



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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161ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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SUMMER 2016

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The General Assembly must act to close gun loopholes

On June 12th, just after midnight, an armed gunman entered a night club in Orlando and fired on a crowd of over 300 people, committing the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. He used a military-style assault rifle, a weapon that made it possible for him to kill or wound over a third of the people in the club before the shooting was stopped by brave law enforcement officers. This is the same type of gun used at Sandy Hook Elementary, San Bernardino and Aurora. Right now in Pennsylvania, a person planning a deadly attack can buy that very same weapon without having to ever go through a background check. I believe this loophole compromises our safety and it's time for the legislature to take action.

I care so deeply about keeping guns out of the hands of those who wish to do us harm that the first bill I co-sponsored after being sworn in last August was House Bill 1010, which would mandate universal background checks in PA. In May, I was proud to host the first ever legislative hearing on H.B. 1010, legislation that would close loopholes that currently enable purchasers to avoid background checks when purchasing a firearm. The hearing was attended by both Republicans and Democrats and broke records for number of members in attendance.

A recent Franklin and Marshall poll shows that nine in 10 voters favor a federal law requiring background checks on all potential gun buyers. In Pennsylvania, 56 percent of residents favor

increased background checks, and 68 percent favor gathering more information about citizens' mental health and factoring that into the background check system.

This begs the question: why hasn't the General Assembly acted in moving H.B. 1010?

Since its introduction last October, H.B. 1010 has been stuck in the House Judiciary Committee awaiting action. Let's be clear about this legislation – it would do nothing to prevent the fundamental right of all law-abiding Pennsylvanians to purchase a firearm. What it would do is close loopholes that allow criminals or those with a history of mental illness to purchase a firearm.

Under current law, a person does not need to undergo a background check to purchase a long-barreled firearm, including some types of rifles and shotguns. It defies logic that after all of the tragedy our nation has seen regarding gun violence, including this most recent tragedy, that today in Pennsylvania, a criminal could be barred from purchasing a handgun but could bypass the background check system by purchasing a more deadly weapon.

It's important to note that the background check system in Pennsylvania, known as the Pennsylvania Instant Check System, or PICS, cross checks the name of a potential firearm purchaser with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, the National Crime Information Center and five additional Pennsylvania databases. Under normal circumstances, a check using PICS averages under 45 seconds. In some instances when further clarity is necessary, operator-assisted phone calls average about 10 minutes.

The effectiveness of PICS is undeniable. Last year alone, PICS denied over 15,000 attempted firearm purchases in Pennsylvania. Since its inception, PICS has been responsible for the apprehension of 1,971 fugitives who were attempting to purchase a firearm. The system is working.

The Pennsylvania State Police stated that if the goal of background checks is to identify and stop prohibited persons from acquiring guns, it's only logical to expand background

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Legislators from both sides of the aisle attended my policy hearing on H.B. 1010.



Courageous first responders in our district receive state grants



As we all know, our first responders are the brave individuals who time after time run toward danger when most others would run away. They sacrifice their time and safety for the benefit of others, and we

all owe them a debt of gratitude for the services they provide our community.

That's why I'm so excited to announce that 16 fire and EMS grants were awarded to fire and ambulance companies in the 161st Legislative District. These grants are made possible by the Fire Company and Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program, which is funded by gaming revenue.

This grant program has been invaluable in helping our fire and EMS companies provide the services that keep us safe, which is why I was proud to vote for House Bill 1877, legislation that would extend the program for an additional four years.

Grants can be used toward repairing, building or renovating facilities. The money also can be applied toward the purchase of new equipment, training and certification of staff, or it may go to repay debt related to equipment purchases or facility building and maintenance.

Aston Beechwood Volunteer Fire Company 1 (EMS)	\$7,201
Aston Beechwood Volunteer Fire Company 1 (Fire Company)	\$13,789
Brookhaven Fire & Rescue Company (EMS)	\$7,201
Brookhaven Fire & Rescue Company (Fire Company)	\$13,561
Folsom Fire Company No. 1	\$12,878
Garden City Fire Company 1	\$13,561
Green Ridge Volunteer Fire Company	\$13,789
Holmes Fire Company (EMS)	\$7,201
Holmes Fire Company (Fire Company)	\$13,789
Milmont Fire Company & Ambulance Service	\$11,000
S M Vauclain Fire Company	\$7,201
South Media Fire Company No. 1	\$13,561
Swarthmore Fire and Protective Association (EMS)	\$4,904
Swarthmore Fire and Protective Association (Fire Company)	\$11,275
Woodlyn Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 (EMS)	\$7,201
Woodlyn Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 (Fire Company)	\$13,561



It was an honor to meet with firefighters from Brookhaven, Nether Providence, Swarthmore and Woodlyn for International Firefighters Day in May.

Medical marijuana legislation signed into law

Earlier this spring, the General Assembly passed momentous legislation that legalized medical marijuana in Pennsylvania. Flanked by hundreds of supporters, Gov. Tom Wolf signed Senate Bill 3 into law on April 17 in the Capitol Rotunda, giving access to this life-saving drug to countless individuals who need it.

Medical marijuana has the potential to work wonders for those who suffer from debilitating diseases that other medicines just can't help. Children who suffer from dozens of seizures a day have found relief with medical marijuana, as have those who suffer from epilepsy, chronic

pain and post-traumatic stress disorder, among other illnesses.

It is estimated that it could take a year and a half to get the program fully up and running. A vast infrastructure needs to be created to handle the process of cultivating, growing and distributing medical marijuana.

For more information on medical marijuana, please visit one of the following links: *(NOTE: please follow capitalization in links)*

General Fact Sheet: <http://bit.ly/1TFUbVe>

Pennsylvania Department of Health FAQ: <http://bit.ly/25bLjKT>

Patients diagnosed with one of these 17 serious medical conditions can be prescribed medical marijuana by a participating doctor:

- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
- Autism
- Cancer
- Crohn's Disease
- Damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord with objective neurological indication of intractable spasticity
- Epilepsy
- Glaucoma
- HIV/AIDS
- Huntington's Disease
- Inflammatory Bowel Syndrome
- Intractable Seizures
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Neuropathies
- Parkinson's Disease
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
- Severe chronic or intractable pain of neuropathic origin, or severe chronic or intractable pain in which conventional therapeutic intervention and opiate therapy is contraindicated or ineffective
- Sickle Cell Anemia

Photos from Harrisburg and around the district



It was an honor to meet with local police chiefs, including Ridley Capt. Scott Willoughby, Nether Providence Chief David Splain and Brookhaven Police Chief Randy McGoldrick, during National Police Week.



I was proud to invite the Sun Valley Marching Band to Harrisburg to be honored in the House Chamber for their state championship.



Above: Students at Aston Elementary showed great appreciation for reading on Read Across America Day!



Left: Congratulations to the winners of the 15th Annual Recognition Reception hosted by the Taylor Community Foundation!



Right: I spoke with students at Ridley Middle School for their Career Day earlier this spring and look forward to visiting with them again.



Opioid crisis must be dealt with

In May, Gov. Tom Wolf joined me and other local legislators in Brookhaven for a roundtable to address the current opioid epidemic destroying families across Pennsylvania and especially in Delaware County.

Unfortunately, Delaware County is home to the highest number of heroin overdose deaths in the state. This epidemic is impacting families and communities from Philadelphia to Erie, Scranton to Pittsburgh, and all points in between – and our area is no different. That's why I was so grateful to the governor for joining us and helping shed light on the tragic situations caused by opioid abuse.

Far too many people are becoming hooked on prescription painkillers, such as OxyContin, codeine and Dilaudid, among others, and moving on to heroin, which is often cheaper and more easily accessible. Sadly, many are becoming addicted and overdosing on heroin, especially as deadlier varieties of heroin hit the streets.

One local legislator shared a story about how his doctor prescribed a six-month supply of OxyContin for a broken arm. He used the pills to relieve pain for several days and then safely disposed of them once he realized he no longer needed the relief. Sadly, many people use the pills longer than necessary and find themselves addicted.

The problem has become so serious that the Pennsylvania Medical Society has issued a call to action regarding the opioid epidemic. It's time for everyone involved to take a step back and re-evaluate how we use and prescribe these heavy-duty painkillers.

Thankfully, Gov. Wolf's administration has been proactive in battling this crisis. Some initiatives already taken include allowing greater access to naloxone, a life-saving drug that combats heroin overdoses immediately upon use, and developing a prescription drug monitoring program to detect and prevent prescription fraud and abuse, among other measures.

But we must do more.

Many in the General Assembly recognize this problem, which knows no party lines. Legislators from both urban and rural Pennsylvania find their constituents affected and recognize action is needed.

I will work together with legislators on both sides of the aisle – as well as doctors, advocates and health and human services workers – to raise awareness and help those who are struggling with opioid addiction, to prevent the further needless loss of life.

If you or someone you know is currently dealing with an opioid addiction, please visit www.pastop.org.



Thank you to Gov. Wolf for taking part in an opioid roundtable in Brookhaven. We must raise awareness of this epidemic striking our state.

Senior breakfasts around the district a big success

This year, I've hosted a number of senior breakfasts around the 161st Legislative District to talk to residents about concerns that may be on their mind relating to state government. Many people don't know all the different state programs that my office can help with. Getting out in the community and speaking with residents is not only a great way to educate them on how my staff and I can help, but it also helps educate me on issues that concern local residents. Below are some pictures from the latest round of senior breakfasts. If you'd like to stay up to date on future breakfasts or if you'd like to host one at your congregation or civic group, please call my office at (610) 534-6880 or sign up for my emails at www.pahouse.com/KruegerBraneky/EmailSignUp.



Brookhaven Senior Breakfast.



Ridley Senior Breakfast.



We must protect pregnant women and their babies – not the oil and gas industry

Last month, I was honored to partner with the Sisters of St. Francis in Aston to convene a diverse group of Catholic and other religious leaders, health professionals, advocacy groups and moms from across Pennsylvania to call on the General Assembly to support regulations that would cut air pollution from oil and gas operations.

These regulations are necessary to help protect our environment and, most importantly, the health of Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens. We can never under-value the health of pregnant women and their newborn children.

There are multiple ways that oil and gas operations may impact a baby's health, including:

- Low birth weight,
- Preterm birth,
- Congenital heart defects and
- High-risk pregnancy.

Furthermore, preliminary studies have found that living near pollution emitted from oil and gas operations may be harmful to a baby's health by increasing their risk of:

- Rashes,
- Upper respiratory symptoms,
- Fatigue, dizziness, vomiting, headaches and nosebleeds.

The regulations that some were fighting were crafted over a five-year period and included numerous meetings with industry representatives, two public comment periods, 12 public hearings and nearly 30,000 public comments. It was a comprehensive and exhaustive process and there is no reason for the House to overturn them. I will continue to fight to protect public health and stand up for clean air and clean water for all Pennsylvanians.

For more information, please visit www.momscleanairforce.org/.



Closing gun loopholes *continued from page 1...*

checks to all those seeking to acquire a gun, regardless of the gun's size or source.

I couldn't agree more.

So why hasn't the General Assembly taken up H.B. 1010? The National Rifle Association vigorously opposes it because, according to the NRA website, "background checks don't necessarily stop serious criminals from getting firearms." I'm not sure what the definition of a "serious" criminal is, but I don't believe the level of criminality in the mind of those who are attempting to get around background checks is a reason to ignore loopholes and not expand PICS.

Upper Darby Police Superintendent Michael Chitwood said it best when he commented that he thought Sandy Hook, where 20 children ages 6 and 7 were shot and killed, would change the way this country looks at gun violence. Sadly, it did not. Politicians and advocates and talking heads made a lot of noise following Sandy Hook, but took no action.

It's time we in Pennsylvania take action. We must support closing loopholes in the background check system to allow PICS to do what it is intended to do and keep guns out of the hands of those who wish to do us harm.



State Representative

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SAVE THESE DATES!

Small Business Breakfast July 28th

Entrepreneurs and small-business owners can learn about the resources available from SCORE, the Small Business Development Center, the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Association.

Back-to-School Family Day August 27th



It's hard to imagine being back to school just as school is ending, but mark your calendars for this fun family day in August.

Call 610-534-6880 for more information or to register to attend one of these events.

Stay in touch!



Stay up to date with all the latest news from Harrisburg and the 161st Legislative District by following me on social media. You can also sign up for email updates about breaking news and legislative updates by visiting www.pahouse.com/KruegerBraneky/EmailSignup.



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