

State Representative | 157th Legislative District

MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN



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Spring
2024

RepShusterman.com | @RepShusterman

UNIFORM FAMILY ARBITRATION BILL BECOMES LAW

I am excited to announce that my bill, H.B. 917, has been signed into law by Gov. Josh Shapiro! The Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act will provide families with a voluntary and private process for resolving disputes with the help of an arbitrator. This is a significant victory for PA families, and it could not have happened without the efforts of a persistent bipartisan coalition.



FOOD SAFETY BILL

Buying healthy groceries can be challenging. One of those challenges should not be worrying that the ingredients might pose long-term health risks. That's why I introduced House Bills 2116 and 2117, prohibiting dangerous chemicals from being used in foods produced and sold in Pennsylvania. Consumers need transparency; this bipartisan bill package will keep our families safe by ensuring harmful additives stay out of our food.



EQUAL PAY ACT PASSES

I'm proud to report that the Equal Pay Act introduced by Reps. Donna Bullock, Jennifer O'Mara, and I successfully passed the House. Women in the same occupation, with the same level of education, and same number of hours worked are still being paid less than their male counterparts. By ensuring equal pay for equal work, we could potentially add a staggering \$482 billion to the U.S. economy. This lost income could be used by women to provide necessities such as food and clothing for their families. Additionally, paying women what they rightfully earn could help reduce the number of working women and single mothers living in poverty by half. The time for action is long overdue.



ROSIE THE RIVETER DAY

On March 21, thousands of women who joined the workforce to support our country during World War II were honored with the declaration of Rosie the Riveter Day in PA. These women volunteered to join the Armed Services, built equipment crucial for the war effort, and inspired generations of women with their strength, sacrifice, and patriotism. To this day, "Rosie the Riveter" symbolizes empowerment for women everywhere, and our Commonwealth owes a debt of gratitude to these powerful women.

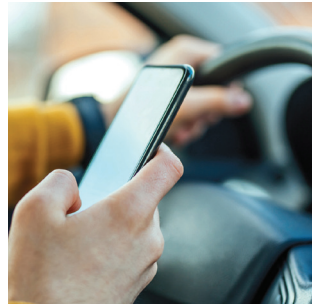
STUDENT JOURNALISM HEARING

The House Education Committee invited Ben Shapiro, Conestoga senior, “Spoke” editor-in-chief, and 2024 PA Student Journalist of the Year, to testify on behalf of a bill I introduced to protect student journalists’ freedom of speech. Ben did an exemplary job fielding tough questions about why this legislation is necessary. Our communities have witnessed local news coverage evaporate as small newspapers have been consolidated and shut down. The few remaining papers are full of syndicated stories from other states, barely relevant to local residents. This is what makes student journalism so essential. Students have access to investigate the issues that matter most to our communities thoroughly. We need students to speak up; this legislation will protect their right to do so.



DISTRACTED DRIVING BILL BECOMES LAW

This month, Governor Shapiro enacted a new law aimed at curbing distracted driving. Under this law, drivers will be banned from using electronic devices while operating a vehicle and will only be permitted to use their phones through hands-free technology.



Police will start issuing fines beginning in January 2026. By passing this law, Pennsylvania joins 26 other states in recognizing the dangers associated with distracted driving. As a member of the House Transportation Committee, I want to ensure law enforcement has the tools they need to keep our families safe.

BANNING GHOST GUN PARTS

I proudly voted to close loopholes in PA’s gun laws that allow unregistered “ghost guns” out onto the streets. In less than an hour, almost anyone can turn a kit of untraceable parts into a semi-automatic or even fully automatic rifle. Rep. Morgan Cephas introduced H.B. 777, which I co-sponsored, that would prohibit the purchase, sale, and production of these untraceable gun parts. This bill has garnered support from law enforcement and will provide police with an additional tool to solve crimes and keep our communities safe. The bill now sits in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING BILL

Victims of human trafficking may be coerced by their abusers into committing crimes, or they may be faced with the difficult decision of breaking the law while trying to escape their abusive situations. Numerous cases of trafficking survivors defending themselves against their traffickers have surfaced in the last decade. Instead of providing support and sympathy for these individuals, these survivors often face criminal charges for protecting themselves from those who have hurt them in the most despicable ways. We cannot, in good conscience, allow this blatant injustice to continue. That’s why I introduced H.B. 2227 to provide human trafficking survivors access to an affirmative defense for crimes they commit while being trafficked. My bill was successfully voted out of the Judiciary Committee and will now move to the House Floor for consideration.

ENDING LIVE PIGEON SHOTS

What a victory! H.B. 2139, introduced by state Rep. Perry Warren, which would ban live pigeon shoots in Pennsylvania, was enthusiastically voted out of the House Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support. Dog fighting, cockfighting, and greyhound racing have already been prohibited, and it’s long overdue for PA to end this obsolete, inhumane practice—especially when clays are readily available. This bill will not affect current hunting laws and has overwhelming support across the Commonwealth. Animal advocates visiting the Capitol for PA Humane Lobby Day cheered the successful vote. The bill now moves to the House chamber for consideration.



KAYDEN’S LAW

New protections will soon take effect to prevent child abuse during court-ordered visitations. “Kayden’s Law,” named for 7-year-old Kayden Mancuso, who was tragically murdered by her father during a court-ordered visit, will ensure the safety of the child is the most important factor when a judge makes custody and visitation decisions. If there is a risk of ongoing abuse, custody orders must now include safety precautions, including supervision.

CUP OF DREAMS HOSTS

Thank you to Cup of Dreams for hosting my most recent Coffee & Conversation event. We had a fantastic turnout, and I'm glad that my team and I got to help so many constituents. Everyone enjoyed the delightful pastries and drinks; many were pleased to learn this shop is in our community. I'm always proud to support women-owned businesses and look forward to having more events at Cup of Dreams soon!



RUSHTON WOODS WALK & TALK

Constituents brought their state government and conservation questions to Rushton Woods Preserve for my latest Walk & Talk event. We took a tour of the meadows, which are planted with native flora and feature birdhouses that encourage nesting. Additionally, we visited the federal bird banding station, which plays a crucial role in researching migration patterns and population growth. At Rushton, the bird populations' response to the regenerative farming practices on site is measured. The evening concluded with a Q&A session and a presentation by Willistown Conservation Trust staff on restoring habitats for animals and pollinators in our backyards.



SHREDDING & FOOD DRIVE

Thank you to everyone for making my Spring Shredding & Canned Food Drive event a huge success! Despite the cold weather and drizzle, we helped hundreds of constituents securely shred their documents. We also collected over 485 pounds of food and \$200 in donations for the Chester County Food Bank!



SPRING CLEAN UPS

To celebrate Earth Week, my office recently participated in cleanup events around the community! Summer Cirino represented our office at the Schuylkill Township EAC cleanup where 15 volunteers helped remove 50 bags of litter, abandoned tires, and tons of miscellaneous scrap metal from State Road. Thank you to the Valley Forge Volunteer Fire Co. for closing the road to traffic and Keep Chester County Beautiful for donating the hi-vis traffic vests to keep everyone safe!

My District Office Director, Jennifer Pyc, also joined The Easttown Township Environmental Advisory Council along with almost 100 volunteers at Hilltop Park to help clean up surrounding areas in the township!



PHOENIXVILLE YMCA COMMUNITY DAY

I stopped by the Phoenixville YMCA 2024 Fun Fest with state Rep. Paul Friel! Over 2,500 community members showed up for a gorgeous day filled with fun, games, music, and food. It was heartwarming to see so many children laughing and having a great time! Thank you to my staffer, Kat Nixon, for managing our office table throughout the event.



SCHUYLKILL POLICE CHIEF SWEARING-IN

I had the honor of attending the swearing-in ceremony for Chief William Fitzsimmons. Chief Fitzsimmons was promoted from within the department due to his outstanding leadership and commitment to serving the residents of Schuylkill Township. I congratulate him on his new role and eagerly anticipate working together to ensure the safety and security of our community.



HARRISBURG UPDATE

VILLA MARIA GIRLS FIELD HOCKEY STATE CHAMPS

I welcomed the Villa Maria Academy High School Girls Field Hockey team to the state Capitol to celebrate their PIAA 2A State Championship! The team and coaches received an official citation for their outstanding achievement. Congratulations, and keep up the hard work, ladies!



CONESTOGA BOYS SOCCER

Congratulations to the Conestoga Boys Soccer team on their 2023 Pennsylvania State Championship! With an amazing 24-0-1 record, the boys are not only #1 in the state but are also ranked No. 2 in the entire nation! This alum is 'Stoga Proud!



CONESTOGA CAMERATA HIGHLIGHTS MUSIC EDUCATION

I had the pleasure of welcoming the Conestoga High School Camerata to perform at the state Capitol. Their beautiful performance highlighted the importance of music education in our schools. Music has been proven to help children develop critical cognitive skills and provides an outlet for personal expression. Thank you to the performers and their director, Nathan Shugart, for accepting the invitation and demonstrating why arts education funding is essential for happy, healthy students.

HUMANE LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

On Humane Lobby Day, animal lovers from across PA met with their representatives to discuss legislation that will protect the lives of our furry companions. During a rally under the rotunda, I was honored to accept the Humane Legislator of the Year award presented by The Humane Society of the United States! Thank you to Kristen Tullo, director of the PA Humane Society, for organizing such a successful lobbying day!



WATERMAIN BREAK

A watermain break was quickly under control, thanks to the speedy response from the hardworking men and women of the Schuylkill Township Police Department, Valley Forge Volunteer Fire Co., and Aqua. We greatly appreciate their quick action in shutting off the broken water main, and prompt inspection of nearby gas lines to ensure no one is in danger. We are lucky to have such dedicated, helpful individuals in our community.

Grants Awarded

157th District

SPRING 2024

\$500,000 - Easttown Township

\$343,000 - Valley Forge & Whitehorse Road Redevelopment Project

\$250,000 - AgConnect

\$250,000 - Healthcare Connect

\$45,000 - Easttown Library

\$15,587 - Surrey Services for Seniors



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Keeping Up with Shusterman!

@RepShusterman

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lpo.kg.0624

ANNUAL VETERANS

Barbeque

Wilson Farm Park Pavilion
600 Lee Road,
Chesterbrook, PA 19087

SATURDAY

JULY 13TH, 2024

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Please RSVP by July 9th by calling 484-200-8260
or by visiting <https://bit.ly/ShustermanBBQ2024>



SAVE THE DATE!

You're Invited!



JUNE

11

SENIOR SEPTA SIGN UP EVENT

*Tredyffrin Library, 582 Upper Gulph Rd.
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM*

JULY

13

VETERAN'S BBQ

*Wilson Farm Park, Chesterbrook,
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM, RSVP Required*

SEPTEMBER

24

SAFETY TOWNHALL

*Tredyffrin Library, 582 Upper Gulph Rd.
7:00 - 8:00 PM*

FALL

TBD

COFFEE & CONVERSATION
PET RESOURCE FAIR

Please check back for more info!