



State Representative to the 50th Legislative District

# Pam SNYDER



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Summer 2016

## HERE TO SERVE YOU!

### Snyder's pepper spray bill wins speedy House approval

#### Tour of state prison prompts safety measure

The state House of Representatives in June unanimously approved legislation I drafted that would ensure all state corrections officers are equipped with oleoresin capsicum, better known as O.C. or pepper spray, to deter prison assaults.

State Rep. Timothy S. Mahoney and I toured SCI-Fayette in May and learned of multiple assaults, drug busts and weapon seizures at the 2,000-inmate facility this year. Similar episodes were reported at SCI-Greene.

We were shocked to learn that most corrections officers at the facilities were not equipped with the inexpensive canisters of pepper spray, so we promptly introduced House Bill 2084 to make the nonlethal deterrent available to all officers.

The House agreed – quickly – and sent H.B. 2084 to the state Senate less than seven weeks after our tour.

A dangerous encounter with an inmate can be defused in as little as 20 seconds with pepper spray, and putting this deterrent in the hands of all corrections officers should be a bipartisan priority in the state Senate.

Pepper spray could be a life-saver for our state corrections officers, who too frequently face very dangerous situations.



*Rep. Snyder toured SCI-Fayette in May and learned that few state corrections officers were equipped with pepper spray, despite a spate of assaults, drug busts and weapon seizures. Rep. Snyder quickly introduced legislation to make the spray available to all state corrections officers.*

### Special session on opioid addiction set for fall

Two years ago, I was named as one of four members of a Joint State Government Commission Task Force responsible for tackling opioid prescription drug abuse.

In June, I joined the governor, House leaders and other legislators to mark the significant legislation produced by the task force to combat the addiction scourge and also to highlight the work that remains.

Among the highlights was the bipartisan agreement reached in June to convene a special session this fall to continue the legislature's work combatting the opioid addiction epidemic.

I'm proud that my work on the task force has helped to produce landmark legislation, including Act 191 of 2014, which enables information on potentially harmful prescription opioids to be monitored by appropriate authorities, and permits monitoring of those who may be over-prescribing.

We also now have the tools through Act 139 of 2014 allowing law enforcement and emergency responders to administer naloxone – the life-saving drug that can reverse opioid overdoses.

Overdose deaths in the state totaled 3,383 in 2015 – a 23 percent increase over the prior year. Opioid overuse and abuse cost the state over \$12.2 million in hospitalization costs annually.

The current state budget includes \$20.4 million to combat Pennsylvania's heroin crisis and expand treatment options for Pennsylvanians struggling with opioid use disorder.

The critical funding will enable about 4,500 people who were unable to access treatment to enter recovery programs.



*Rep. Snyder joined the governor, House leaders and other legislators to mark the significant legislation produced to combat the opioid addiction scourge. Rep. Snyder was a member of the task force formed two years ago to craft legislation addressing addiction issues.*

# Snyder bill on farm stands, fresh produce signs advances

I'm pleased to report that my legislation that would unshackle signs for local farmers' markets and farm stands from state fee requirements was passed overwhelmingly in the House this spring.



House Bill 1561 would exempt the small businesses and family farms from state Transportation Department fees for signs along state highways.

I had the legislation drafted after a local family farm notified me that it was directed to remove its signs along a state route. H.B. 1561 would benefit consumers seeking fresh fruit and produce, as well as the family farms that make them available.

The measure awaits consideration in the state Senate. Meanwhile, I have been consulting with Senate leaders and state transportation officials on other ways to ease the regulatory burdens on these small businesses.

## Standing firm



*In May, Rep. Snyder stood with citizens from across the state and many of her fellow House members at a Second Amendment rally at the Capitol to support the right to bear arms.*

## Champs!



*Rep. Snyder helped salute the West Greene High School softball team, the Class A WPIAL champions and runners-up at the PIAA State Tournament! The Lady Pioneers completed the season with a remarkable 26-2 record.*

## Just Drive



*Rep. Snyder spoke at an ABATE rally at the Capitol this spring to urge an end to distracted driving, especially texting while driving. According to PennDOT, 66 fatalities were caused last year by distracted driving, which resulted in more than 300 fatalities in Pennsylvania over the last five years.*

## Budget briefs



The 2016-17 state budget includes these basic education funding increases for local school districts:

- Carmichaels – \$148,092, 2.2 percent;
- Central Greene – \$164,869, 2 percent;
- Jefferson-Morgan – \$114,511, 2.1 percent;
- Southeastern Greene – \$72,800, 1.5 percent;
- West Greene – \$123,288, 3.8 percent;
- Albert Gallatin – \$536,827, 2.4 percent;
- Brownsville – \$308,508, 2.6 percent; and
- Bethlehem-Center – \$107,260, 1.2 percent

The budget also provides a 6.8 percent boost to the state Corrections Department – funding that is critical to providing fairer pay and safer staffing levels for corrections officers.

# Good news for seniors!

## Deadline extended for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

The application deadline for the popular Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been extended to the end of the year.

The extension gives everyone who is eligible the opportunity to apply for the rebate program. I encourage residents to stop by any of my district offices to find out if they qualify and for assistance with applying for rebates on 2015 property taxes or rent.

My staff has ample experience helping folks with the application. More information is available by calling my main district office at 724-966-8953.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is available to eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older. Homeowners are limited to a \$35,000 maximum annual income, while renters' income may be no more than \$15,000, although applicants may exclude half of Social Security income.

The maximum standard rebate is \$650. The program is supported by the Pennsylvania Lottery and from slots gaming revenue.

Applications are available online through the state Department of Revenue at [www.revenue.pa.gov](http://www.revenue.pa.gov), or by calling 1-888-222-9190.

Since the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program's 1971 inception, older and disabled adults have received more than \$5.9 billion in property tax and rent relief.



## Working to expand seniors' prescription coverage

I'm pleased to report that the state House of Representatives has unanimously passed legislation that would expand prescription drug coverage to over 32,000 older Pennsylvanians by increasing income eligibility guidelines for the PACENET program.

It's been more than a dozen years since the PACENET income limits have been increased. By updating the income limits, we can ensure access to affordable prescription drugs and help thousands of senior citizens maintain their quality of life.

House Bill 2069 would increase the annual maximum income limits in the PACENET program to \$31,000 for a single person and to \$41,000 for a married couple.

Current maximum annual income limits for the PACENET program, which covers those individuals with incomes exceeding PACE maximums, are \$23,500 for an individual and \$31,500 for a married couple.

The PACE and PACENET programs offer lower-cost prescription medications to qualified residents 65 or older, thanks to roughly \$200 million a year in funding from the Pennsylvania Lottery. Advancing this measure will bring even more live-saving medicines to older Pennsylvanians.

H.B. 2069 now is before the state Senate for consideration.

## Expanded wine sales, improved convenience on tap

The House this spring passed and the governor signed into law legislation that would allow the sale of wine in restaurants and grocery stores, and make the sale of wine more convenient for Pennsylvania consumers.

I voted for the legislation because it will modernize rather than dismantle a state-store system that annually delivers millions of dollars to help balance the state budget and provides nearly 5,000 good-paying jobs to Pennsylvania residents, with the potential to create more jobs.

Act 39 of 2016 will give the Liquor Control Board more flexibility to set competitive prices, offer discounts and set state liquor store hours in ways that are better and more convenient for consumers. It also will permit the direct shipment of wine by licensed producers to consumers at their homes.

And, the measure is projected to increase state revenues by almost \$150 million in the fiscal year that began July 1.

Pennsylvanians could see wine in grocery stores, select restaurants and hotels by Thanksgiving.





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## SAVE THE DATES!

### Electronics recycling

I've teamed up with the Greene County Commissioners to sponsor quarterly electronics recycling at the Greene County Fairgrounds.

The final two recycling events for 2016 are scheduled for 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 14, and Wednesday, Dec. 14.

Greene County residents can safely dispose of electronics such as computer equipment, TVs, VCRs and stereos during those times and dates.

Please call my office at 724-966-8953 for more information. There are restrictions on what can be recycled – one TV per vehicle, please – and fees are applied to some larger items and items with Freon.

As an added bonus, my staff and I will be available Sept. 14 and Dec. 14 to answer questions about state issues and programs.

Hope to see you there!



### Annual Greene County Senior Fair on tap Oct. 7 at fairgrounds



My staff and I will be teaming up with the Greene County Commissioners and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Area Agency on Aging to sponsor the fifth annual Greene County Senior Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 7, at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Waynesburg.

The fair provides county residents convenient access to a wealth of information about programs and services. It's a free, one-stop event that offers health screenings and flu shots along with free refreshments, lunch and door prizes.

My staff and I also will be attending the Washington County Senior Expo from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 22, at the Washington Crown Center, 1500 W. Chestnut St., Washington.

Please call my office at 724-966-8953 for more information about both events.

### Coal Royalty



*It was my pleasure to introduce Bituminous Coal Queen Katlyn Allison of Carmichaels to the state House of Representatives and present her with a House citation congratulating her for her volunteer service, leadership and community spirit. Katlyn, daughter of Todd and Lisa Allison, was crowned Coal Queen last August at Carmichaels High School.*