



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



SPRING 2015

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## Governor's budget plan a promising start

Gov. Tom Wolf campaigned on offering a new approach to governing and the budget plan he outlined in March proves he was serious.

But his budget proposal is just the first step in a long process. Overall, the governor's proposal offers much for Pennsylvania, including three main concepts: schools that teach, jobs that pay and government that works.

Here are some highlights:

- Restoring devastating cuts to public education by investing \$400 million more in basic education, \$100 million more in special education and \$120 million more in early childhood education.
- Restructuring tax policies and reducing school property taxes by half, to reduce the overall tax bill for the average family by 13 percent, while strengthening schools and ensuring the state pays 50 percent of public school costs. This plan offers \$3.8 billion in property tax relief and offers a realistic opportunity to cut property taxes by up to \$1,000 for the average homeowner.  
  
For 270,000 senior households, property taxes would be eliminated.
- Reduce business taxes. By cutting the Corporate Net Income tax from 9.99 percent to 4.99 percent by 2017, requiring mandatory combined reporting and updating the net operating loss cap, the overall result would be a tax reduction for many businesses, which would help grow existing businesses and attract new industry. Closing the loopholes that the largest corporations take advantage of to avoid paying their fair share, would create a fairer tax structure for all businesses.
- Addressing the pension debt by creating a special restricted account specifically for pension payments; refinancing; and reducing fees paid to professional fund managers.



*Rep. Flynn and legislators from across the commonwealth have been conducting public hearings on various issues affecting Pennsylvania taxpayers. Locally, hearings were held on education funding and health care. From left are Reps. Frank Farina, Flynn, Ryan Bizzarro, Stephen McCarter, Michael Sturla, Eddie Day Pashinski and Patrick Harkins.*

- Streamlining and consolidating functions across departments, as well as modernizing technology and other improvements, would result in \$150 million in savings.
- Expanding home- and community-based long-term care to enable more older Pennsylvanians to obtain care in their homes.

However, it's important to look at this proposal in its entirety. The only way we can increase state spending on education, reduce property and business taxes and design a pension reform program that works, all the while addressing a structural \$2 billion deficit, is to consider the whole plan. To make real progress, we must work together on all the issues.

## Enjoying the culinary arts



I recently visited the Lackawanna County Career Technology Center and met with students from the Culinary Arts program.

Upon completing the program, students have the qualifications to start a career in a culinary arts establishment. Students also are actively recruited for further culinary education in two- or four-year post-secondary programs.

The Career Technology Center of Lackawanna County is dedicated to developing a prepared workforce. Other areas of study include building mechanics trades, carpentry, electrical construction and maintenance, plumbing and heating, masonry, welding technology, mathematics, child development, cosmetology, health occupations technology, protective services occupations, visual art and design, computer systems, graphic and printing communications, automotive technology, and collision repair.

# Flynn offers bill to benefit veterans' spouses

Currently, the state offers a real estate property tax exemption for veterans who have been classified as fully disabled. While that benefit extends to their spouse upon the veteran's death, that benefit isn't available to the spouse if the veteran dies before being declared fully disabled.

I am planning to introduce a bill that would correct that oversight, as long as the deceased veteran would have

been declared 100 percent disabled upon completion of the evaluation period.

Making sure that veterans' benefits are maintained is extremely important to me. We need to ensure their benefits don't disappear just because the veteran died of his injury or disability before deemed fully disabled and eligible for the exemption.

# Animal cruelty law change sought

I plan to introduce legislation that would better protect animals from abuse.

Under current law, the commonwealth is required to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a perpetrator acted willfully and with malice toward the animal in order to charge animal cruelty – a difficult feat to overcome.

My legislation would lower the necessary standard to "knowingly, intentionally or recklessly," which would let prosecutors finally use the misdemeanor penalties to deter crime and hold the perpetrator accountable for his actions.



# A member of the 'Greatest Generation'

This past month, I shared some time with an incredible gentleman and some of his family members, along with veteran's activist Joseph D. Sylvester, as we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the action that resulted in Pvt. George Crollly being awarded a Silver Star.

Mr. Crollly is a 93-year-old tough, yet compassionate West Scranton resident and World War II combat veteran who shared a few stories with me, including the incredible ordeal he went through on March 24, 1945 that resulted in his being awarded one of the highest honors given to a U.S. soldier.

His Silver Star Medal citation reads:

Private GEORGE W. CROLLY, Infantry, 2d Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army. For gallantry in action on 24 March 1945 near TREBUR, Germany. While attempting to make contact with a portion of his unit which had been cut off by an enemy counterattack, Private CROLLY, a rifleman, was ambushed from behind by four German soldiers. Undaunted when an enemy bullet pierced his helmet and although he lost his rifle in the struggle, he succeeded in overpowering his opponents. Continuing on his mission, he was again attacked by 3 other Germans, and with a captured enemy weapon, eliminated them and proceeded to accomplish his mission. His indomitable courage and intrepid actions reflect great credit upon himself and the armed forces.

While the story he told me was a bit more graphic as he spoke of fighting with and "eliminating" the 7 enemy soldiers, he also spoke of more lighthearted stories and experiences that he and other members of "the Greatest Generation" went through.

I am thankful and humbled by the many people in my district and my country who gave and still give every day of their lives.



*Rep. Flynn reads the citation from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to Mr. Crollly. Standing, from left, are family members Maureen Crollly, Patricia Crollly, Denise Gosse-Crollly and Martin Crollly.*

Thank you, Mr. Crollly, and thank you to your family for letting me share this day with you, and thank you to all veterans for the service and sacrifice you give and gave to allow us all to live in the greatest country in the world!



*Mr. Crollly with the various medals and citations earned for his service in World War II.*



*Rep. Flynn and Mr. Crollly with his Silver Star Medal Citation.*

# Monthly Outreach Events

Every month, I host several outreach events to help constituents. To schedule an appointment for any of these outreach efforts, please call my office at 570-342-4348. My regular office hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at Jay's Commons, 409 N. Main Ave., Scranton.

## Medicare – 2nd Monday

I host a Medicare outreach session the second Monday of the month where an APPRISE counselor is available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in my office to help answer questions about original Medicare, Medicare Advantage plans, Medigap plans, Medicare drug plans, PACE/PACENET and various other low-income assistance programs, such as the Medicare Savings Program and Extra Help.

## Mobile Constituent Service – 3rd Wednesday

My staff holds monthly constituent outreach visits, alternating between South Abington Township and Clarks Green, from 9 a.m. to noon the third Wednesday of the month.

They'll be at the South Abington Township Building (2nd floor meeting room), 104 Shady Lane Road, Chinchilla, in May, July, September and November; and at the Clarks Green Borough Building, 104 N. Abington Road, in June, August, October and December.

We can help with the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, PennDOT paperwork, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, PACE/PACENET prescription-drug coverage, unclaimed property searches and any other state-related matter.

## Veterans – 4th Wednesday

My monthly veterans support program is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday at my office in Jay's Commons.

A representative from the American Legion Service Office Outreach program is in the office to provide information on services available to veterans and their families. The American Legion representatives are available to discuss pensions and other compensation, education, health care and death benefits. Legion membership is not required to take advantage of the help.

# Persian Gulf veterans' bonus deadline approaching

Pennsylvania veterans have until Aug. 31 to apply for a special one-time payment to honor their service and sacrifice if they served on active duty in the Persian Gulf Theater of Operations between Aug. 2, 1990, and Aug. 31, 1991.

The bonus pays \$75 a month for qualifying, active-duty service members, up to a \$525 maximum, for those who served in Operation Desert Shield or Desert Storm.

An additional \$5,000 is available to the surviving family for personnel whose death was related to illness or injury received in the line of duty. Service members who were declared prisoners of war may also be eligible for an additional \$5,000.

The state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is reviewing all denials, but new applications are required to reopen a claim. Almost 11,000 Persian Gulf veterans have applied for the one-time cash bonus program since the department began accepting applications in 2008.

Instructions on how to apply are available by visiting [www.persiangulfbonus.state.pa.us](http://www.persiangulfbonus.state.pa.us).



## My office can help with Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications

My office at Jay's Commons, 409 N. Main Ave., Scranton has the current Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program applications from the state Department of Revenue – and the staff is ready to assist!

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. Half of Social Security income is excluded and the maximum standard rebate is \$650.

Please take note of two changes to the program that I supported:

- Social Security cost-of-living adjustments no longer disqualify those applying for a rebate; and
- Spouses, personal representatives or estates may file rebate claims on behalf of deceased claimants who lived at least one day in 2014 and met all other eligibility criteria.

The deadline to apply for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2014 is June 30, 2015, and the rebates normally are distributed beginning July 1. So, the sooner you file, the sooner you will receive your money!

Please ignore offers to assist with filing the application for a fee. My office offers help at no charge, and the Revenue Department does not charge a fee to process your application.

## Flynn, SBDC to host social media seminar

The Small Business Development Center at the University of Scranton will present a "grow your business seminar" on how to improve your business with customer service through social media.

**May 7 • 10 a.m. – noon**

**The Mall at Steamtown**

(Former American Eagle store)

The seminar is free but pre-registration is required. You may register by calling my office at 570-342-4348.



**STATE REP. MARTY FLYNN**  
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## A holiday success!



Rep. Flynn hosted his annual holiday outreach event for more than 1,500 regional residents at which he distributed information on home and child safety, and state coloring and activity books. He also provided food and refreshments, a free photo booth, free pictures with Santa, over 300 bikes, plus scooters, toys and prizes.

## House passes cyberbullying bill

Bullies have been around forever, but today's bully has new ways of torturing his or her victim. Legislation I supported (H.B. 229) would make cyber harassment of a child a third-degree misdemeanor.

This would cover anyone who repeatedly communicates directly to the child online or through publication on social media sites with a threat to inflict harm or with seriously disparaging statements or opinions about the child's physical characteristics, sexuality, sexual activity, or mental or physical health.

Juveniles charged with cyber harassment would be given a path toward becoming responsible adults. In those cases, the court would be required to give first consideration to referring the juvenile to a diversionary program. Juveniles who successfully complete a diversionary program would have their records expunged.

A criminal record, or the thought of having one, can and will deter some young people, and even adults, from bullying. And if it doesn't, bullies will be made to pay.

The bill is before the Senate for consideration.

## Selling off liquor stores not right for Pennsylvania

In February, I voted against a liquor bill that is wrong for Pennsylvania.

House Republicans pushed through a proposal that would close the state's Wine and Spirit Shops, eliminating 5,000 family-sustaining jobs, and offering the licenses to big-box retailers and corner gas stations that will increase prices and decrease selection.

There were many things wrong with the proposal, not the least of which is looking at this sell off as a financial windfall for the state, solving the structural \$2 billion budget deficit. It's basically a fire sale of a revenue-generating asset that provides millions in profits for the state's General Fund. To eliminate that reliable source of revenue would be costly.

I think what customers are looking for is convenience, and the proposal being offered would not provide it.

The Liquor Control Board has already begun making changes that improve customer convenience. One of the most recent is the decision to let people purchase 12-packs at beer distributors, rather than requiring them to purchase a whole case or keg. This, as well as longer store hours, specialized sales and other modernization efforts would provide the convenience that customers want, rather than selling off a valuable revenue-generating asset that also hinders underage consumption. I will keep you posted on this issue.

