



State Representative • 172nd Legislative District

Kevin J. Boyle



CAPITOL OFFICE: 102A East Wing • P.O. Box 202172 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2172 • (717) 783-4944

Winter 2016

DISTRICT OFFICES: **Fox Chase** – 7801-A Hasbrook Ave. • Philadelphia, PA 19111 • (215) 695-1016
Mayfair – 7420 Frankford Ave. • Philadelphia, PA 19136 • (215) 331-2600

Email: RepKevinBoyle@pahouse.net

Website: www.pahouse.com/KBoyle

BUDGET CRISIS: MY PROPOSAL TO PREVENT FUTURE IMPASSES

The state has been without a full budget for eight months, and the impasse has been exacerbated by the lackluster work ethic of too many of my colleagues in the legislature. Since the June 30 deadline, there has been no sense of urgency to get a budget completed. For example, in August, more than a full month after the budget deadline, the House met to vote only once.

This is unacceptable. Social service agencies across the state did not receive needed funds; some were unable to pay employees, while others had to cut back needed services. School districts were deciding whether to open after Christmas, as the state funds upon which they rely had not been delivered. Here in the Northeast, some Catholic schools were unable to provide students with textbooks.

The fact that many of my colleagues were in their homes and at their leisure while this budget crisis hamstrung our state is intolerable. That is why I plan to introduce a bill that would amend the state constitution, to require both chambers of the legislature to stay in session until a budget is passed.

The Pennsylvania Constitution requires that a balanced budget be passed on or before July 1 of each year. My bill

would amend that section, adding a provision that requires the legislature to stay in session until a balanced budget passes.

Amending the Pennsylvania Constitution is a difficult process – and that is appropriate. In order for this proposal to be added to the text of the state constitution, the bill must be passed in this legislative session and the next. Were the bill to pass in two consecutive sessions, it would be voted on directly by the citizens of the commonwealth as a ballot question. If the measure then passes the direct vote, the Pennsylvania Constitution would be amended and stalemates like the present one would be far less likely to occur.

While it would be at least three years before this amendment could take effect, I am not afraid of a fight that is long – or hard. I think the people of Pennsylvania are owed public servants who do the hard work of public service when faced with a crisis. I believe that real leaders don't retreat when faced with discord. I believe they should work harder to reach an outcome that best serves the public good.

I look forward to the discussions and debate that will surround this proposal. I promise to keep you updated on the progress of this bill as it moves forward.

HONORING THE IRISH



Irish immigrants and Irish-Americans have played an important role in the history of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. Irish men and women laid the groundwork for the development of Pennsylvania's industrial economy, were founding members of the labor movement and were integral in the creation of many Pennsylvania cultural institutions. I honored their impressive contributions by introducing two resolutions. The first resolution designates March as Irish-American Heritage Month in Pennsylvania. The second resolution recognizes and honors the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising in Ireland. In 1916, an armed rebellion against British rule in Ireland took place during Easter Week. This historical event is largely viewed as the spark that led to the Irish War of Independence and the creation of the Republic of Ireland in 1922.



Rep. Boyle joined former Gov. Ed Rendell and U.S. Rep. Brendan Boyle at a press conference to advocate for transportation funding.

PENNSYLVANIA WORKERS DESERVE A HIGHER MINIMUM WAGE

The minimum wage in Pennsylvania has been stuck at \$7.25 per hour since 2009. Despite increases in the cost of everything from heating oil to property taxes, our state's minimum wage remains among the lowest in the country. While worker productivity and corporate profits have climbed to record highs in the years following the recession, the minimum wage – and wages generally – have remained stagnant. No one who works full time should have to live in poverty.

There are more than 1 million workers in Pennsylvania earning minimum wage. Almost 85 percent of them are over 25. Across the country, 29 other states have raised their minimum wage above \$7.25, and many of them experienced more robust economic growth in 2015.

Pennsylvania workers deserve a raise. It's time Harrisburg politicians put the needs of the people first. That's why I have signed on as a co-sponsor for H.B. 250 and will continue to work to make sure 2016 is the year Pennsylvania passes a \$10.10 minimum wage.



CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM EXTENDED

A new law extends the state's health insurance program for children, CHIP, through the end of 2017.

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.

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 household income is \$32,253 to \$50,440, low cost if the household income is \$50,440 to \$76,145, or full cost if the household income exceeds \$76,145. Premiums vary, depending on the carrier.

If your child doesn't have health insurance, or if 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 or by contacting my office.

FIGHTING TO COMBAT GUN VIOLENCE

Last October, I spoke at a rally at the Montgomery County Court House with fellow legislators, other elected officials and concerned citizens to reduce gun violence. The plague of gun violence in our country is a national shame. Over 300,000 people in the United States have lost their lives due to gun violence since 2004.

Even with all of these atrocities, many of them in our schools, we have done nothing to combat this crisis. Our inaction angers me. Because of one deranged man who boarded a plane with explosives in his shoes, every American has to take their shoes off before they fly, yet 300,000 people die from guns and we do nothing.

We need to get our act together and pass commonsense gun laws to protect human lives.



HEATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Pennsylvania's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program – LIHEAP – is accepting applications and expected to close April 1. LIHEAP helps low-income families pay their heating bills.

LIHEAP provides two types of grants – a cash grant sent directly to utility companies to pay a portion of the resident's fuel bill, and a crisis grant for households in immediate danger of being without heat due to a furnace failure or a utility shut-off notice.

LIHEAP cash grants – based on household income, family size, type of heating fuel and region – will range from \$100 to \$1,000 in 2015-16. LIHEAP crisis grants will range from \$25 to \$500.

To qualify for either a cash grant or a crisis grant, the income limit for a one-person household is \$17,655. This income limit increases by \$6,240 for each additional person in the household.

Residents who received a LIHEAP grant last season should have received a postcard or a 2015-16 LIHEAP application with a registration number.

Those who did not receive LIHEAP last season may obtain an application by contacting my office, calling LIHEAP directly at 1-866-857-7095, or applying online at www.compass.state.pa.us.





I joined Fox Chase Town Watch to host the 2015 Fox Chase Night Out in August. The event cultivates cooperation between the community and local police in the fight against crime.

PRISONER TRANSPORT VEHICLE BILL PASSES HOUSE



My bill giving emergency vehicle designation to Philadelphia Prison System prisoner transport units has passed the House.

The bill, H.B. 898, is important because this designation will allow prisoner transport units to operate using flashing lights when transferring prisoners. There is no doubt this will reduce risks associated with prisoner transfers.

Due to the vast State Road prison complex, prisoners are transported across Northeast Philadelphia every day. All of these transfers can potentially lead to problems if there are traffic issues or one of the prisoner transport units gets into an accident.

Prison transports are subject to high-volume traffic, which poses a risk when moving prisoners between locations. Also, the complex infrastructure of Philadelphia makes it necessary for prisoner transport units to have a clear path to facilities.

The bill awaits consideration by the Senate.

SENIORS RIDE FREE ON SEPTA

Did you know senior citizens, 65 and older, can use SEPTA service free?

To ride free, seniors can use a Pennsylvania driver's license, a state non-driver identification card or a senior citizen transit ID card. For more information on obtaining a free senior citizen transit ID card, call SEPTA at 215-580-3490.

The free service for seniors is available on all SEPTA transit services, including buses, the Market-Frankford and Broad Street lines, trolley lines and the Norristown High Speed Line. Regional rail fares for seniors continue to be \$1 for rides in Pennsylvania.

Please be aware that SEPTA has begun introducing its SEPTA Key program, a new fare payment and collection system, but be assured that this new system will not affect free senior service on SEPTA.

SPECIAL FORUMS TO HELP RESIDENTS WITH STATE PROGRAMS AND FORMS

I will be hosting two senior-assistance events at KleinLife (formerly the Klein JCC) at 10100 Jamison Ave. on March 3 and 9, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., to assist area residents with filling out forms and services offered by the state. Please make an appointment in advance by calling my district office at 215-331-2600. If you respond before Feb. 24, you will be invited to join Klein Center members for a FREE lunch.

We will assist residents with forms and applications such as: the 2015 Property Tax/Rent Rebate, LIHEAP (Low-Income Heating Assistance Program), PACE prescription-drug applications, medical assistance applications, SNAP applications, reduced-cost senior vehicle registrations, handicapped placards, PennDOT issues, birth and death certificates, and unclaimed property applications.

In addition, we will provide information on living wills, how to obtain a free credit report, senior directories, and 2015 Pennsylvania tax booklets and tax forms.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR PROPERTY TAX/ RENT REBATE PROGRAM

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program provides a state rebate of up to \$650 on 2015 property taxes or rent to income-eligible residents who are 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older.

To be eligible, household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter. When applying, you only have to count half of your Social Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I benefits toward your total income.

Social Security cost-of-living adjustments that push applicants over the limit no longer disqualify applicants, because of a new law enacted last year.

You can obtain information about the program, an application and help applying by contacting my office.

For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/1Bb2OgN>. You may also call 1-888-222-9190.



Rep. Boyle, his wife, Caitlyn, and his daughter, Keira, at the Mayfair Holmesburg Thanksgiving Day Parade.



State Representative
Kevin J. Boyle
 P.O. Box 202172
 Harrisburg, PA 17120-2172

INSIDE:

- **Fighting for minimum wage increase**
- **CHIP extended**
- **Avoid IRS phone scams**

lpo.kaf.0216

DON'T FALL FOR IRS PHONE SCAMS

Increasingly, phone scammers are setting out to target unsuspecting victims who are preparing to file their tax returns. Most often, a person will receive a phone call from someone claiming to work for the IRS and demanding payment on taxes owed.

Any phone call like this is a scam and the IRS will NOT initiate first contact with you about taxes owed through a phone call. Though your caller ID may indicate it is the IRS, phone scammers can alter caller ID numbers to try and deceive you.

Always be wary of unsolicited phone calls in which a person claims to be representing a business or government entity and aggressively demands payment. The IRS does not operate this way and will always send official correspondence through the mail to make its first contact with you.

Additionally, it is important for you to know that the IRS:

- Never asks for credit card, debit card or prepaid card information over the telephone.
- Never insists that taxpayers use a specific payment method to pay tax obligations.
- Never requests immediate payment over the telephone and will not take enforcement action immediately following a phone conversation. Taxpayers usually receive prior notification of IRS enforcement action involving IRS tax liens or levies.

Other characteristics of these scams include:

- Scammers use fake names and IRS badge numbers. They generally use common names and surnames to identify themselves.
- Scammers may be able to recite the last four digits of a victim's Social Security number.
- Scammers spoof the IRS toll-free number on caller ID to make it appear that it's the IRS calling.
- Scammers sometimes send bogus IRS emails to some victims to support their bogus calls.
- Victims hear background noise of other calls being conducted to mimic a call site.
- After threatening victims with jail time or driver's license revocation, scammers hang up and others soon call back pretending to be from the local police or DMV, and the caller ID supports their claim.

If you think you may have been targeted with one of these scams, please contact my office or the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 1-800-366-4484 to report the incident.



Rep. Boyle joined other legislators at the Abington Cbeldenham Jenkintown League of Women Voters "Conversation with your Legislators" town hall event in January.

FORMATION OF PENNSYLVANIA FUTURE CAUCUS

I recently joined state Rep. Nick Miccarelli, R-Delaware, to form the Pennsylvania Future Caucus, which is a bipartisan coalition of political contemporaries in the House of Representatives dedicated to finding common-ground solutions to problems facing the state.

We will co-chair the Pennsylvania Future Caucus and hope to recruit our Millennial Generation colleagues to join us in this new caucus.

There is a certain lack of trust in government among the younger generations, as evidenced by lower voter turnout and involvement. By uniting our younger legislators toward a common goal, we hope to set a precedent for how government should work and begin to rebuild that trust. The Future Caucus will seek to create a more transparent and inclusive political discourse that energizes younger people to get involved.

The Pennsylvania Future Caucus is partnered with the Millennial Action Project (MAP), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization activating young legislators across the country and in Congress to foster cooperative, future-focused leadership.