



State Representative **Dan Miller**

THE STATE REPORT

Serving the 42nd Legislative District

Winter 2014

Here To Serve You

District Office:

650 Washington Road, Suite 102
Mt. Lebanon, PA 15228
(412) 343-3870

Capitol Office:

106B East Wing
P.O. Box 202042
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2042
(717) 783-1850

Website:

www.pahouse.com/miller

Twitter:

@RepDanMiller

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/
RepDanMiller](http://www.facebook.com/RepDanMiller)

Committee Assignments:

Aging and Older Adult Services
Children & Youth
Policy and State Government

Caucuses:

At-Risk Children & Families
Autism
Early Childhood Education
Fire/EMS
Government Reform
LGBT Equality
Steel

**Sign up for my monthly
updates online at**

[www.pahouse.com/email_
alerts/email_signup.asp](http://www.pahouse.com/email_alerts/email_signup.asp)



LOOK INSIDE FOR: Government Reform Update ● Education Funding Status
Redistricting Information ● Policy Hearing Summary ● Senior Town Halls
Saluting our Veterans ● Local Job Creation ● Community Events and Resources
Legislative Action Center

GOVERNMENT REFORM UPDATE

I currently serve on the State Government Committee and I am a member of the bipartisan, bicameral Government Reform Caucus. As promised, I have championed measures that I believe will make Harrisburg more efficient and will increase the public's confidence that their government is working for them. Accordingly, I crossed party lines and supported Speaker Sam Smith's bills (H.B. 1234 and H.B. 1716) that would reduce the size of the legislature by 50 House members and 12 senators.

Not only did I vote to pass the bills, but I fought for them and urged my colleagues on the committee to do the same. I would note that while I am pleased these bills were approved by the committee, I am disappointed that amendments which would have assured that such reductions would be carried out in a nonpartisan method were soundly rejected. This does not increase people's faith in government. It is my hope that these amendments will be reconsidered before a final vote occurs.

I believe we need more reform measures, and I have co-sponsored a variety of bills that I think can help:

Gift Reform: Currently, and to me inexplicably, legislators do not need to report annual gifts under \$250. I have co-sponsored H.B. 1667, which would prohibit almost all gifts.

Fair Redistricting: Given the recent redistricting debacle, I think now is the time to push for an improved, nonpartisan procedure that will better serve citizens' interests. I have co-sponsored H.B. 1843.

Term Limits: Due to the failures of the redistricting system to foster competitive races that would engage the public, as well as the lack of campaign finance restrictions, I have co-sponsored H.B. 1292 which seeks a limited constitutional convention to address legislator term limits.

Constitutional Convention: I believe it is wise for every generation or so to reevaluate the structure and form of our government to be sure that it is well-tailored to the issues and missions of the time, and therefore I have co-sponsored H.B. 989 that would authorize a full constitutional convention.

Obviously there are more reform issues to debate, but I will continue to fight for bipartisan solutions to make our state government more efficient and increase its standing in the minds of those it is designed to serve. We may disagree on elements of government, but everyone should demand its efficiency, transparency and accountability.

Supporting our veterans

There is no greater sacrifice than the one that our military servicemembers and their families have made for our country. For these men and women we owe a debt of gratitude, and every level of government must efficiently fulfill all promises made. I was proud to bring the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs service van to our district to help connect local veterans with state resources. Fittingly, we set up shop adjoining the new Mt. Lebanon's Veterans Memorial, which was a project I was honored to spearhead as a commissioner. We were joined by staff from Senator Pat Toomey's office who helped provide additional information regarding federal resources. Veterans and their families should continue to contact my office any time for assistance regarding earned benefits.



I was honored to meet so many veterans at our veterans van event, and I look forward to hosting similar events in the future.

Valley Forge Military College

To promote military career opportunities, I will be nominating one high school senior from the district for admission and a scholarship to Valley Forge Military College. Interested students should talk to their guidance counselor or contact my office for an application.



Following the Mt. Lebanon Pumpkin Patch Parade, we had a great turnout at our Kids Health and Safety Fair at the Mt. Lebanon Public Safety Building.

Redistricting information

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Constitution, all of the state legislative districts have now been redrawn based on the 2010 Census. This process was the subject of much debate and contention. The state Supreme Court actually struck down the first set of maps for violating the requirements of compactness, continuity and political subdivision integrity. This led many to the assumptions of political gamesmanship and gerrymandering. Eventually, the Supreme Court approved new maps deemed to be more centralized and balanced.

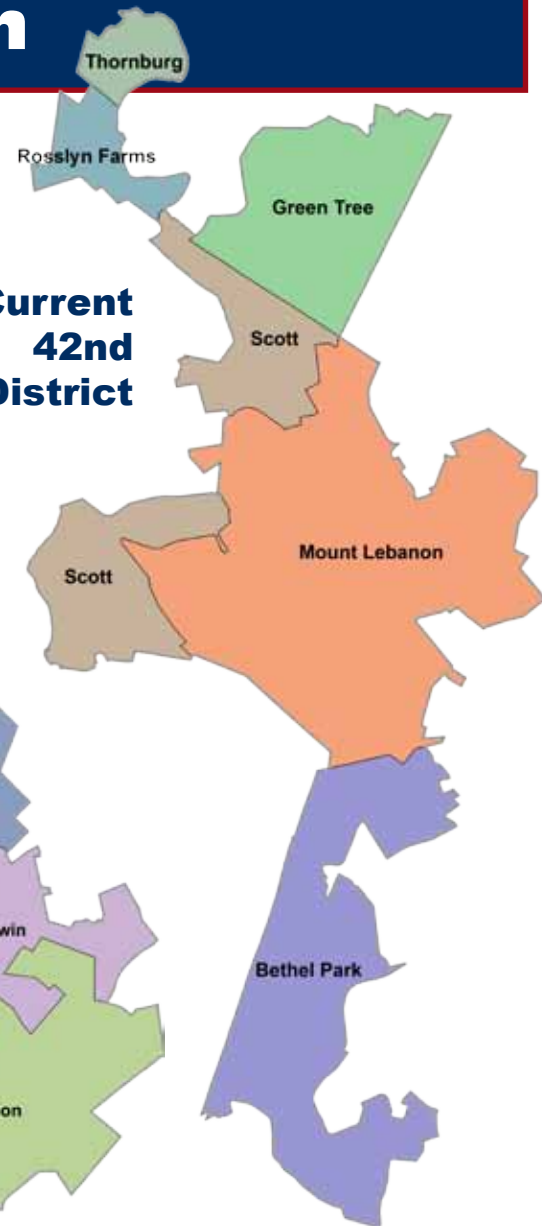
These new maps mean changes to the 42nd District. Bethel Park, Green Tree, Rosslyn Farms and Thornburg have been completely removed from the district. Dormont, Baldwin Township and Castle Shannon will become part of the 42nd District. Scott and Brookline are half in and half out, divided among two or even three legislative districts.

When you vote in the 2014 Primary and General Elections, you will be voting for state representatives who will represent these new legislative districts beginning Dec. 1, 2014. Until then, I continue to represent the current 42nd Legislative District. Please contact my office to provide your legislative feedback and to request state-related services.

It is my hope that real redistricting reform legislation will make for a better and smoother process in the future.



**Current
42nd
District**



Meeting people at Mt. Lebanon First Fridays.



Meeting constituents at Mt. Lebanon's Fourth of July celebration.



Presenting a flag to Mike Rierner of the Salvation Army.

Cyber and charter school effects on public education

In 1997, Pennsylvania passed a law authorizing charter schools, and today there are over 170 operating in our state. For many students, charter and cyber charter schools offer a great alternative to the traditional public school setting. But, given that these schools are largely funded by taxpayer dollars, we must demand that they abide by the same mandates which govern our public schools – especially in relation to outcomes, results and transparency.

Many people have heard about the pension “double-dip” problem that currently exists for cyber and charter schools. In short, this double-dip occurs because the state reimburses at least 50 percent of the charter schools’ pension costs while those schools also receive 100 percent of their pension costs from the local school district.

Clearly, such double-billing with taxpayer dollars would not be tolerated anywhere else.

Recently the House passed H.B. 618 which attempts to correct part of this problem. H.B. 618 would eliminate the double-dip loophole for cyber charter schools for two years. It does not address brick-and-mortar charter schools, which coincidentally far outnumber cyber charters in our state. While not a perfect bill, it would provide direct savings to our local school districts. It also would authorize a commission to study the true cost of educating students in charter and cyber charter schools in order to devise a fairer funding formula.

Meanwhile, the Senate is currently waiting to vote on S.B. 1085 which alter, and in part eliminate, what benefit H.B. 618 would provide. As amended, this bill would cut the local school district savings by sending almost half of it to Harrisburg, further reducing state support for public education overall.

Keep in mind that Harrisburg essentially caused the problem by eliminating charter school reimbursements in the first

place. The state has a constitutional obligation to support public education and in exchange for such dwindling support it sets the ground rules for teacher pensions, limits district options to address them, tells districts how much to pay annually, and passes on more and more unfunded mandates while failing to recognize districts that are actually ahead of the curve. Given all that, to redirect the savings meant for local school districts would shirk the state’s constitutional obligation yet again. And even worse, S.B. 1085 would further erode local control by eliminating the requirement that new charter schools obtain local school district approval, although local school districts would still have to pay the bill.

I recognize that there are many issues to address regarding education in this state. However, we must demand fairness in these taxpayer-funded school systems. It is my hope that we will find ways to comprehensively address the fiscal impact of charter schools and move on to the real issue: How to more efficiently and effectively graduate students who are positioned for success in the global economy and who are well-tailored to the future job opportunities in our state.



I outlined my concerns about education funding with reporters before voting on the budget in June.

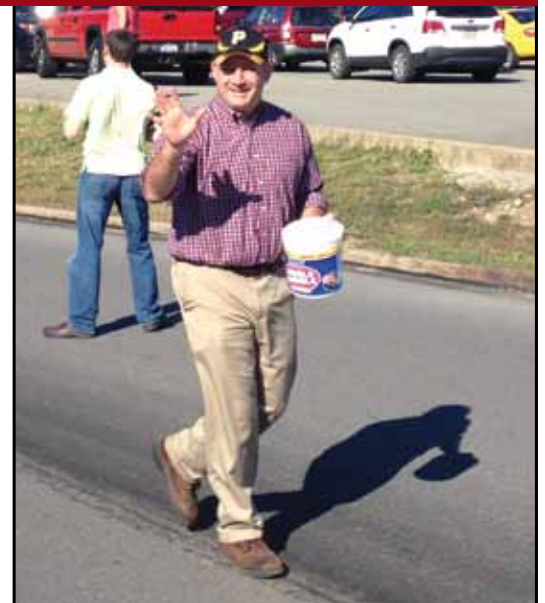
Article III, Section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution:

“Public school system: The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.”



Presenting a citation to the Shamrock Manor Women’s Club

Marching in the Bethel Park Community Day Parade.



Policy hearing summary and the Parental Involvement Leave Act



I was honored to be joined by my fellow legislators in Mt. Lebanon to discuss special education issues.

In September, I hosted a policy hearing that brought my colleagues from across the state to the Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building. I was very pleased to provide an opportunity for local school districts, parents and community representatives to speak on issues surrounding schools and youth in our district.

The superintendents from Mt. Lebanon, Bethel Park and Keystone Oaks made comments on important topics like special education funding, charter and cyber school problems and unfunded mandates. We also heard an update from Mt. Lebanon's Drug Taskforce and Pennsylvania American Water's safety program designed to properly assist with the disposal of outdated prescription pills.

I also led a discussion on my legislation, the Parental Involvement Leave Act, or PILA. This bill, similar in nature to the federal Family Medical Leave Act, is designed to help working families attend academic-related activities for their children. This legislation recognizes that, in many parts of the state, parental attendance at teacher conferences, open houses or curriculum nights is becoming the rarity instead of the norm – and most often due to conflicting work hours.

This legislation would apply only when such conflict is unavoidable. This bill would also provide additional time for parents of children with special needs. Parental involvement from the beginning of early intervention services is integral for the implementation and success of an individualized education program or individual family service plan. These plans can take hours to design, and that still assumes there is no need for modification or challenge through the school year. The failure to develop such a plan adequately can set a child back years.

The reality is that, for far too many middle-class and working families, it is becoming increasingly difficult for one parent to attend such events, let alone two. For better or worse, our economy is different now. But what hasn't changed are the clear benefits gained and the increased likelihood of success that come with full parental involvement in a child's academics.



It was a pleasure getting to meet with local seniors this Fall about the issues they find most concerning to our community.

Senior town halls

As a member of the state House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee, my staff and I have prioritized our outreach to seniors across the district. We have had visits and town hall events at several senior care facilities, including Baptist Homes, Providence Point, Bethel Park Holiday, ManorCare-Green Tree, Concordia, the Devonshire and Asbury Heights. These have been invaluable opportunities for me to hear from residents about the importance of necessary government support programs, as well as concerns regarding possible changes from lottery privatization.



Lawmakers from across the area recognized the importance of the jobs the PHEAA call center will bring to our area, and I was proud to join them.

District Growth: Jobs and Volunteerism

I was very pleased to attend two groundbreaking ceremonies in our district, both of which occurred in Green Tree. Thanks to Senator Wayne Fontana, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has opened a call center and will be adding up to 150 jobs in our region. We were glad to assist several residents with the application process. I also attended the opening of the new headquarters of Global Links, a nonprofit that assists with medical relief in developing countries. They have a fantastic operation with a lot of opportunities for volunteers!

State Representative
Dan Miller's



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2014

At Beth El Congregation
1900 Cochran Road, Pittsburgh PA 15220

■ **Resource Expo**

State, county, local agencies,
advocacy and support groups.

■ **Informative Sessions**

Employment, transition services,
advocacy, independent living,
and other important topics.

Free and open to the public.



More information may be found at www.pahouse.com/miller

State Representative Dan Miller • 42nd Legislative District

650 Washington Road, Suite 102 • Mt. Lebanon, PA 15228 • (412) 343-3870

Website: www.pahouse.com/miller • Twitter: @RepDanMiller • Facebook: www.facebook.com/RepDanMiller

Paid for by State Funds

Legislative Action Center

You can always visit my website to see my votes on any piece of legislation. Aside from bills referenced elsewhere in this newsletter, here is a list of other legislation that I have co-sponsored which may come up for a vote soon.

H.B. 99 and H.B. 101 Codify bullying and harassment into the crimes code

H.B. 1556 Amend school code to define bullying, create reporting procedures, and continuing professional development for teachers and certified professionals

H.B. 914 Provide for continuing professional development on suicide prevention for teachers and certified professionals

H.B. 300 Prohibit discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression

H.B. 1621 and H.B. 1622 Require acceptance of all medical insurances by all medical providers

H.B. 1014 Require school property tax notices to clearly label savings from state gaming revenue

H.B. 1842 Allow people to have the option of identifying their autism disability on their driver's license

H.B. 1792 Provide for efficiency awards for state employees who find savings at the workplace

H.B. 1770 Mandate labeling for genetically modified foods

H.B. 1297 Allow local police to use radar

H.B. 1010 Mandate background checks for additional firearm sales

