \$3.9 billion in federal funding under the CARES Act.

Highlights include \$692 million to long-term living programs to fight the impact of COVID-19; \$625 million to counties – including \$14.8 million to Beaver County – to help cover the costs associated with coronavirus prevention, protection and treatment; \$260 million to protect people with intellectual disabilities and autism; \$225 million in grant funding to help small businesses; \$175 million for rent and mortgage assistance; \$150 million to school districts to create and maintain a safe, sanitary environment; and millions more for other critical programs and services.

While there are no quick fixes, the funding should help restore strength to our small businesses, ensure protections for students and vulnerable residents and mitigate some of the pandemic's harshest effects on working families.

***Brainstorming with Rep. Pam Snyder on ways to keep the commonwealth running and protect residents.***



## Matzie support helps bring better policing

I recently voted for two measures – passed with unanimous bipartisan support and signed by the governor in July – that will improve police hiring and training.

The first requires law enforcement agencies to do a thorough background check before hiring and requires employers to disclose all employment information to a law enforcement agency that is conducting a pre-hiring background check. Employers who provide the information will be free from liability for doing so.

The law also establishes an electronic database of separation records – including criminal charges and civil complaints – so that agencies can learn of potential red flags before hiring an officer who has separated from another agency.

A second new law requires officers be trained on interacting with people of diverse racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds; on the use of force and de-escalation methods; and on identifying and reporting child abuse. The law also requires that officers be evaluated for post-traumatic stress every two years and after any lethal use-of-force incident.



*Discussing important House Judiciary Committee bills with Democratic Whip Jordan Harris and state Rep. Tim Briggs, who is Democratic chair of the committee.*

## More than \$1 million to fund new sanitation infrastructure

Six grants totaling \$1.1 million from the state Commonwealth Financing Agency will fund critical repairs and upgrades to area stormwater and sewer systems. Many of these structures are aging, and system failures can interrupt service, burden taxpayers and even pose health dangers.

### The projects include:

- **\$300,000** to the Creswell Heights Joint Authority for emergency gas generators at its treatment plant and two booster stations to address water outages caused by power failures. Total project cost is \$467,955, with \$70,194 committed.
- **\$210,000** to the Economy Borough Municipal Authority for trenchless rehabilitation of the borough's sanitary sewer system for the Sunset Hills neighborhood. Total project cost is \$500,000, with \$75,000 committed.
- **\$200,000** to Harmony Township to remove and replace the deteriorating storm and sewer system along 8th Street. Total project cost is \$301,953, with \$45,293 committed.
- **\$150,025** to the Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority to rehabilitate nearly 1,800 linear feet of 18-inch interceptor sewer to correct problems with inflow and infiltration. Total project cost of \$176,500 is fully funded, with \$26,475 committed.
- **\$39,989** to the Leet Township Municipal Authority to upgrade two pump stations with new control panels and other equipment. Total project cost of \$47,046 is fully funded, with \$7,057 committed.
- **\$200,000** grant to the Leetsdale Borough Municipal Authority to eliminate the Sewickley Borough sewage treatment plant and connect the borough to the Leetsdale plant for greater cost efficiency. The total project cost is \$1.15 million, with \$383,915 committed.

Securing this funding will help ensure the proper infrastructure is in place to prevent costly future repairs, save taxpayer dollars, bring more efficient service to residents and businesses and – most importantly – safeguard community health.

## Matzie secures millions in funding for the district

An important part of my work is ensuring that your tax dollars return to benefit our district. This year, that funding includes nearly \$15 million in federal CARES Act dollars to help Beaver County defray costs associated with the pandemic. Here is a look at more than \$12 million in additional funding we secured in recent months.

- More than \$5.2 million in COVID-19 safety funding to regional universities, colleges and tech institutes.
- More than \$2.6 million to area schools to support continued learning during the pandemic.
- \$1.3 million to fund security-related resources for area schools.
- More than \$1 million to help area food banks meet greater demand.
- Nearly \$600,000 to expand apprenticeship opportunities for area workers.
- More than \$450,000 to help Beaver County childcare providers safely reopen.
- Nearly \$400,000 to support opioid testing and law enforcement coronavirus response.
- Nearly \$242,900 to Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania to develop skilled trades curricula for students in grades 3 through 12.
- More than \$146,400 to help those struggling with opioid use disorder return to work.
- Nearly \$120,000 to Beaver County Career and Technology Center to help implement COVID-19 safety plans.
- More than \$103,000 to fund paid internships for area students and young adults.
- More than \$51,000 to equip students for remote learning during the pandemic.
- Nearly \$36,000 to Center at the Mall to enhance operations for seniors.
- More than \$31,000 in federal funding to fight homelessness.
- \$21,500 in COVID-19 relief funding for Beaver County cultural and social service organizations.
- \$4,000 to boost area historic preservation efforts.

## PA Humanities Council brings heart and soul to Beaver County



The Pennsylvania Humanities Council is working with cities and towns – including Ambridge, Beaver Falls and Rochester – to incorporate the humanities into community development and planning processes through the Community Heart & Soul program.

The program empowers people to shape the future of their community by creating a shared sense of belonging that improves local decision-making and ultimately strengthens social, cultural and economic vibrancy.

A central part of the process involves personal outreach to find out what matters most to the community by gathering stories. With storytelling at the heart of the planning process, community development is shaped by local values and voices, leading to a community that is better connected, stronger and more engaged.

**Learn how you can become involved by visiting [www.pahumanities.org](http://www.pahumanities.org).**



*In early February, the House Opening Prayer was delivered by my pastor, Father Jay Donahue, Pastor of the Great Grouping of Saints John and Paul, Good Samaritan, St. John the Baptist and Our Lady of Peace. A guest of both myself and former House Speaker Mike Turzai, Father Jay delivered a message of kindness and inclusion that inspired all of us.*



**STATE REP. ROBERT F. "ROB" MATZIE**

P.O. Box 202016  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2016

lpo.ad.0820

# Matzie fights for Beaver Valley Power Station workers

As co-chairman of the Nuclear Caucus, I worked to keep Beaver Valley Power Station operating and was thrilled for employees when we received word that Energy Harbor Corp. was rescinding its deactivation notice, keeping family-sustaining, community-building jobs intact.

Beaver County has some of the hardest-working, most dedicated workers in Pennsylvania, and it means something to them to know that in addition to sustaining their families, their efforts are serving the community by bringing clean, reliable, secure energy.

I am so proud to represent our incredible, talented community of workers and to have played a role in keeping Beaver Valley open.

