



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**Marty Flynn**

113TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

MEMBER, HOUSE AGING & OLDER ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE



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SEPTEMBER 2014

## It's about the jobs ...

Over the last year I have been working on legislation and initiatives to help bring and keep jobs in our region — only to be thwarted by repeated setbacks to our region by this current administration.

Our families and our businesses need the support of not only our local representatives — but also that of the administration — to set the tone for business development in our commonwealth. Twice in the short time that I have been in office, Lackawanna County has been denied the opportunity to participate in the newly established “City Revitalization and Improvement Zone” (CRIZ) program “which will provide economic development and job creation within a political subdivision.”

I have met and talked with leaders of the business community, including the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, and we have shared concerns over the limited resources made available for economic development in the 2014-15 state budget. The governor's new budget not only makes the recruitment of new business to our region difficult, it makes it equally challenging to retain existing enterprises that may be lured by other states that are offering greater incentives.

While we are blessed with a population that has a work ethic that could stand against any other region in the country, we must find a way to match that talent to emerging job opportunities. We have witnessed several examples of that positive vision with Lackawanna, Johnson and Keystone colleges creating new programs that adapted to the circumstances of the market in providing education and training for the growing Marcellus Shale industry. Until we have an administration that is an advocate of job creation and business stimulation in Harrisburg, we must continue to build on the positives of our region.

Outside the scope of the internal financial challenges faced by the city of Scranton — we have a downtown that against all odds, has become a growing residential community that will be a catalyst for continued growth.

I can assure you that I, along with the other members of the Northeastern Pennsylvania legislative delegation are ready to work together to fight for increased support from the administration and the full General Assembly.

## Flynn named to Gaming Oversight Committee

Earlier this summer, I was pleased to be appointed to the House Gaming Oversight Committee by Democratic Leader Frank Dermody.

The casinos have brought significant employment to the area and the commonwealth. It's also important that we properly regulate them so we can maximize their potential for tourism growth and economic development. In addition, the committee will be at the forefront of discussions on the possible legalization of Keno, online gaming and potentially even sports betting.

“Representative Flynn is an energetic fighter who will use his spot on the committee to make sure that gaming continues to provide good jobs and property tax relief as it matures in Pennsylvania,” Dermody said.

My other three committee assignments include Aging & Older Adult Services, Commerce and State Government, the last of which I serve as secretary.



*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](http://www.papowerswitch.com), a website maintained by the PUC.



# The last day to register to vote for the Nov. 4 election is Oct. 6.

## Are you a registered voter?

In order to be eligible to vote, you must be 18 on or before Nov. 4. You can check to see if you are registered to vote and find information on your polling place by visiting [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).

If you have moved since the last election, you must register in your new voting precinct to be eligible to vote.

If you cannot make it to the polls because of illness or disability, or you will be out of your municipality because of professional obligations, you may apply for an absentee ballot by Oct. 28.

Voter registration and absentee ballot applications also are available in my office.

### Flynn's office can help you with:

- ☐ Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- ☐ Information on financial assistance for higher education
- ☐ Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- ☐ Birth and death certificates
- ☐ Problems with the Department of Public Welfare (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- ☐ Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- ☐ Requests for literature of all kinds — bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information

***Any problem with state government!***



*Rep. Flynn presents certificates from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to the Scranton Co-op Farmers Market celebrating its 75th Anniversary. Left to right — Paul Brace, co-op president; Flynn; Marylee Schirg, women's auxiliary president; and Rep. Karen Boback.*



*Rep. Flynn with members of the North Scranton Neighborhood Association — winners of the "Part of the Solution" award for their support and dedicated service to the city of Scranton. Left to right — Flynn, John O'Hearn, Christine Falbo, Mike Lucas, Kathy Quinn, Isabelle Lance, Lois Moran, Donna Graziano and Nicole Lance.*



*Rep. Flynn and the American Red Cross present a Community Service Award to Linda Robeson for her tireless volunteer work with the local charities and the sick and poor. Left to right — Mary Marrera, Sen. John Blake, Linda Robeson and Flynn.*

# VETERANS' CORNER

## Veteran's designation now available on Pa. driver's licenses, ID cards

Pennsylvania veterans now have an easy way to prove their eligibility to obtain benefits or get a discount at a hotel or retailer.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is now offering a veteran's designation on driver's licenses and identification cards for free. The designation — an American flag with the word "veteran" under it — is the result of a law I supported.

The law was needed because the military generally only provides a veteran status identification card for those who have a retired

designation, which requires 20 to 30 years of service. Many people serve their country for several years, and then work in the private sector, leaving them with only their discharge papers to prove their status. Now, they won't have to bring that paperwork with them.

This is just a small way of saying thank you to veterans, whose service to our country is priceless.

Veterans holding a non-commercial driver's license or identification



card can apply for the designation by visiting [www.dmv.state.pa.us](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us) and clicking on the American Flag/Veterans Designation icon. Early renewals simply to add the designation are assessed a fee.

## Veterans — Do you have unclaimed money due to you?

As we prepare to honor the men and women who have served in the military on Veterans Day, I wanted to pass along some information you may find useful.

Apparently millions of dollars for veterans and their families are unclaimed. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reports that the money is typically from life insurance

payments or dividend checks and premium refunds that were mailed to policyholders. If they were not delivered, the department holds the money indefinitely.

To find out if you or a family member has any unclaimed money, you can check on the department's website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) (<http://is.gd/VetInsFund>). You will need the veteran's full

name, date of birth and, if applicable, date of death. I encourage you to be careful if searching common names. To verify an identity, you may need to supply the VA insurance file number or service number, which can be found on

enlistment or discharge documents.

You also can claim money by contacting the Department of Veterans Affairs' Regional Office and Insurance Center by calling **1-800-669-8477 or 1-800-827-1000 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday**; an after-hours/weekends messaging system is available.

*To all of our veterans and active military personnel, thank you for your service to our great country and for all that you have done. If you know a veteran or veteran's family who may find this useful, please pass along the information.*





# 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.





**STATE REP. MARTY FLYNN**

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**Rep. Flynn's 2nd Annual**

# SENIOR FAIR

**FREE!**



**Friday, September 12**

**1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

**St. Joseph's Hall**

**Divine Mercy Parish**

**312 Davis Street, Scranton**

- Information from state and county agencies
- Social service and senior support organizations
- FREE refreshments
- Door prizes



*Rep. Flynn hosted an old-fashioned "Welcome Wagon" for over 330 members of the Group Workcamps Foundation. These young volunteers conducted improvement projects for elderly, modest-income and disabled homeowners, helping to repair and refurbish 55 homes in West Scranton. Pictured are members of NeighborWorks of Northeastern Pennsylvania who hosted and coordinated the project, along with members of the Scranton Fire Department, Hyde Park Neighborhood Watch Group, Scranton Area Foundation, Flynn and his staff.*

## Opt in for emails

I want to alert you to House rules that prohibit when I can contact you leading up to a state House election, such as the one on Nov. 4. Though you already may be receiving my emails, there will be a 60-day period preceding the 2014 general election when you will be prohibited from receiving legislative emails from me unless you have "opted in" to continue receiving my emails.

If you already opted in ahead of the primary election, you do not need to do this again.

So, please be sure that you have "OPTED IN." Simply go to my website, [www.pahouse.com/Flynn](http://www.pahouse.com/Flynn), and click on the "E-mail Alerts" button.