



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**Marty Flynn**  
113TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



MARCH 2014

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Dear Friends,

It has been just over one year that I have been serving as a state representative in Harrisburg.

During that time I have watched, listened, and fought what I think is "The good fight." While I have fought and worked on many issues from property tax relief, to better roads and bridges, job protection and job creation, to fighting utility rate increases, and changing legislation to allow for better protection for our children, our people AND our pets – there is probably no issue that I have worked harder on – and frustrated me more than fighting for property tax relief.

Something MUST be done this year! The partisan politics that has blocked this relief must come to an end. Our citizens, particularly our seniors and those living on limited or fixed incomes can no longer shoulder the ever-increasing burden of skyrocketing property taxes. Whether the revenue relief comes from Marcellus Shale gas exploration tariffs, legalized Keno, further closing of the Delaware loophole, an increased or modified sales tax, or a modified income tax – the politics of the current administration has to STOP!

I have fought for, and voted for reduced taxes for our seniors and low- and moderate-income families – only to have these attempts at relief dashed against the rocks of partisan politics.

For too long, we have all been hammered with increased costs and expenses in our lives – whether it be the governor's increased gasoline tax, or increases in our utility bills, or garbage and sewer fees – our citizens can take no more.

As difficult as things have been during the last year, there have also been some "points of light":

- The completion and opening of the Linden Street Scranton, and Main Avenue Taylor bridges, and stopping the transfer of management of our Pennsylvania Lottery to a foreign company.
- Also here at home, when more than 6,000 water customers (which is approximately 20,000 people) in Scranton and Moosic lost their water service in late January and early February, my staff and I worked day and night to be sure that emergency water supplies were more readily available to all residents of the affected area.

I will continue "the good fight" both in Harrisburg and here in Lackawanna County.

When you need assistance on a state-related matter – my staff and I are here to help you – please call us – we are working for you!

## Changes coming to the 113th District

As you may know, every 10 years, following the U.S. Census, the legislative district boundaries for the state House, Senate and U.S. House of Representatives are redrawn. The purpose is to equalize the populations in each district. This process is required in both the federal and state constitutions.

In May of last year, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court approved the new district lines and they will take effect Dec. 1, 2014. Portions of the City of Scranton will then officially be part of the 113th District.

Residents of those areas will vote in the newly configured 113th District starting with the upcoming primary election on May 20.

Meantime, you can contact my office from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at Jay's Commons, 409 N. Main Ave., Scranton for assistance with any state-related issue. The phone number is 570-342-4348.

By visiting my website, [www.pahouse.com/Flynn](http://www.pahouse.com/Flynn), you may sign up for email alerts for news from the Capitol and the local area.

Parts of the newly drawn 113th District are currently represented by Rep. Kevin Haggerty.

# Corbett 2014-15 budget proposal kicks can down road

The 2014-15 budget proposal laid out by Gov. Tom Corbett on Feb. 4 will continue to lead Pennsylvania in the wrong direction in education and job creation.

The pain felt by Corbett's \$1 billion in cuts to public education during his first year and little-to-no restoration of those cuts in his second- and third-year budgets cannot be eased by the gimmicks he is proposing for 2014-15, including a significant increase in Pennsylvania's debt to pay for new education programs and small increases in a handful of other programs. But the vast majority of Corbett's cuts to public schools remain. His previous cuts to higher education also largely remain.

Instead of embracing the viable revenue sources Pennsylvanians favor, such as closing the Delaware loophole that allows large corporations to avoid paying taxes or enacting a modest tax on Marcellus Shale gas drillers who pay this tax in other states, Gov. Corbett is kicking the can down the road with gimmicks that cannot possibly help and will most likely hurt Pennsylvania's long-term economic condition.

Our governor cut business taxes over three years when the state could not afford to do so and at the expense of children in Lackawanna County and across the state. Not only did the education of our children suffer, Corbett's corporate tax cuts yielded little results for working Pennsylvanians. Our commonwealth still falls below most states in outlook for employment, ranking 48th in job growth nationwide.

Corbett's budget plan reads more like a campaign document in a gubernatorial election year than a workable spending plan for the state.

At a time when other states are figuring out how to spend their budget surpluses, Gov. Corbett is staring at a \$1.7 billion deficit of his own making. Instead of pulling out some "Johnny come lately" proposals for education and suggesting more pension debt to pay for it, he should be embracing the ideas that Pennsylvanians support. Our working families deserve better.

The state's fiscal year begins July 1.

## Home heating aid applications available

Applications for Pennsylvania's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program are currently being accepted.

There are two types of assistance. Cash grants help you pay your regular monthly heating bill. These grants are sent directly to your utility provider if you qualify. You may also qualify for a crisis grant, which can help pay for emergency heating equipment repairs or replacement.

You can get more details by contacting my office or by calling the Lackawanna County Assistance Office. For cash grants, call 570-963-4842 and for crisis grants, call 570-963-6836.

If you are eligible, my staff can help you fill out your application and submit it for free.



Funding eligibility is determined by a family size and income level scale.

Household Size	Income Limits Cash/Crisis Program
1	\$17,235
2	\$23,265
3	\$29,295
4	\$35,325
5	\$41,355
6	\$47,385

For families of more than six people, please add \$6,030 per person.



*Rep. Flynn spoke to students of the Career Technology Center of Lackawanna County about various aspects of career opportunities. At far right is Jenine Ikeler, Career Resource Coordinator of CTC.*

## Real estate exemption sought for veteran spouses

### Establishing veterans court across PA

In the near future, I plan to join my colleague Rep. Ryan Bizzarro in introducing legislation that would establish a veterans court in those counties in Pennsylvania that do not currently have one.

Lackawanna County was the first county to establish a veterans court in November 2009 and 16 counties have followed their lead, but 50 counties have not yet established a veterans court. These courts assist veterans charged with nonviolent crimes who are struggling with addiction, mental illness or co-occurring disorders.

Because a veterans court judge handles numerous veterans' cases and is supported by a strong, interdisciplinary team, the judge is in a much better position to exercise discretion and effectively respond to a veteran than a judge who only occasionally hears a case involving a veteran defendant. The veterans court provides support and guidance from fellow veterans and those who participate in the court program are supervised by specialized probation officers and receive treatment and support from the Veterans Administration to address the underlying problems that are often caused by post-traumatic stress disorders.

One in five veterans has symptoms of a mental health disorder or cognitive impairment and one in six veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom suffers from a substance abuse issue. Research has shown that there is a link between substance abuse and combat-related mental illness, and left untreated, mental health disorders common among veterans can lead directly to involvement in the criminal justice system.

With nearly 1 million veterans, Pennsylvania has the fifth-largest population of veterans in the country. We owe it to our veterans to provide the specialized support and treatment they need after serving their country so courageously.

I plan to introduce legislation to allow the spouse of a disabled veteran to receive an important real estate tax exemption should the veteran become deceased before being deemed fully disabled and eligible.

Under current law, veterans who are injured during active duty service and are no longer able to perform their duties are subject to an evaluation period, in which it is determined whether they are able to perform any other duties within the military or are deemed to be 100 percent disabled. However, should they die as a result of their injury or disability before this evaluation period is complete, their unmarried spouse does not qualify for the real estate tax exemption they would have otherwise received. My legislation would allow the spouse to receive the tax exemption if the VA determines that the veteran would have been deemed 100 percent disabled had they survived the entire evaluation period, and if the veteran died as a result of the injury or disability.

It is our duty as a commonwealth to ensure that veterans and their loved ones receive every benefit to which they are entitled. As such, I will continue to fight for those who fought for us.

## Standing with labor against union-busting bill

I recently stood with labor leaders and workers from across the state to rally against a so-called "Paycheck Protection" bill that would outlaw public workers from having their union dues automatically deducted from their pay.

This misleading name hides what Wall Street special interests and right-wing extremists are really trying to do. It's more like "paycheck deception" because H.B. 1507 is a politically motivated attack to silence working families and give control of our state government to corporate CEOs. Supporters of this legislation contend that they are protecting working individuals, when in reality they're looking to silence workers' voices in the legislature and the workplace.

I will do everything in my power to stop the passage of this union-busting bill.



**Rep. Marty Flynn (FAR RIGHT) stands with fellow legislators and Rick Bloomingdale, president of the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, (CENTER) at a rally in Harrisburg against so-called "paycheck protection" legislation, which will harm workers.**



# Legislation would hike age for buying cigarettes to 21

I plan to introduce legislation that would increase the legal age to purchase tobacco and tobacco-related products from 18 to 21.

Under current law, an individual who is 18 or older can legally purchase tobacco and tobacco-related products. Anyone younger than 18 found guilty of purchasing or receiving a tobacco product, or knowingly falsely representing himself or herself to be at least 18, is convicted of a summary offense and must pay a fine.

My legislation would allow Pennsylvania to join other states such as New Jersey and Texas in considering legislation to increase the minimum legal sale age of tobacco products from 18 to 21.

According to the United States surgeon general, more than 600,000 middle school students and 3 million high school students smoke cigarettes. Increasing the minimum age to purchase tobacco would likely lower overall tobacco use rates among youth by reducing and delaying the onset and access of tobacco and tobacco-related products.

As public officials, I believe it is our duty to help protect our most valuable assets, our children.

This measure has been endorsed by Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Care.



## Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Care, Inc.

Honorable Marty Flynn  
28A East Wing  
PO Box 202113  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2113

February 4, 2014

Dear Representative Flynn,

The Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Care (PSRC) is the professional association for approximately 6,700 respiratory therapists in the Commonwealth. On behalf of the Board of Directors for the PSRC, I am writing to you today to support your pending legislation that would amend Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses), § 6305 (Sale of Tobacco) of the Consolidated Statutes for the purpose of increasing the legal age to purchase tobacco and tobacco-related products from 18 years of age to 21 years of age.

A 2010 study found that each day, nearly 4,000 children under the age of 18 smoke their first cigarette and 1,000 become new daily cigarette smokers in the United States. In 2011, approximately 18% of high school boys smoked cigarettes and nearly 18% smoked cigars. When added to the fact that 88% of adults started smoking when they were under the age of 18, it's obvious that kids are still smoking.

As one of the front line health care providers for patients with lung disease, respiratory therapists see far too often the devastation that smoking can have on the lungs, heart and the rest of the body. While current Pennsylvania law bans the sale of tobacco and tobacco related products to anyone under the age of 18, the PSRC believes more can be done and this legislation is a step in the right direction.

The PSRC is happy to support your efforts and fully supports this legislation. Please feel free to contact me should you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Gail A. Varcelotti BS, RRT, FAARC  
2014-2015 President, PSRC  
Email: [2014President@psrc.net](mailto:2014President@psrc.net)  
Phone: 412-370-1749



**Rep. Flynn presents a proclamation recognizing the Original Black Sheep organization for its work supporting needy families and children. 1st row, L to R: Sam Tomaino; Lee Bomgardner; Sean Bingham, event chairman; Rep. Flynn; Mark Novak, president; Rich Belardi Sr.; Ed Marcyoniak; and Paul Walsh. 2nd row: Joe Macciocco; Frank McHugh; Joe Bevilacqua; and Jim Barrasse, incoming president.**

# Animal cruelty law change sought

Animals would be better protected from abuse under legislation that I have introduced in the House of Representatives.

Recently, a German Shepherd family pet escaped from its yard in Northumberland County. A neighbor saw the dog running outside on his property and proceeded to shoot it twice at close range. Sadly, the dog later succumbed to its injuries. Criminal charges are expected to be filed; however, under current law, the commonwealth is required to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the neighbor acted willfully and with malice – a difficult feat to overcome.

It has come to my attention that some prosecutors have found it challenging to prove the mental elements of willfully and maliciously beyond a reasonable doubt for the misdemeanor-graded crime of cruelty to domestic animals.

My bipartisan proposal (H.B. 2015) is supported by The Humane Society of the United States.

“While clearly Pennsylvanians believe these horrific offenses deserve tougher penalties ... This high standard is exceedingly difficult to prove and is exploited by guilty animal abusers to negotiate lesser penalties,” wrote Sarah Speed, Pennsylvania state director of HSUS.

“For example, someone who teases a service dog to the point of distraction puts the dog and her handler in danger, something which the misdemeanor penalties were specifically enacted to guard against. Unless the prosecution can prove that the perpetrator had malicious intent, no misdemeanor can be charged.

“Representative Flynn’s legislation will lower the necessary standard to ‘knowingly, intentionally, or recklessly’, which would allow prosecutors to finally use the misdemeanor penalties to deter crime. Returning to the above example, a prosecutor would only have to prove that the perpetrator ‘knowingly’ harassed the service dog to hold him accountable for his actions at the penalties originally intended by the legislature.”

My legislation has 32 co-sponsors and is awaiting action by the House Judiciary Committee.



**Rep. Flynn with rescued dogs Keggs, Sophie, and Mack Radzwillowicz.**

## Student financial aid applications available

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is now available for students planning to attend a college or university in the fall. Information from the FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for federal grants, the Pennsylvania State Grant program, scholarships, reduced-cost federal loans, work-study programs, and many school-based scholarships and financial aid programs.

The FAFSA may be completed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Items required to fill out the application include Social Security numbers, the student’s driver’s license, W-2 forms, federal income tax return and current bank statements.

Pennsylvania students and families can also find more information about the FAFSA by going online to [www.PHEAA.org/FAFSA](http://www.PHEAA.org/FAFSA). The website also offers a list of information that will be needed in order to submit a complete application.

This is a vital step that students and families should take when looking into financial assistance for higher education. College preparation is a very busy time packed with deadlines so I encourage prospective students to fill out the FAFSA form as soon as possible.



**Rep. Flynn and members of American Legion Kosciuszko Post 207 present a check for the purchase of televisions at the Gino Merli Veterans Center in Scranton. L to R: Jenna Fehr, Veterans Resource Coordinator; Commandant Michael Semian; Rep. Flynn; Post 207 Commander Jeff Sunday; Adjutant Joseph Staskiel; and Secretary James Vancosky.**



**Rep. Flynn replaces the television stolen from the West Side Senior Center. L to R: Laurie Fleming, manager, West Side Senior Center; Charlotte Roche, senior participant; Lisa Bonacci, HR director at Citizens Savings Bank Scranton – who replaced the stolen Wii system; and Rep. Flynn.**





## STATE REP. MARTY FLYNN

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## STAY IN THE KNOW

I want to alert you about Pennsylvania House rules that prohibit when I can contact you leading up to a state House election. Though you might already be receiving my email alerts, there will be a 60-day period preceding the 2014 primary and general elections when you will be prohibited from receiving legislative emails from me unless you have “opted in” to continue receiving my emails.

Please visit my website, [www.pahouse.com/Flynn](http://www.pahouse.com/Flynn), to sign up for email alerts on important information, including legislation being considered in Harrisburg. On my website, click on the Email Alerts tab in the left-hand column and fill in your information. You can also keep up to date with me through my Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/RepMartyFlynn](http://www.facebook.com/RepMartyFlynn) and follow me on Twitter at @RepFlynn.



*After passing by a graffiti-plagued bridge abutment on North Main Avenue in Scranton every day – Rep. Flynn decided to take the matter into his own hands and paint over the eyesore. Two months later it is still “graffiti clear!”*

## My office can help you with:

- ☐ Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications
- ☐ Information on financial assistance for higher education
- ☐ Obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- ☐ Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- ☐ 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
- ☐ Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- ☐ Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- ☐ Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- ☐ Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- ☐ Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- ☐ Problems or questions about the state lottery
- ☐ PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- ☐ Consumer complaints
- ☐ Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- ☐ Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups