



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Joseph A.
PETRARCA

55TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

2015



CAPITOL OFFICE

220 Irvis Office Building
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(717) 787-5142

DISTRICT OFFICES

239 Longfellow St.
Vandergrift, PA 15690
(724) 567-6982

620 N. Chestnut St.
Derry, PA 15627
(724) 694-5298

Latrobe Municipal Building
901 Jefferson St.
Latrobe, PA 15650
(724) 539-7560

VETERANS UPDATE

Persian Gulf Bonus Program due to expire

Bill pending to extend deadline

Are you or do you know someone who served in the first Gulf War? Those who served on active duty between Aug. 2, 1990 and Aug. 31, 1991, may qualify for a bonus from the state.

The deadline to apply is Aug. 31. However, a bill is moving through the General Assembly that would extend the program through 2018. I will keep you posted on its progress.

The program pays \$75 per month for qualifying, active-duty service members, up to a \$525 maximum. For those whose death was related to illness or injury received in the line of duty in the operations, an additional \$5,000 is available to the surviving family. Service members who were declared prisoners of war also may be eligible for an additional \$5,000.

I co-sponsored and voted for this law back in 2006 because I believed it was important to recognize those military men and women who sacrificed for us. Now the program is coming to a close and I want to make sure

everyone who qualifies knows about this program and applies.

To qualify, the service member must have:

- Served with the U.S. Armed Forces, a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces or the Pennsylvania National Guard.
- Served on active duty in the Persian Gulf Theater of Operations between Aug. 2, 1990 and Aug. 31, 1991, and received the Southwest Asia Service Medal.
- Been a legal resident of Pennsylvania at the time of active duty service.
- Been discharged from active duty under honorable conditions, if not currently on active duty.

For detailed instructions on how to apply, please visit www.persiangulfbonus.state.pa.us.

Pennsylvania's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs also is asking veterans who might have previously been denied the bonus to reapply. New applications are required to reopen a claim.



Deadline extended for state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

The state Department of Revenue has extended the deadline from June 30 to Dec. 31 for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, which provides rebates on property taxes or rent for older adults and residents with disabilities.

My office staff and I stand ready to help people apply.

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 and any COLAs are excluded and the maximum standard rebate is \$650.

To learn more, or for help in filing an application, contact one of my offices: 239 Longfellow St. in Vandergrift; 620 N. Chestnut St. in Derry; or in the Latrobe Municipal Building at 901 Jefferson St., Latrobe.



Plan would exclude veteran disability payments from rebate program

A bill is pending before the Senate, which already passed the House which I supported, that would exclude veterans' disability payments from the income limits of the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. If it

becomes law, disabled veterans who receive these payments won't have to include them in their income for determining eligibility, which will help some of them qualify for property tax relief.



Veterans plate for motorcycles

Like the "Honoring Our Veterans" license plate for passenger vehicles, a license plate with the same motto is available for motorcycles.

The new law I supported makes this motorcycle plate available for \$35, \$15 of which is donated to the Veterans Trust Fund, which helps needy veterans with food, utilities, mortgage or rent payments, health care and other necessities of life. Veterans will be able to purchase this license plate for only \$20. The new plates should be available in late fall.



In-state tuition rates available to veterans

A new law offers veterans the lower-cost, in-state tuition rates at state-related or state-owned colleges and universities and community colleges, regardless of their residency status.

Veterans and their families who live in Pennsylvania already qualify for these lower rates, but now, any veteran qualifying for the GI Bill or a member of their family who wants to go to college in the commonwealth may qualify, provided they are a resident on the first day of their school semester.



'Veterans First Tax Credit' bill wins committee approval

A bill pending before the House of Representatives would encourage small businesses to hire unemployed veterans.

House Bill 784 would provide a \$1,000 tax credit per year to businesses with less than 100 employees that hire unemployed veterans who were released or discharged from active military service under conditions other than dishonorable after Sept. 30, 2001.

The \$1,000 tax credit would be available for four years, provided the veteran has been continually employed with the business. It would be applied against Pennsylvania personal and corporate taxes for each unemployed veteran the business hires.

For the business to receive the tax credit, the veteran must have been unemployed for at least six months, and hired for either a new position or for a position vacated by an employee's voluntary departure.

The program could create an estimated 12,500 jobs for Pennsylvania veterans who have been unemployed for more than six months. According to 2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are approximately 19,000 unemployed veterans in Pennsylvania.

These people made significant sacrifices for their country, and I believe we must help them return to the workforce.



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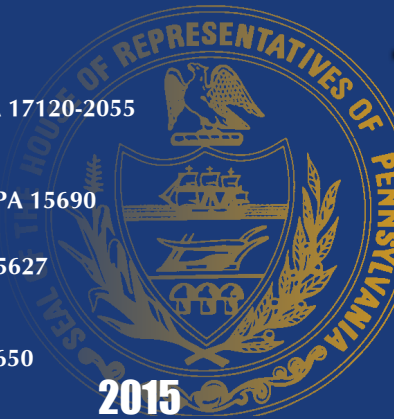
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MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Free notary service
- Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Birth and death certificates
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups



Sign up for email updates

Sign up to receive email alerts about my legislative activities in Harrisburg and state-related issues that affect your life. Visit my website at www.pahouse.com/Petrarca, click "CONTACT" and then "Sign up for emails" and fill out the form.