



State Representative Dan Miller

Serving the 42nd District

*Mt. Lebanon, Dormont, Castle Shannon and Baldwin Township
with parts of Scott Township and Brookline*

Summer/Fall 2016

Here To Serve You

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Committee Assignments:

- Judiciary, Secretary
- Education, Co-Chair,
Subcommittee on Special
Education
- Children & Youth
- Human Services
- Veterans Affairs & Emergency
Preparedness

Caucus Memberships:

- At Risk Children & Families
- Autism & Intellectual
Disabilities, Co-Chair
- Early Childhood Education
- Firefighters & EMS
- Government Reform
- HOPE
- LGBT Equality
- Steel



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Committee Updates ● Government Reform Caucus ● Working
For Our Community ● Upcoming Events

Disability and Mental Health Update

Autism & Intellectual Disabilities Caucus

Last year, I teamed up with my friend state Rep. Tom Murt, R-Montgomery, to re-energize this caucus and to build a statewide, bipartisan team of legislators to help advance disability issues. I am very proud to announce that we have almost 50 members in the caucus and continue to meet regularly. We also became the first bipartisan, issue-based caucus to operate a shared social media account where members from across the state can share disability-related events and legislation. It is open to the public at [facebook.com/autismidcaucus](https://www.facebook.com/autismidcaucus) and you are invited to “like” it and follow our progress!

We also had our 2nd Annual Disability Rally, which was timed to coincide with our budget negotiations. We partnered with several nonprofits to highlight the need for funding in the disability and mental health arenas. We also spoke on several new legislative efforts that we hope will increase independence and opportunity for everyone. I was also very excited to have introduced two Republican leaders at our rally: House Speaker Mike Turzai and state Rep. Bryan Cutler, the majority whip. They, along with members of my own caucus who were in attendance, reflect the reality that disability and mental health issues have no partisan label, and I hope this rally is a sign of further compromise and cooperation on that front.

Early Intervention Bill for Mental Health

Recently, I introduced H.B. 2057 with state Rep. Judy Ward, R-Blair. Much like how students need to have physical health checks at certain school benchmarks – like vision, hearing, or dental screenings – this bill would require a depression screening by age 14. Parents have the ability to opt their children out if they wish, and the screening results are not required to be shared with the school district. The reality we are faced with is that too many people are going undiagnosed for years. This lack of treatment can lead to risk-taking behaviors like truancy and substance abuse, and in more extreme scenarios, can lead to physical harm and suicide (which is the second-leading cause of death of teenagers).

We have found that early intervention in disabilities such as autism has often led to steady improvement and increased quality of life for many individuals and families. We also know that 50 percent of lifetime mental illness cases can be diagnosed by age 14. Clearly, this is a big bill, but I believe we can strike a balance between privacy, parental rights, and helping young people reach their full potential. There should be no difference between physical and mental health. My hope is that this bill, at a minimum, will decrease stigma and increase conversation. If everyone is in, then no one is left out.



Disability and Mental Health Summit

Thanks to our friends at the Beth El Congregation, we hosted our 3rd Annual Disability and Mental Health Summit this spring with record numbers! This year everything was bigger – more attendees, more resources, more programs, and more partnerships with related nonprofits! I was very proud that we were able to use the skills and expertise of organizations like 21 and Able, The Peal Center, the Pittsburgh Youth Leadership Taskforce, and Allegheny Family Network to enhance what has become the preeminent event for disabilities and mental health in Western Pennsylvania.

Our closing event was our Legislative Panel, which is always very popular. For the first time we were able to have several local Republicans join us, which was fantastic! This event keeps growing every year and we are already hard at work planning next year's summit!

Committee Updates

Each session members of the House of Representatives are given committee assignments. These committees are broken up by subject matter and have both Democratic and Republican members. You can find more information on these standing committees, their membership, and their votes by visiting <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/>.

Here is a brief rundown on some of the major issues my committees have been working on this session:

Judiciary

- Medical Marijuana: Act 16 of 2016 authorizes use of medical marijuana, in non-smoking form, for patients with certain qualifying medical conditions such as cancer; epilepsy; multiple sclerosis; PTSD; and severe, chronic and intractable pain. This bill was signed into law.
- Criminal Records: Act 5 of 2016 amends the Criminal History Record Information Act to reduce barriers to employment for people who have minor criminal records. It permits a person convicted of a relatively minor nonviolent offense and who has remained free of arrest for at least 10 years to seek an order limiting public access to those criminal records. This bill was signed into law.
- Prohibiting the Sale of Vaping Products to Minors: House Bill 954 would prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes and related nicotine products to minors. This bill passed the House in June 2015 and is currently awaiting action in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Education

- Recovery Schools Pilot Program: House Bill 1827 would establish the Drug and Alcohol Recovery High School Pilot Program for students in recovery from substance abuse. An alternative to traditional public schools, recovery high schools offer positive peer pressure, on-site intervention support services and academic curricula designed for students in early recovery. This bill is currently before the Senate Education Committee.
- Truancy Procedures: House Bill 1907 would extensively revise truancy provisions contained in the Public School Code. These include definitions of truancy, truancy provisions and greater flexibility to school districts and district judges in imposing penalties on students and families violating school truancy provisions. This bill is currently awaiting action in the Senate Education Committee.



- Act 48 Compliance Deadline Extension: House Bill 1734 would extend the School Code's continuing professional education deadlines for public school entities, teachers and administrators by one year. This bill is currently awaiting action in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness

- EMS Direct Reimbursement: House Bill 857 requires that the reimbursement of medically necessary services be made directly to an EMS agency by an insurance company when the EMS agency was dispatched for emergency services. This bill was signed into law as Act 84 of 2015.
- Volunteer Firefighter Emergency Services Grant Program: House Bill 1877 would extend the Volunteer Firefighter Emergency Services Grant Program until June 30, 2020. The annual mandated funding amount for the program is \$30 million, with funds generated from gaming revenue. This bill is currently awaiting consideration by the Senate.
- Highway Donation Soliciting: House Bill 138 permits a first responder organization to solicit donations at a controlled intersection with a stop sign or traffic signal. This bill was signed into law as Act 57 of 2015.



Children & Youth

- Activities and Experiences for Children in Out-of-Home Placement: House Bill 477 authorizes the caregivers of children and youth who are in foster care to approve or disapprove of their foster child's participation in age-appropriate extracurricular and social activities. Previously such decisions would have had to come from a child welfare agency, a private agency or the court. This bill was signed into law as Act 75 of 2015.
- Child Protective Services Law: Senate Bill 1156 would make changes to background check requirements for hospital personnel and doctors under the Child Protective Services Law. This bill also makes several technical changes to the law and implements many recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Child Protection. This bill is currently up for consideration in the House.
- Postpartum Depression Services: House Bill 2086 would include postpartum depression as an At-Risk Category for Early Intervention Tracking under Pennsylvania law. This bill is currently before the House Children and Youth Committee for consideration.



Human Services

- Bill of Rights for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:

House Bill 133 requires the Department of Human Services

to develop and submit a plan to address the waiting list for community based services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This bill is still awaiting final consideration before the House.

- Minor's Rights to Consent to Mental Health Treatment: House Bill 337 would give the Department of Human Services authority to issue guidelines and adopt rules and regulations to the Allowing Minors to Consent to Medical Care Act. Currently, minors 14 or older must consent to outpatient mental health examination and treatment. This legislation will allow DHS to clarify the rights of all parties involved in a minor's care. This bill is currently before the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee.
- Person-First Language: House Resolution 305 urged the Commonwealth to adopt and utilize person-first language when discussing individuals with disabilities. This resolution unanimously passed the House and was adopted in June 2015.



Government Reform Caucus

During this session I have continued to serve as a member of the Government Reform Caucus, which is a bipartisan work group that meets regularly to develop ways to increase transparency and improve how our government works. You may recall that earlier in this session I helped support two bills that passed the House that would reduce the size of our legislature. (The Senate has passed the one that cuts the House but has yet to debate the bill that reduces the Senate.) More recently, Gov. Tom Wolf, along with the Democratic caucus and some Republicans, have proposed a series of reform measures that I have co-sponsored. Here is the breakdown:

Gift ban, H.B. 1983: Currently, there are no limits as to the type and value of gifts that legislators can accept. Legislators are only responsible to annually disclose them. The Reform Caucus has long debated more stringent changes that I would prefer, but this bill, which bans all gifts over \$25, is seen as a compromise. As a person who has never accepted a dinner, tickets, etc., from a lobbyist, I believe this measure would help restore confidence and is long overdue.

No pay for serving on boards, H.B. 1981: Existing law allows legislators to be paid for serving on the boards of organizations. I believe legislators are paid enough by taxpayers and, absent reimbursement for actual expenses, extra money for such service only exacerbates the common belief that Harrisburg isn't working for the people. The appearance of impropriety just isn't helping.

Campaign finance reform, H.B. 1980: Pennsylvania is one of only 12 states that does not have limitations on the amount of campaign contributions that can be made by individual donors and by Political Action Committees (PACs). This bill would require incorporated entities that make uncoordinated expenditures on behalf of candidates and campaigns to disclose contributions. It also develops aggregate limits for individual races.

Stopping "pay to play," H.B. 1977: This bill requires applicants for state contracts to submit a disclosure form, listing all campaign contributions made by them or through an intermediary to any state or local elected official or candidate, or PAC. It also requires continued disclosure during the length of an awarded state contract.

Separating lobbyists from campaigns, H.B. 1978: This bill would prohibit lobbyists from operating as campaign consultants for a candidate and continuing to lobby for special interests. This would help to erase the appearance that there is no difference between an elected official and a special interest that pays the lobbyist's salary.

Political communications reporting, H.B. 1982: This bill is designed to counter some of the issues many have raised regarding the federal *Citizens United* decision. It defines political communication, and requires individuals and entities engaging in it to file disclosure reports similar to candidates and political parties that would disclose the names of their donors.

Stopping legislative pay during budget impasse, H.B.

1976: While I remain optimistic that we will have a budget much sooner than last year, I have co-sponsored this bill, which would freeze legislator salaries and per diems if a budget is not completed by June 30th.

Working for our Community

The 42nd District is home to great towns and school districts, and throughout the year we work closely to help them achieve their goals and partner with them on community activities.

Baldwin Township – This spring, I was pleased to host a press conference in the Baldwin Township Municipal Building where we introduced H.B. 2057, which would require a brain health/mental health check-up for students in the Commonwealth by age 14. Special thanks to manager Rob Zahorchak and Commissioner Eileen Frisoli for their help with bringing this important discussion to Baldwin!



Dormont – Working with the Dormont Library board and administration, and thanks especially to state Sen. Wayne Fontana, the library will be receiving a \$250,000 grant to rebuild and enhance this important community resource. While I played a modest role in this local and state collaboration, Sen. Fontana deserves all of our thanks for bringing this project home! To highlight more local projects, we teamed up with the library and Dormont Mainstreet to host a “Business Roundtable” discussion with Pennsylvania Secretary of Community and Economic Development Dennis Davin and Matt Smith, president of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce.



Brookline – Last year, I enjoyed hosting a town hall meeting in Mazza Pavillion, where I had the chance to hear from city residents about their state and local concerns. We also hosted our “Women in the Workplace” event as part of our “Conversations that Matter” series at St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church. I was also very glad to join state Sen. Wayne Fontana and Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak in standing with Las Palmas, along

with many Brookline residents, in condemning the racist vandalism that affected this popular local establishment. It was important that we came together to send a message that this was a crime and not a reflection of our community character!

Castle Shannon – Over the past several months, my office has assisted Castle Shannon in making progress on its Transit Village Project and its Main Street Program. These are important local initiatives that will help push Castle Shannon forward. As always, we were also glad to team up with the Castle Shannon Revitalization Corp. for an annual shredding event in order to help prevent identity theft in the area.



Mt. Lebanon – Besides assisting former state Sen. Matt Smith and the Municipality in securing state funds for the critical Castle Shannon Boulevard reconstruction project, I was also very pleased that we were successful in helping the Mt. Lebanon Historical Society to receive a \$200,000 grant to help renovate the History Center on Washington Road. The Center is already a regional asset and is a great place for kids to go to learn about our area! Mt. Lebanon has been home to a large number of our community events, and I thank the library, municipality, school district as well as St. Bernard and Holy Cross for being such great partners!

Scott Township – Over 900 people attended our 3rd annual Disability and Mental Health Summit at the Beth El Congregation this year in order to find resources and connect with services for themselves or for loved ones. We are very thankful to all our friends in Scott for helping this event continue to grow! I also appreciate our strong working relationships with Scott officials, including new Commissioner Frank Bruckner who we have partnered with on several occasions to talk about related services, and my friend District Judge Craig Stephens, who is a great asset in protecting children and solving problems.



Constituent Service 101

... I need help with PennDOT services.

If you waited too long to renew your registration or driver's license, or are dealing with a license suspension, our office can expedite forms to and from central PennDOT offices. If you have complex correspondence with the customer service center, we can often get a fast, simple answer and assist with the exchange of documents and payment. Please note we are not a photo center.

...I am having issues with Medicaid/CHIP health benefits.

Whether an initial application, renewal, or coverage issue, our office can help clarify and submit documentation needed for these programs. We can also help troubleshoot application and coverage issues.

...What is the status of my licensure application?

Professionals who apply for licensure through the state (including real estate agents, engineers, nurses, teachers and more) can receive status updates and submit paperwork through our office.

...I want to get an honor citation for a family member or friend.

Are you or someone you know celebrating a major birthday (over 74) or anniversary (25th, 50th and higher)? Is an organization you work for celebrating a major anniversary? Our office is able to obtain honorary citations and have them presented by either Rep. Miller or a staff member, to commemorate your special occasion.

...I want to schedule a tour of the Capitol.

We can schedule tours for individuals or groups on both session and non-session days.

Upcoming Events

Right-to-Know Seminar

**Thursday, Sept. 15th
7 p.m.**

Mt. Lebanon Library
16 Castle Shannon Blvd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

**Save the
dates!**

Community Town Hall – The Opioid Epidemic

in conjunction with U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy and
state Sen. Guy Reschenthaler

**Thursday, Sept. 1st
7 p.m.**

Beth El Congregation in Mt. Lebanon
1900 Cochran Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Don't miss our 2nd Annual Senior Fair

Thursday, Sept. 29th

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Mt. Lebanon
123 Gilkeson Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Join various government
agencies and local
organizations for information
on resources that are available
to seniors, including:

- Free health screenings
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program Applications
- Prescription-drug assistance information
- Light refreshments

For more information,
please contact my office at
412-343-3870.

