

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

DECEMBER 2020

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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Apply now for Property Tax/Rent Rebate

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program Deadline has been extended to Dec. 31, 2020. Applications for a rebate on taxes or rent paid in 2019 are available at my district office or online at www.revenue.pa.gov.

The program provides rebates up to \$650 on rent or property tax paid by Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit for applicants is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. Half of Social Security income and all Social Security cost-of living increases are excluded

from income calculations.

Claimants must reapply for rebates every year because they are based on annual income and property taxes or rent paid each year. Spouses, personal representatives, or estates may file rebate applications on behalf of deceased claimants who lived at least one day in 2019.

My office can help complete and submit the application. The state has begun mailing refund checks to those who have already filed. Check the status of your rebate at www.doreservices.state.pa.us/PITServices/WheresMyRebate.

Controlling the Spotted Lanternfly

The spotted lanternfly is still active in the fall and winter. They lay egg masses which can survive over winter.

Look for these egg masses on tree trunks, outdoor furniture, decks, stones, metal, tires, etc. The masses are typically about 1 to 1.5 inches long and covered with a gray or yellowish-brown, waxy coating.

To destroy eggs, you should smash them or scrape them into a container of rubbing alcohol. You can also limit the number of adult insects by removing their preferred host trees, the tree of heaven. It is recommended that you apply herbicide to their stumps.

Report sightings by calling 1-800-BAD-FLY. For additional information about ways to mitigate the Spotted Lanternfly, visit <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly-management-for-residents>.



Nymph



Adult

Home Heating Assistance Available

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program is now accepting applications.

LIHEAP offers cash grants to help with home heating bills and crisis grants to help with emergency situations, such as a broken furnace or an unexpected fuel shortage. Applicants do not have to be on public assistance to receive help through LIHEAP, nor will any lien be placed on a person's property.

This season's income limits for LIHEAP cash and crisis grants are \$19,140 (yearly) for an individual. This limit increases by \$6,720 for each additional person in the household.

These grants are available to renters and homeowners. They range from \$200 to \$1,000 based on household size, income, and fuel type. These grants will be sent directly to your utility company or fuel provider. Grants do not need to be repaid. Online applications may be completed by visiting www.compass.state.pa.us. My office can provide assistance when applying.

PennDOT Resumes Issuing Real ID

PennDOT has resumed issuing Real IDs to Pennsylvanians following a pause from March to September due to COVID-19. Real ID is a federally compliant driver's license or state photo identification card with enhanced security features.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has postponed enforcing the Real ID requirement until October 21, 2021. Then a Real ID or another federally accepted form of ID such as a U.S. Passport, will be necessary to board commercial flights or enter secure federal buildings.

To obtain a Real ID-compliant driver's license or ID card, you will need to bring all of the following documentation to a full-service Driver's License Center:

- Proof of identity (original birth certificate with a raised seal, or a valid U.S. passport)
- A Social Security card
- Proof of all legal name changes (marriage license or court order from applicable county's family court)
- Two proofs of current, physical PA Address (unexpired PA license or ID and no more than 90-day old bank statement or utility bill with the same name and address)

The two closest full-service Driver's License Center locations are:

143 S. Gulph Road, King of Prussia PA 19406

1067 W. Baltimore Pike, Media PA 19063

You can learn more about Real ID at www.dmv.pa.gov/realid or by calling my office.

New Resource for Relatives Raising Children

If you are a grandparent, other relative, or non-relative, such as a teacher, coach, or family friend, raising a child when their biological parents cannot care for them, you should be aware of a resource launched in September by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services called KinConnector. This is an information, referral, and education program for kinship

caregivers in Pennsylvania.

At www.kinconnector.org, you can find resources such as after school care, financial assistance programs, legal information, and support groups of family care professionals. The KinConnector helpline can be reached at 1-866-KIN-2111 (1-866-546-2111).

PACE now Allowing Early Prescription Refills

The Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE) is a prescription assistance program for adults aged 65 and older with limited incomes. PACENET provides the same prescription benefits for those with slightly higher incomes.

PACE and PACENET are now allowing for early prescription refills.

Previously, enrollees had to use 75% of their supply before refill costs would be reimbursed.

Now, the program will reimburse the cost of refills purchased before 75% of the days' supply has passed. (Does not apply to prescriptions for opioids and other controlled substances, which will be handled on a case-by-case basis.)

If you have any questions, or need assistance applying for PACE, visit <https://pacecares.magellanhealth.com/> or call 1-800-225-7223. My office can also help you apply.

Pa. Extends “Move Over” Law to Disabled Vehicles

Pennsylvania has recently expanded its “Move Over” driving law. Previously, you were required to move to the far lane when passing police, emergency responders and utility employees stopped by the side of the highway. Now you must move over for disabled vehicles as well.

If you cannot do that safely, you must slow down to 20 m.p.h. below the posted limit. Penalties have also been increased. A first offense carries a fine of up to \$500 and 2 points on your driving record. Penalties for subsequent offenses increase considerably.

COVID-19 Exposure Notification App Now Available

The PA Department of Health has released its COVID-19 exposure notification app for iOS and Android smartphone users.

To download this app, visit your smartphone's app store and search COVID Alert PA. Once downloaded, you can opt-in to receive alerts to warn you of potential exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. The more Pennsylvanians that use this app the more effective it will be.

COVID Alert PA protects your privacy and personal information. The app does not use GPS, location services, or any movement or geographical information. It will never collect, transmit, or store your personal information and is completely anonymous.

For more information visit <https://www.pa.gov/covid/covid-alert-pa/>.

New Resource for PA Veterans

The PA Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs has a new website to help connect Pennsylvania's veterans, their beneficiaries, and veteran's advocates with resources available to them in Pennsylvania. Resource areas include benefits, employment, financial assistance, mental wellness and substance use, post-traumatic stress, and more. To learn more about PA VETConnect, visit www.dmva.pa.gov/VETConnect.

New 3-Day Passes Now Available through SEPTA

SEPTA's two new 3-day pass options for Transit and Regional Rail provide additional flexibility for riders.

The **Transit Convenience pass** costs \$18 and is valid for 24 SEPTA rides taken over 3 days on buses, trolleys, or subways (excludes regional rail).

The **Independence Regional Rail pass** costs \$36 and is good for 10 combined rides on buses, trolleys, subways, and regional rail.

3-day passes can be purchased on a SEPTA Key Card and are ideal for those who use Transit and Regional Rail less than five days a week. You can purchase these passes online at www.septakey.org, through the SEPTA Key app, or in person at any SEPTA station fare kiosk or SEPTA sales office.

PennDOT Travel Resources

Here are two PennDOT resources to help plan your local driving:

The **Traffic Bulletin** is a website that advertises current and upcoming travel restrictions on state highways in the region. It is updated in real-time during normal business hours. Visit <https://www.pennDOT.gov/RegionalOffices/district-6/Pages/default.aspx> then click "Traffic Bulletin" on the

far-right menu.

"**511PA**" is smartphone app that gives real-time, hands-free traffic advisories for Pennsylvania state roadways. Open the app before driving to hear traffic advisories near you. To get the app search for "**511PA**" at your smartphone's app store.

New PA Health Insurance Marketplace

If you do not have health insurance or need additional coverage Pennsylvania has a new health insurance marketplace for you.

"**Pennie**" is an online marketplace for affordable healthcare coverage. Pennie-certified Assistants can walk you through the shopping and enrollment process.

Healthcare coverage can only be purchased during the Open Enrollment period which began

November 1st and will continue until January 15th.

Pennsylvanians already enrolled through HealthCare.gov now will be transitioned to Pennie for their 2021 coverage.

Visit www.Pennie.com or call 1-884-884-8040 to compare plans, get quotes, find advice, and purchase coverage.

District Office Assistance During COVID

My Havertown District Office is available to help you remotely with your state related matters from 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through Thursday and 9:00 to 4:30 Fridays. Please call 610-789-3900 for assistance. Due to COVID we are not currently accepting walk in traffic. In office appointments will be available as conditions permit.

Our satellite office at the Ardmore Library is temporarily closed. The Ardmore Library is limiting visitors and library activities for the duration of the pandemic. When the library returns to business as usual, our satellite office will resume service.

Follow me on Facebook

You can follow me on Facebook at [Facebook.com/RepVitali](https://www.facebook.com/RepVitali). There you will find updates from Harrisburg, district news, and other important state-related information.

Join My Email Update List

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. To be added to that list, please email RepVitali@pahouse.net.