

Rep. Chris

sainato

Fall 2016



Capitol Office: 30 East Wing • P.O. Box 202009 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009 • (717) 772-2436

District Office: Z-Penn Building • 20 S. Mercer St. • New Castle, PA 16101 • (724) 656-1112 • Toll free: 1-800-866-2215

Website: www.pahouse.com/sainato • Email: csainato@pahouse.net

Working to combat the opioid epidemic in Pa.

In late October, the General Assembly passed several bills that begin to fulfill the commitment it made with Gov. Tom Wolf earlier this year to attack the opioid and heroin epidemic in Pennsylvania. The governor signed the bills into law in November.

In addition to these bills, legislators also added funding in this year's state budget to implement opioid treatment centers across the state that will help 11,000 more people get treatment.

THE LAWS PASSED WILL:

- Limit opioid prescriptions given to minors and require parents or guardians to sign a consent form and discuss the risks of addiction and overdose before opioids are prescribed.
- Require continuing education on opioid prescribing and addiction treatment for medical professionals. It also requires physicians and pharmacists to check the state's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database each time they prescribe an opioid or controlled substance; requires pharmacists to enter data into the database within 24 hours of issuing an opioid prescription; and requires all prescribers and dispensers of controlled substances to register with the database. Previous law did not mandate registration with the database, and only required doctors to check the database the first time they prescribed an opioid or controlled substance, or if they suspected a patient was abusing or selling drugs.
- Limit the amount of opioids prescribed in emergency rooms and urgent care centers to a 7-day supply without a refill, and require caretakers to refer patients to treatment if they exhibit signs of addiction.
- Require the state boards of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Optometry, Osteopathic Medicine and Podiatry to develop a curriculum on safe opioid prescribing for medical schools by August 2017.
- Allow all federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, hospitals, assisted living facilities, home healthcare agencies, long-term nursing facilities, hospices and licensed pharmacies to serve as drop-off locations for unused, unwanted or expired prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs.



These bills represent a significant initial step in the General Assembly's bipartisan effort to help the victims of substance abuse disorder and relieve the tremendous financial, health and social burden the opioid and heroin epidemic has placed on families, healthcare providers and law enforcement agencies in communities across Pennsylvania.



I was proud to take part in the Neshannock Lions Club 5K Walk/Run.



I enjoyed spending time with my fellow Union Band alumni.

Sainato continues Policy Committee work

As a senior member of the House Democratic Policy Committee, I spent the summer participating in numerous Policy Committee hearings across Pennsylvania. The committee met to discuss various important issues including job creation, economic development and education funding.

I also had the opportunity to attend several joint bipartisan hearings with the House Republican Policy Committee this summer. During these hearings, we discussed what could be done to help tackle Pennsylvania's opioid epidemic.

All of these hearings investigated an issue's local impact and collected valuable expert input to produce better legislation.

For pictures and testimonies, go to www.pahouse.com/PolicyCommittee.

Lawrence County Emergency Shelters receive grants

I was pleased to announce the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development allocated more than \$1.2 million in Emergency Shelter grants to our area this year.

A \$729,951 grant was provided for rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention to homeless veterans. Another \$543,326 was provided for street outreach, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention for the Lawrence County community. This program helps victims of domestic violence, chronic homelessness, veterans, youth, and homeless individuals and families.



So many delicious desserts to choose from during Polish Day at Cascade Park.



A good time was had by all at the Duca Degli Abruzzi Picnic.

Sainato bill extends emergency responder death benefit in Pa.

I am pleased inform you that legislation I introduced was signed into law this year to become Act 110. The law extends the Emergency and Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act to members of the Civil Air Patrol Pennsylvania Wing whose deaths are related to the performance of their duties. The state's Emergency and Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act provides \$100,000 to families of emergency responders who die while performing their duties.

The Civil Air Patrol is a federally supported, nonprofit organization that serves as an official civil auxiliary arm of the U.S. Air Force. It consists of 2,200 volunteers who support emergency service responders across the country by conducting search-and-rescue operations, providing disaster relief and performing homeland security missions.

Throughout history, thousands of Civil Air Patrol members have answered the call to serve by performing both wartime and peacetime missions. From flying critical missions during World War II, to helping with missions for various governmental and private agencies such as local law enforcement and the American Red Cross, the Civil Air Patrol has been there.

As Democratic Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I have worked for years to get this legislation passed and I am thrilled that we have finally achieved our goal. Members of the Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol provide valuable services and do so daily in the same dangerous environments as other emergency responders.

Pennsylvania's Civil Air Patrol members are perhaps the nation's finest force of citizen volunteers and knowingly risk their lives to keep us safe.

State grants to help keep our students safe

I believe student safety must always be a top priority for every school district. Three local districts, along with the Lawrence County Career and Technical Center, received some financial help from Pennsylvania Department of Education Safe Schools Initiative grants to keep students safe.

THE GRANT RECIPIENTS ARE:

Shenango Area School District:	\$25,000 for security cameras
Laurel School District:	\$25,000 for pole lights and cameras
New Castle Area School District:	\$24,475 for cameras
Lawrence County CTC:	\$25,000 for surveillance equipment and cameras

I am pleased these districts and the career-technical center received these grants to continue providing a safe learning environment for their students.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program deadline expires Dec. 31

I want to remind you that the deadline to file a 2015 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program application is Dec. 31, 2016.

The Property Tax/Rent 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. The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates can boost the total to \$975.

Earlier this month, Gov. Tom Wolf signed legislation into law that will remove veterans' disability payments from the definition of income that is used to determine eligibility for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

Please don't assume you are not eligible for this program. 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 visit my office.

For more information about the program, go to www.revenue.pa.gov.



It was an honor to spend time with members of the Eintracht Singing Society during their annual Octoberfest.



I joined the Shenango Community Education Foundation for their annual 5K Walk/Run.



Protect yourself from the flu

Hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized every year with complications from the flu. The best way to protect yourself is by getting a flu shot.

Everyone 6 months or older is urged to get a flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said those more at risk of illness and complications from the flu include:

- People 65 or older
- People with health problems such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung disease and other chronic illness or conditions
- Pregnant women
- Caregivers of infants or family members with health problems

Veterans enrolled in VA health care can get a flu shot at the nearest VA health care facility. Also, the VA has partnered with a major drug store chain to administer flu shots to veterans. More information on that partnership can be found at: <http://bit.ly/2dXf4N3>.



STATE REP. CHRIS SAINATO

30 East Wing
P.O. Box 202009
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009

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I always look forward to the delicious food at the Greek Festival in New Castle.



It is great to see smiling faces at the St. Vitus Festival in New Castle.

You have more options to pay on the Pennsylvania Turnpike

The Pennsylvania Turnpike is now accepting payment by credit and debit cards at its toll booths.

Turnpike officials said that it is not the best way to pay for tolls, because it takes longer and creates vehicle lines, but it is a viable option should you find yourself without cash or a transponder to pay for a toll.

A transponder is the best way to travel the Turnpike. You can find out more about EZ Pass by going to www.paturnpike.com.

