

THE ROZZI *Report*

From State Representative
MARK ROZZI
126th Legislative District

Summer 2016
WWW.PAHOUSE.COM/ROZZI



4933 Kutztown Road • Temple, PA 19560-1569 • (610) 921-8921
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Dear Friends,

Over the summer, I supported the passage of a state budget that funds education at record levels, without a broad-based tax increase. I will be the first to admit that this budget is far from perfect, but it is a solid step in the right direction, especially for our students and homeowners.

After the protracted impasse of last year, it is refreshing to see this compromise, especially as it contains historic education funding that should help slow the increase of property taxes as we fight for a more comprehensive solution for homeowners.

The budget will also:

- Provide funding for three additional Pennsylvania State Police cadet classes;
- Transfer millions from the Oil and Gas Fund to the General Fund to give money to conservation programs, Growing Greener, and the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund; and
- Dedicate \$15 million to combat heroin and opioid addiction, including funds for emergency addiction treatment and behavioral health services.

While there are parts I dislike about the budget, in reality it is a workable compromise that will invest in our state without relying on a sales or income tax increase. Avoiding an impasse should prevent any future downgrades of the state credit rating.

As always, please feel free to stop by my district office, located at 4933 Kutztown Road, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with any questions or issues about local, state or federal government. My staff and I are here to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Rozzi".



I was happy to attend the graduation ceremony at Muhlenberg High School this year to congratulate Danny Wade and others in the Class of 2016.



In April, I was able to spend time with students from the Holy Guardian Angels Regional School when they were at the Capitol for a school trip. If you know a class or community group looking to visit the Capitol, my office can help make arrangements. Just call my office at (610) 921-8921.

Statute of Limitations Reform

In April, as a result of tremendous public pressure, the Republican House Judiciary Committee chairman took up the statute of limitations reform issue for the first time in a decade and House Bill 1947 was introduced and voted out of committee. Statewide support swelled for the reform effort and on April 12 the bill, along with a highly negotiated “compromise” retroactive amendment that would allow victims previously barred by statute of limitations to file civil suit against their abusers, passed the House 180-15.

When this legislation moved to the Senate for consideration, though, it was stripped of the compromise retroactive amendment. This watered-down version of the bill then passed the Senate 49-0. While this was a crushing blow for me personally and for victims across the state, I can assure you that this fight is far from over.

When the House reconvenes this fall, it is anticipated to take up this legislation again to concur with the changes made by the Senate. I vow to do everything in my power to not let that happen and to reinsert the retroactive amendment back into House Bill 1947. I will continue to keep you updated about this issue.



I am very grateful that Phil Saviano was able to join us for an event in May at the Capitol. He was a gracious and informative speaker whose impact was felt throughout the Capitol.

Local projects get boost from state grants

This summer, the Commonwealth Financing Authority announced nearly \$1.5 million in grants for several projects in our district. The scope of these projects is vast, but they will help to enhance the quality of life for our residents and visitors.

The grant amounts, purposes or recipients are:

- Reconstruction of a 2.4-mile stretch of Skyline Drive in Alsace and Lower Alsace townships and the City of Reading, \$969,298.
- Implementation of the Berks County Conservancy’s Angelica Park master plan, \$200,000;
- Recreation Commission of the Antietam Valley, Carsonia Park Improvement Project and Watershed Restoration Project, \$235,000;
- Berks County Community Foundation, 18th W.O.N.D.E.R. Neighborhood Improvement Project, \$55,000.



COMMITTEES

- Appropriations
- Children and Youth
- Commerce
- Democratic Policy Committee
- Gaming Oversight
- Human Services

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERSHIPS

- Alzheimer’s Caucus
- At-Risk Children and Families Caucus
- Career and Technology Education Caucus
- Community College Caucus
- Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Caucus
- Italian-American Caucus
- LGBT Equality Caucus
- Mental Health Caucus
- Motorsports Caucus
- Northeast Delegation
- Southeast Delegation

Medical marijuana now law in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania this spring became the 24th state to legalize marijuana for medical purposes. I voted to legalize medical marijuana and allow doctors to prescribe the treatment they see fit to help heal their ailing patients. The law took effect in May.

Regulated medical marijuana will help bring relief to tens of thousands of children, adults and senior citizens suffering from serious medical problems, including epilepsy, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, HIV/AIDS, Lou Gehrig’s and Parkinson’s diseases, and glaucoma.

Senate Bill 3, now Act 16 of 2016, establishes an independent, 12-member State Board of Medical Cannabis Licensing to oversee growers with indoor and secure facilities and regulate dispensaries across the state. When the law is fully implemented, doctors will be able to prescribe marijuana in pill, oil, vapor or liquid form. Patients will not be able to legally obtain marijuana to smoke and will not be allowed to grow it on their own.

A parent of a child who suffers from one of the qualifying illnesses will be immune from prosecution for possessing medical marijuana which was legally purchased in another state. Caregivers must apply for a Safe Harbor letter and carry it with them whenever medical marijuana is being transported outside the home. You can apply by going to <https://apps.health.pa.gov/PASafeHarbor/>

All patients will be required to receive a Department of Health Medical Marijuana ID card.

At long last, Pennsylvania can provide another tool for doctors to help patients, including countless suffering children, who are battling debilitating and life-threatening illnesses.

You can find more details at www.health.pa.gov – click on “Pa. Medical Marijuana” under “Hot Topics.”

Pennsylvania tackling opioid, heroin epidemic head-on

Special session planned for the fall

Pennsylvania is dealing with a major epidemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heroin and opioid overdoses are the leading causes of accidental deaths, killing more Pennsylvanians than those involved in deadly crashes. This epidemic crosses all social, geographic and political lines.

A recent study by the Pennsylvania State Coroners Association provides a harsh reality: seven Pennsylvanians died every day due to heroin or prescription opioid overdose. In 2014, nearly 2,500 Pennsylvanians died from a drug overdose, with 63 in Berks County.

Pennsylvania has taken several

important steps to combat the heroin and opioid crisis. Dr. Rachel Levine, the physician general, signed a standing order for naloxone, making access to this crucial anti-overdose drug available to all Pennsylvanians. State troopers are equipped with naloxone for when they arrive first on the scene of a drug overdose. This life-saving drug is also available in public high schools across the commonwealth at no cost. Pennsylvania has developed a prescription drug monitoring program to help detect and prevent prescription fraud and abuse.

Gov. Tom Wolf has been hosting roundtable discussions with state

lawmakers, local officials, law enforcement, emergency responders and health care professionals to discuss ways to work together to combat the opioid abuse and heroin use epidemic. A bipartisan task force was formed to study the opioid problem in the commonwealth and recommend legislation. A special session has been scheduled for the fall to focus lawmakers' attention on combatting this crisis.

I will continue working with my colleagues — both Democratic and Republican — on bipartisan ways to address this crisis head-on. Pennsylvanians are counting on us to make it happen!

Working to expand seniors' prescription coverage

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

The program covers people with income exceeding the PACE maximum income limits, and 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 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 from the Pennsylvania Lottery. Advancing this measure will bring even more life-saving medicines to older Pennsylvanians.

House Bill 2069 awaits consideration in the state Senate.

Apply now to receive your Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

The deadline to file a 2015 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program application is Dec. 31, and my office is here to help!

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 and older, widows and widowers 50 and older, and people with disabilities 18 and older. The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates can boost rebates up to \$975.

My offices can help with the applications. Please don't assume you are not eligible. Half of Social Security income is discounted, and claimants are not disqualified from rebates solely because of Social Security cost-of-living-adjustments.

To find out if you qualify, or if you need assistance with filling out your application, please call or visit my office.



My staff and I were proud to be able to take part in last year's Berks County Buddy Walk, which is an annual event to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome and to raise funds for local programs and services as well as national advocacy initiatives. I look forward to participating in similar events in the near future!

STAY CONNECTED

State Representative Mark Rozzi • 126th Legislative District

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
MARK ROZZI
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INSIDE:

- State budget update
- Grants awarded to area projects

lpo.kaf.0916

SAVE THE DATE FOR MY UPCOMING EVENTS

Community Document Shredding Event

11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 17

4933 Kutztown Road, Temple

Join my staff and me at my constituent service office for a free document-shredding event. Don't miss this chance to help protect yourself from identity theft by shredding documents you no longer need.

NOTE: There is a 10-box maximum per resident. No business documents will be accepted.

Senior Chat: Identity Theft

Noon – 2 p.m.

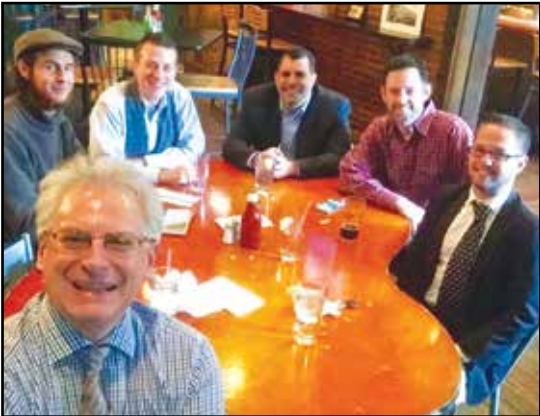
Tuesday, Nov. 1

**Crossroads Family Restaurant
4643 Pottsville Pike, Reading**

Fraud and identity theft are growing concerns in our community, and I want to make sure you have all the facts to protect yourself and your loved ones. Join my staff, me and representatives from the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office to learn more about this growing trend and what can be done to stop these thieves before they strike.

MY OFFICE CAN HELP WITH:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap 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
 - Birth and death certificates
 - Problems with the Departments of Health and Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
 - Requests for literature of all kinds
 - bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
 - Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
 - Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
 - Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
 - PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
 - Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
 - Information about federal, state and local government agencies
- Any problem with state government!**



The organizers of the Reading120 and I meet to discuss the annual, internationally sanctioned bike race. Every year, this race turns Reading into a hotbed of activity and draws in visitors from Pennsylvania and beyond. If you have never attended the race, I encourage you to make it out to this year's race on Saturday, Sept. 10. You won't be disappointed.