

Flynn's office has Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications

By now, you should have received your rebate check if you applied to the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. If you haven't applied, you still have time.

The state extended the deadline to apply to the program until the end of this year.

The program provides qualifying senior citizens and other Pennsylvania residents with rebates based on the property taxes or rent they paid the previous year.

The program is open to Pennsylvania residents 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people 18 or older who have a disability. The income limit to qualify is \$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters.

Applicants must count all sources of income toward the limit, but only half of any Social Security, Supplemental Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier 1 benefits toward their total income.

The maximum property tax or rent rebate for most qualifying Pennsylvania residents is \$650. You can download a form from online or get one from my office.

Remember: There is no charge to apply for this program. If you receive an offer to help you file an application for a fee, please ignore it. My office can help you file for FREE.

Flynn supports enhancements to rebate program

Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is a valuable program for hundreds of thousands of our residents.

I support several enhancements to the program by voting for legislation that would:

- Permanently extend the program's deadline to Dec. 31. The program's regular deadline is June 30, but the state regularly extends the deadline until the end of the year. This would make the extension permanent.
- Double the amount of death benefits that may be exempted when considering income for program eligibility. Current law exempts the first \$5,000 of

death benefits. The bill would increase that amount to \$10,000.

- Allow an executor to apply for the rebate on behalf of a deceased applicant if the individual was eligible for the program on the date he or she died. Currently, deceased applicants must have lived the entire year for which their claim is filed.

Since the program's inception in 1971, more than \$5 billion has been distributed to older adults and adults with disabilities. The legislation is currently being considered by the Senate.

I am also supporting legislation to allow certain federal employees who are ineligible for Social Security to exclude half of their Civil Service Retirement System pension when applying for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program already allows people who receive Railroad Retirement Tier I or Social Security benefits to exclude half of that income in determining eligibility for the program. But federal employees, who, because of their hiring date, are ineligible for Social Security, were inadvertently excluded. This is an unfair omission that should be corrected.





Rep. Flynn partnered with the Griffin Pond Animal Shelter to hold a “Pet Walk & Family Fest” at McDade Park. Left to right — Jess Farrell and Grover; Flynn; Ed Florentino, Griffin Pond executive director; Mary Kettle and MIA.

Rep. Flynn meets with members of the South Scranton Neighborhood Watch group. Left to right — Scranton Police Chief Carl Graziano, Roseann Wallis, Steve Wallis, Flynn, Andrea Wharton and Daniel O’Connor.



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT!



Scranton resident Bill Jennings and his son stopped at Rep. Flynn’s Information Station to pick up state history, trivia and activity books. District office manager Angela Rempe Jones looks on.

Rep. Flynn meets with Scranton Police Chief Carl Graziano at the National Night Out celebration at Scranton High School.



Rep. Flynn with Scranton Police Officers Melissa Forsette and Jill Foley.

How to avoid electric bill spikes

Thousands of Pennsylvanians were shocked when their electric bills doubled or tripled in one month this winter. Customers who had a variable-rate contract with an electric supplier or who had a fixed-rate contract that expired were subject to the price spikes.

To avoid this problem, you should check the terms and conditions of your contract with your electric supplier regularly. I recommend making note of when your contract will expire on your calendar to remind you to follow up and to re-evaluate your electric supplier to ensure you’re getting the best value.

If you have switched to a competitive electric supplier, your bill has the name and phone number of the supplier, and the current rate you are paying. Additionally, you can obtain information about the current status of your contract, including whether your rate is fixed or variable, and more by calling the supplier.

As a result of the price spikes, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission has approved new rules to help consumers.

One rule that recently took effect will require competitive energy suppliers to more clearly disclose the details of their offers, especially the risks of variable-rate offers. In regard to fixed-term contracts, suppliers must notify customers by mail if their contracts are expiring or if there are changes to terms of service.

Another rule will shorten the time to switch suppliers from 40 days to within three days of the request. This new rule will take effect by the end of 2014.

You can learn more about shopping for electricity suppliers, or choose another supplier by visiting www.papowerswitch.com, a website maintained by the PUC.