

Rep. **Rob**
MATZIE
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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THE 16TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT SERVING BEAVER COUNTY

Beaver County: City of Aliquippa; Boroughs of Ambridge, Baden, Conway, East Rochester, Freedom, Monaca, Rochester and South Heights; and the Townships of Center, Harmony, Hopewell and Rochester.

Matzie: New state budget boosts Beaver County

Budgets are never a simple matter. Passing a spending plan that meets the needs of our large and diverse commonwealth requires compromise, and no plan is ever perfect. But the \$45.2 billion state budget we passed this July was easy for me to support because it benefits Beaver County in important ways – without raising taxes.

The new state plan makes a historic investment in our public schools, adding an additional \$525 million

for basic education funding and an additional \$100 million for special education funding. Here at home, Beaver County schools will see across-the-board increases.

Beyond K-12, the new budget will make it easier for students to afford college by providing a \$75 million increase in basic funding to Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. The funding will allow PASSHE to freeze tuition for the fourth year in a row. The commonwealth's 15 community colleges will receive an \$11.3 million increase, and libraries statewide will see a similar increase.

Working families and seniors will benefit from new programs funded by remaining American Rescue Act dollars. Some of those include a one-time bonus rebate under the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, a new grant program to help lower-income homeowners afford home repairs and a state child care tax credit to help working parents.

The new plan also taps federal stimulus dollars for programs that support clean air and drinking water, improve energy efficiency, protect the environment and expand state parks and recreational opportunities.

In an important move for our business community, the new budget cuts the Corporate Net Income tax. The rate will drop from 9.99% to 8.99% this year and then incrementally over the next nine years down to 4.99% in 2031.

Finally, the new budget delivers a healthy \$2 billion back into the Rainy Day Fund – leaving a total of \$5 billion – to ensure that the commonwealth is prepared for any future contingency.

All in all, the new budget spends responsibly, in ways that will help Beaver County residents thrive and our small businesses grow. It may not be perfect, but it's a solid plan to keep us moving in the right direction.



Making Schools Safer

In addition to increasing funding for learning, the new state budget adds stronger resources for school security. Every school district in the state will receive grant funding of \$100,000 for school safety resources, another \$100,000 for student mental health programs, and additional funding based on the school's average attendance rate.

Matzie introduces bills to help with heating, cooling costs

This year, I introduced a bill package to modernize the state's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and help more Pennsylvanians benefit from the program.

Pennsylvania receives federal funding each year for the LIHEAP program. Yet every year, the state withholds some of that funding – a practice that has kept tens of millions of dollars from getting to the families that need it. Those federal tax dollars are coming home to Pennsylvania for a purpose – to help people pay their bills – and we should be using every penny.

My legislation would require the state to use all of the annual federal funding it receives.

Year-round program

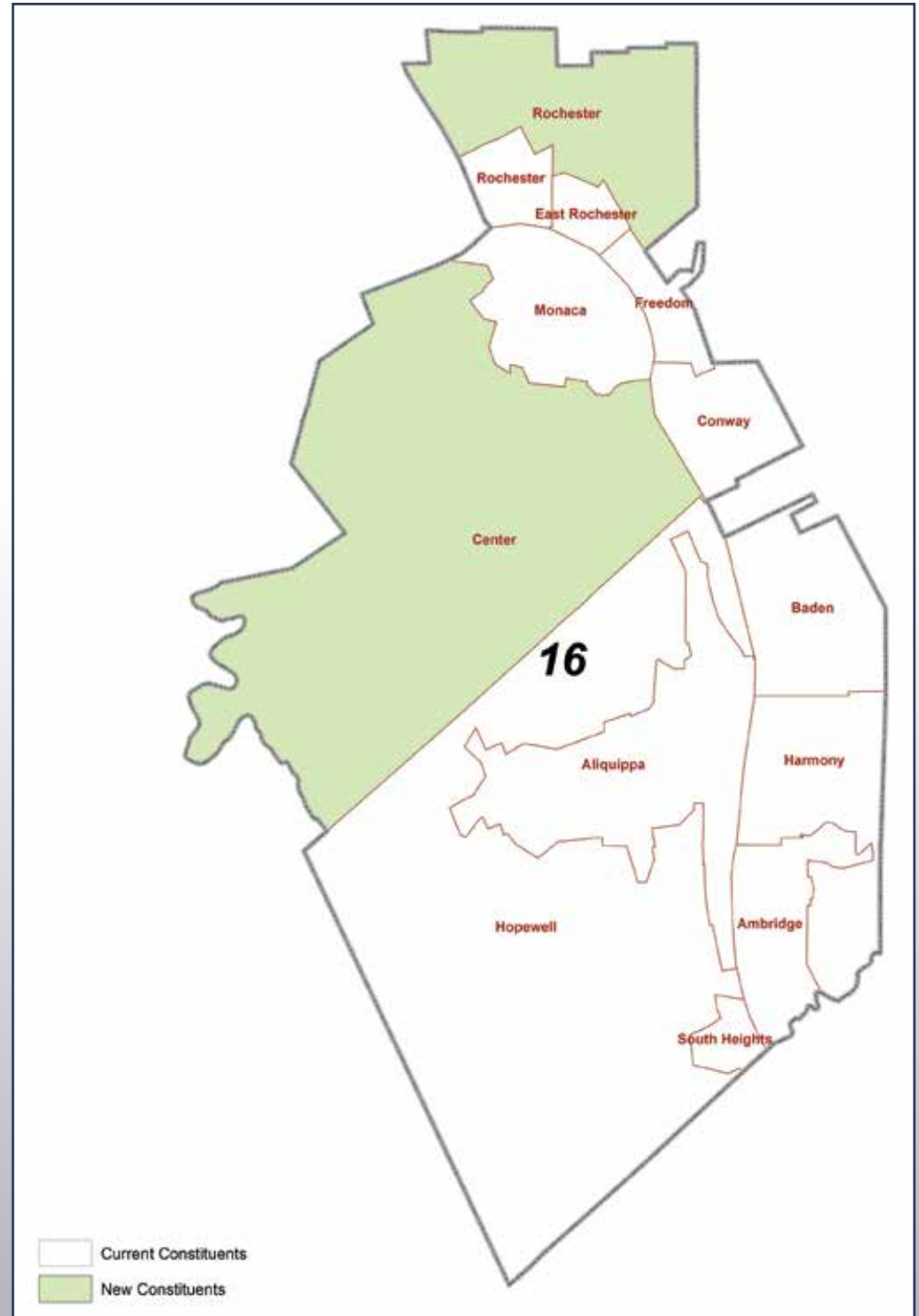
A related bill I introduced would expand the program to help with home cooling, which can take just as big a bite out of a household budget as heating. Currently, at least 11 other states have year-round programs. It's time for the commonwealth to join them.

I was encouraged that some language from my bill was included in the new state budget to fund a temporary increase in home energy assistance. With millions available in federal funding, however, and thousands of residents needing more help, the program needs to be expanded on a permanent basis.

A new shape for our district

As you may have heard, the lines for the Sixteenth Legislative District will soon be changing based on the redistricting process that occurred earlier this year. The new 16th District will be entirely in Beaver County and will consist of the City of Aliquippa, the Boroughs of Ambridge, Baden, Conway, East Rochester, Freedom, Monaca, Rochester and South Heights, and the Townships of Center, Harmony, Hopewell and Rochester.

Below is a look at the new map.



Matzie bill would fast-track aid to Ukrainian refugees

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine is personal for Beaver County. Our district has three communities – Ambridge, Baden, and Harmony – in the top 20% of residents whose families originally came from Ukraine. It has been devastating to see the war's impact on friends and neighbors who fear for their relatives still there.

Fortunately, refugees fleeing the war have found a safe haven here in Pennsylvania, as people in our community and others throughout the state have opened their hearts and arms.

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation with my colleague, state Rep. Kevin Boyle, that would provide \$2 million in state assistance to aid Ukrainian refugee resettlement efforts. The funding would help get immediate aid – including housing, food, and clothing – flowing to displaced families and allow us to better support the efforts of local relief organizations as they deliver longer-term resources including job training and education. These folks, like many of our ancestors, are seeking refuge and want to become contributing members of our communities. We should help them in any way we can.

Empowering women with a second chance

The 2022-23 budget invests \$1 million in a powerful program – PA Women Work – to help women reentering the community following incarceration find employment. Second-chance hiring practices – together with job training and related resources – can give women leaving the criminal justice system a fresh start in life and empower them to become financially independent and self-sufficient. That equals a win for our community by reducing recidivism, stabilizing families, and adding productive wage-earners back to the economy.

Bonus rebate coming under Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

Seniors and residents with disabilities who qualify for rebates on property taxes or rent paid in 2021 will receive a one-time bonus rebate under the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.



Funded in the new state budget with \$140 million in remaining federal stimulus dollars, the one-time bonus will equal 70% of an applicant's regular rebate. For example, an applicant who received a regular rebate of \$500 can expect to see a bonus rebate of \$350.

Applicants who have already received their regular rebate do not need to do anything to receive the bonus rebate, which will be sent by the same method – direct deposit or check – used to deliver the regular rebate.

Eligible residents who have not yet filed for their standard rebate can still apply through Dec. 31. Residents can apply online by visiting www.revenue.pa.gov and scrolling down to the “My Path” link. My staff can also help with the application process.



On Pitt Day at the state Capitol, we welcomed Panthers' Head Coach Pat Narduzzi (left), who led the team to the 2021 ACC Championship. I also had a chance to congratulate Aliquippa grad and Hopewell resident Chris LaSala (right), Pitt associate athletic director for football administration.

Matzie urges DEP: keep protecting Big Sewickley Creek

Last year, PennEnergy petitioned the Department of Environmental Protection to withdraw millions of gallons of water per day from Big Sewickley Creek for natural gas extraction efforts. The move would have risked lasting environmental damage to the creek, which has been loved and enjoyed by generations in our community. I urged DEP to deny the petition, and they did.

This year, PennEnergy renewed its request, and I am urging DEP to deny it a second time. Nothing has

changed from last year to this year that would warrant reversal of the agency's decision. Withdrawing huge volumes of water will still aggravate drought conditions, threaten wildlife, and impact fishing.

I am on record as supporting natural gas development, and I believe that with strong protections in place, these activities can take place without damaging our environment. This is not such a case, however, as PennEnergy's proposal risks very real harm to a beloved community resource.

Matzie lauds pharmacy vaccination efforts, supports legislation to make temporary vaccine authority permanent



At a rally at the state Capitol this spring, I had a chance to thank PA pharmacists, pharmacy techs and interns for successfully administering millions of vaccines to children during the pandemic. I support legislation that would authorize them to administer vaccines on a permanent basis. They have proven that they can do so safely, reliably and with the same steadfast dedication with which they approach all their patient care duties.

Budget boosts film credit to attract industry

The new budget boosts the state's film tax credit from \$70 million to \$100 million, which will encourage the film industry to produce more movies within the state. Movie production has great benefits for the local economy, as crews typically spend thousands of dollars daily on area restaurants, hotels, dry cleaners, hardware stores and other retailers. Being featured in movies can also boost tourism dollars later on.

Our district is no stranger to the industry. In fact, last year, the TV series "A League of Their Own" was filmed right here in Ambridge!



This summer, I was proud to welcome community-minded participants of Keystone Boys State, a week-long civics and leadership development program organized by the American Legion.

Matzie brings millions back to the district

An important part of my job is bringing your tax dollars back to the district. So far this year, I have worked to secure nearly \$13 million in grant funding, including:

- Nearly \$2.9 million to area child care providers to help stabilize operations.
- \$2.5 million to boost Beaver County projects, regional workforce training.
- Nearly \$1.5 million for Beaver County early education programs.
- More than \$1.4 million to bolster regional apprenticeship programs and career education.
- \$1 million to support the Borough of Monaca's planned civic center project.
- Nearly \$600,000 to expand Beaver County housing-related services.
- \$1 million in Ready to Learn block grants, including \$250,000 each for the Aliquippa, Ambridge Area, Hopewell Area, and Rochester Area school districts, and more than \$100,000 to bolster safety resources for area schools.
- Nearly \$400,000 to improve Beaver County probation services, support rehabilitation, reduce recidivism.
- Nearly \$440,000 to continue successful Beaver County recycling programs.
- \$250,000 to fund Hopewell Township recreational projects.
- More than \$227,000 for major upgrades to Laughlin Memorial Library, including a roof replacement, upgraded outdoor security lighting and cameras, exterior cleaning, and new accent lighting.
- Nearly \$226,400 to fund equipment, training and other resources for fire and EMS companies in the district.
- Nearly \$200,000 to fund practical training to help veterans transition to civilian IT jobs.



It was a special honor to present a House of Representatives citation to the Rochester Public Library for 100 years of service to the community as a beloved center for learning, storytelling, events and community programs.



On Beaver County Association of Realtors' 2022 Advocacy Day, I met with Denise Molchen-Donnelly, Julie Sebeck, and Dee Dixon (left to right) to discuss issues important to Pennsylvania homeowners and prospective homeowners.



Visiting Freedom Middle School for a Q&A provided a chance to catch up with talented educators and inquisitive students.



At recent House Policy Committee hearings, we explored innovative new energy technologies, including fusion energy and the creation of a possible hydrogen hub in southwestern PA. Both would create new jobs for the region and address the growing need for energy independence.



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My office can help you with:

- Obtaining state forms of all kinds, like PACE (pharmaceutical assistance for qualified senior citizens), voter registration, Property Tax/Rent Rebate (for qualified seniors), PHEAA (higher education assistance), etc.
- Requests for literature of all kinds — bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information, student aid information, etc.
- Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications
- Birth and death certificate applications
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, income assistance)
- Questions about utilities or the PUC
- Unemployment compensation, disability, and workers' compensation problems
- Notary services
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Problems with Pennsylvania income taxes
- Consumer complaints
- Disability license plates and placards
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- If it's about state government, we can help!

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