

# **GREG VITALI**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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## ***LEGISLATIVE REPORT***

JANUARY 2014

# **GREG VITALI**

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT**

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## ***Children's Health Insurance Program improved and extended***

There is no longer a mandatory waiting period before parents can enroll their uninsured children in Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program under a law enacted in October. Previously, children had to go without insurance for six months before qualifying for enrollment in CHIP.

In addition to eliminating the six-month wait for CHIP enrollment, the law also extends the program through December 2015.

CHIP coverage is available to any child in Pennsylvania whose family earns too much to qualify for Medicaid, but can't afford to purchase private insurance or isn't covered by an employer.

For an average four-person family, CHIP is free if the household income is \$23,550 to \$47,100, low cost if the household income is \$47,101 to \$70,650 or full cost if

household income exceeds \$70,650. Low-cost premiums range between \$34.84 and \$72.54 per child, per month. Full-cost premiums range from \$159.86 to \$306.80 per child, per month, depending on the carrier.

CHIP covers immunizations, wellness checkups, prescriptions, dental, vision and hearing services, diagnostic testing, emergency care, mental health benefits, and hospitalization, as well as substance abuse rehabilitation and other services.

If your child doesn't have health insurance, or you know of a child who isn't covered, you can find out more about CHIP, including providers in your area, and how to enroll at [www.chipcoverspakids.com](http://www.chipcoverspakids.com) or by contacting my Havertown office.

**Before applying for CHIP, I urge you to contact my office to avoid any unnecessary delays.**

# Changes coming to the 166th Legislative District

Wards 4 and 8 and Precinct 10-3 in Lower Merion Township, as well as Ward 2 and precincts 1-2, 3-2 in Radnor Township will be joining the 166th Legislative District.

Residents of those areas will vote in the newly configured 166th District starting with the 2014 primary election. Residents of these areas will officially be part of the 166th District starting Dec. 1, 2014.

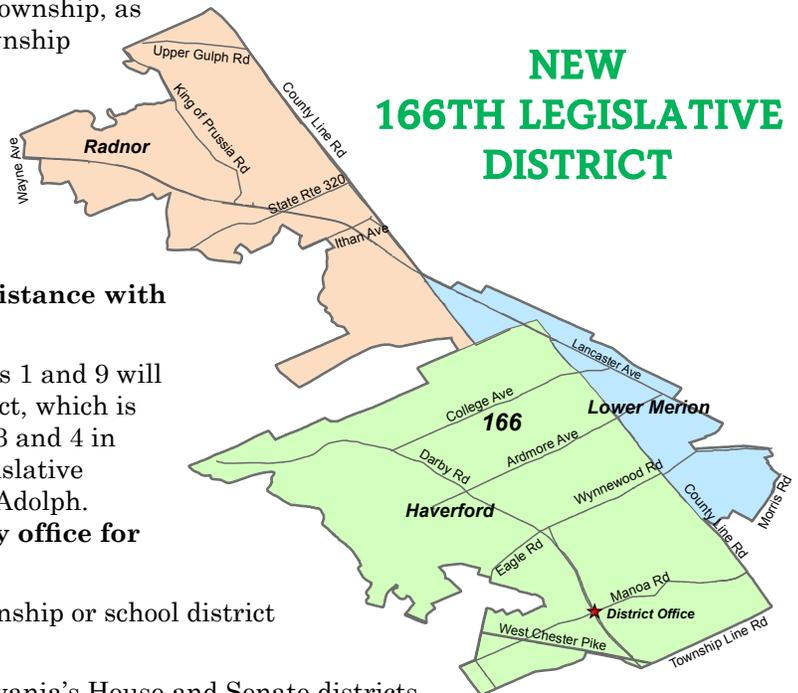
**All residents can contact my office now for assistance with any state-related issue.**

Starting on Dec. 1, 2014, Haverford Township Wards 1 and 9 will officially become part of the 163rd Legislative District, which is currently represented by Nicholas Micozzie. Wards 3 and 4 in Marple Township will become part of the 165th Legislative District, which is currently represented by William Adolph.

**These constituents may continue to contact my office for assistance for as long as they choose.**

Changes to the legislative districts do not affect township or school district affiliations.

The process of redrawing the boundaries of Pennsylvania's House and Senate districts takes place every 10 years following the Census. The purpose is to equalize the populations in each district.



## Tavern games legalized

A recently enacted Pennsylvania law allows bars, restaurants, hotels and public golf courses with liquor licenses to conduct tavern games. Tavern games are small games of chance which include pull-tab games, daily drawings and raffles. About 4,500 businesses across the state can seek licenses.

The maximum individual prize limit is \$2,000, and no more than \$35,000 in prizes may be awarded per week by any one establishment.

Tavern games are expected to eventually generate \$156 million per year in additional revenue for the state.

Previously, small games of chance had been limited as fundraisers for nonprofit organizations, such as VFW posts and volunteer fire companies.

I voted against this legislation for two reasons. The legalization of tavern games may reduce revenue for nonprofits which rely on these games to generate income. I also felt the legalization of tavern games was an unnecessary expansion of gambling.

## Join my email update list

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates from me about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. If you would like to be added to that list, please email my office at [RepVitali@pahouse.net](mailto:RepVitali@pahouse.net).

## Receive newsletters electronically

I am sending newsletters via email in an effort to reduce postage costs and help the environment. If you want to opt out of receiving the paper version, and receive only an electronic copy, go to my website, [www.gregvitali.com](http://www.gregvitali.com), and click on "Sign up for e-newsletters" in the upper left hand corner.

## 2014 House calendar available online

You can download the 2014 House of Representatives calendar on my legislative website, [www.pahouse.com/Vitali](http://www.pahouse.com/Vitali). It contains photos of the state Capitol Building.



## ***Major transportation funding bill enacted***

A major transportation bill was recently enacted to provide funding for Pennsylvania's deteriorating roads, bridges, and mass transit systems.

This legislation is expected to generate an additional \$2.3 billion per year by 2018. The new revenue will come by lifting a cap on the tax imposed on the wholesale price of gasoline, increasing driver-related fees and raising fines.

The cap on the wholesale price of gasoline is being lifted gradually, starting Jan. 1, 2014. It's unclear how much the retail cost of gasoline will increase as a result.

Registration for passenger cars will increase from \$36 to \$38 by 2017. Registration for small pickup trucks will increase from \$58.50 to \$62 by 2017. After that, there will be an inflationary increase every two years for all vehicle registrations.

The cost of a driver's license will increase by \$1 in 2015 and by another \$1 in 2017. There will be an inflationary increase every two years thereafter.

The fine for "failure to obey traffic control devices," a common citation for running a stop sign, will increase from \$25 to \$150.

## ***North Wayne flood project update***

A project to provide flooding relief in the North Wayne area is moving forward.

The Radnor Township Board of Commissioners recently authorized Chagrin Valley Engineers to complete final design and permitting for a project that would greatly increase the capacity of the storm water collection system at the North Wayne Field. The current system is undersized and in need of repair.

The Board of Commissioners will review the final design before authorizing the receipt of sealed bids for construction.

Poplar Avenue is one of the streets hoped to benefit from this project, but township officials warned this is not a cure all. This is the first step as part of an incremental approach to North Wayne's flooding problem.

In October the Radnor Board instituted a stormwater management program fee to fund flood mitigation projects, repair and replacement of storm sewer, and regulatory requirements.

For more information call the Radnor Township Public Works Department at (610) 688-5600.

## ***Check legislative action online***

The General Assembly's website has recently been updated. You can find real-time information on how legislators voted, along with information about bills, upcoming session and statutes.

The website also allows you to subscribe to receive free updates on bills, session activity, and committee activity. It can be accessed at [www.legis.state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us).

The increases were necessary because Pennsylvania's transportation infrastructure needs significant repairs.

Pennsylvania has the most structurally deficient bridges in the nation (5,543). Fifty-seven percent of Pennsylvania's roads are in poor or mediocre condition. In addition, many public transit agencies have been running deficits.

Of the \$2.3 billion in new, annual revenue, \$1.3 billion will be devoted to state roads and bridges and about \$500 million to mass transit. The remainder is earmarked to local government for road maintenance, Pennsylvania Turnpike projects, a fund for airports, rails and ports and repair of dirt and gravel roads.

The new funding will allow SEPTA to catch up on necessary capital improvements. Some critical projects in Delaware County include replacement of bridge timbers on the Darby Creek, Cobbs Creek and Ridley Creek viaducts, replacement of electrical substations at Morton and Lenni and replacement of the 118-year-old Crum Creek Bridge in Swarthmore.

## ***State grant to preserve part of Ardrossan Farm***

A \$1 million grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnerships Grant Program will help Radnor Township purchase 71 acres of the 311-acre Ardrossan Farm.

The purchase was approved by the Radnor Board of Commissioners in December. It will preserve open space and help restore and reforest Darby Creek stream banks to improve water quality and address stormwater mitigation. The purchase also will give Radnor control over both sides of the Darby Creek and a portion of the Little Darby Creek.

The transaction will cost Radnor about \$12.1 million. This money will come from a \$20 million bond fund approved by referendum in 2006.

According to plans filed with the township, the rest of the property would be subdivided for high-end homes and for open space.

Ardrossan Farm's most famous resident, Hope Montgomery Scott, was the inspiration for Katherine Hepburn's character in the movie, *The Philadelphia Story*. The farm is the largest undeveloped piece of land in Radnor.

***Reminder:  
Shopping for an  
electric supplier  
can save money  
and help the  
environment***

There are 3.6 million Pennsylvania utility customers who have not picked a competitive electric supplier, although doing so can help save money and help the environment.

As a result of the Pennsylvania Electric Generation Customer Choice & Competition Act, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2011, many electric suppliers have begun doing business in the state. PECO customers can choose from more than 70 suppliers, including some who provide electricity generated from renewable sources. A complete list of companies can be found at the Office of Consumer Advocate website, [www.oca.state.pa.us](http://www.oca.state.pa.us).

Variables to consider when choosing an electric supplier include the price of electricity, whether the price is fixed or variable and if there is a cancellation fee to change companies when shopping for electric suppliers. Consumers also can choose to purchase all or a portion of their energy from renewable sources.

If you do nothing, PECO remains your electric supplier. Regardless, PECO will continue to distribute electricity, maintain power lines, provide customer service, respond to emergencies and bill you.

***8-story Cricket lot project up in the air***

A recent withdrawal of state funding has put in doubt a development project planned for the Cricket Avenue parking lot near Lancaster Avenue in Lower Merion Township.

Plans call for an 8-story structure, which would include 121 apartments, 10,000 square feet of retail space, and a four-level parking garage.

Construction was set to begin in mid-2014 and last from 1-2 years on the site of a 175-space municipal parking lot.

The total cost of the project, to be developed by Dranoff Properties, is estimated to be \$46 million, with Dranoff contributing \$34 million. Dranoff would subsequently own the structure and land.

Over the past several years, state Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program funding had been secured for the project, with the purpose of revitalizing the Ardmore business district.

However, on Dec. 16, the state withdrew \$12 million in funding for this project, citing the ineligibility of the residential component of the development, among other reasons. The project probably will not proceed without the state funding, according to Lower Merion Township Manager Doug Cleland. State Rep. Tim Briggs and other officials have requested a reconsideration of this withdrawal.

I'd like to know your thoughts on the project. You can call my office at (610) 789-3900 or email me at [greg@gregvitali.com](mailto:greg@gregvitali.com).



***This image of the Cricket lot project was presented to Lower Merion Township by Dranoff Properties. The entire presentation can be viewed at [www.lowermerion.org](http://www.lowermerion.org).***

***Free notary service at district office***

If you are or will be a resident of the 166th Legislative District, you can have most official documents notarized for free in my district office. Please call ahead to make sure the notary is in the office and can accommodate your type of document. Notary work is done most weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in person, in the presence of the notary, and provide proof of identity such as a valid driver's license, photo ID card, or passport. Please let my staff know if witnesses are needed, in addition to the notary, for your documents. We also ask that residents observe a five-signature limit.

My office is on the second floor. If you are unable to climb stairs, please let us know when you call, and we can arrange to have the notary meet you on the ground floor.