



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Marty Flynn

113TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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Flynn applauds Wolf's 2018-19 budget commitment to education, jobs

The 2018-19 state budget proposal unveiled by Gov. Tom Wolf in early February has much to like in it, particularly because of its continued commitment to education and good jobs.

From day one, Gov. Wolf has been dedicated to restoring the million-dollar cut that was made to basic education funding under the previous administration. I am proud to give him my unwavering support for the idea that all schoolchildren should receive adequate education funding regardless of their ZIP code. The budget he offered continues on that theme by suggesting an additional \$160 million for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade across Pennsylvania.

Although the spending plan offered by the governor is just a first step in the months-long budget process, it is a positive step forward.

While it's not always easy to find more money for every line item in the budget that people would like to see increased, budgets are about priorities. If we expect Pennsylvania

schoolchildren to be able to compete in the worldwide marketplace, we must make them our top concern.

As a member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, I was involved in several weeks of public hearings that looked in detail at the governor's plan.

I am confident that when we eventually close the books on the 2018-19 budget this summer, House Democrats will support Gov. Wolf's request for more education funding because it's the right thing to do for today and Pennsylvania's future workforce.

The governor's proposals go hand in hand with the House Democrats' Plan4PA. We're pushing for quality schools, good jobs and fair taxes for all Pennsylvanians. We believe that hardworking people deserve more from Harrisburg rather than the special interests and multimillion-dollar corporations.

More information about the Plan4PA is available at <http://planforpa.pahouse.com>.

REAL ID update

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security granted Pennsylvania an extension, through Oct. 10, 2018, on REAL ID enforcement. This means Pennsylvania residents will be able to enter federal facilities and board commercial aircraft using current Pennsylvania driver's licenses and non-driver's ID cards, neither of which are REAL ID-compliant yet, through that date.

PennDOT anticipates that REAL ID-compliant licenses will be available in Pennsylvania in the spring of 2019. Until then, PennDOT will continue to request

extensions from DHS until REAL ID-compliant licenses and ID cards are available for purchase.

No Pennsylvania resident is required to get a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or ID card — you don't need a REAL ID-compliant license to drive, for instance. But if you choose to get one, you will be able to use it to board a plane and enter federal buildings when DHS ultimately enforces the REAL ID Act requirements.

PennDOT will implement a one-time \$30 fee in addition to the current standard driver's license/photo ID fee for a REAL ID Act-compliant license or ID card. Renewing a REAL ID Act-compliant ID, however, won't cost anything extra.

NOTE: If your driver's license expires before REAL ID-compliant licenses are available in Pennsylvania, you will have to pay to renew your license and, if you choose to, pay again to get a REAL ID-compliant license when it's available.

To learn more about the REAL ID Act and its requirements, visit www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID or call my office at 570-342-4348. My staff will be happy to answer questions about this or any other state government-related matter.

Scranton School District receives \$2 million in additional state aid

The Scranton School District received an additional \$2 million from the state to help eliminate some of the deficit facing the district. Members of the school district board traveled to Harrisburg to meet with me and with senior members of the governor's staff.

The funding was made possible through the efforts of state Sen. John Blake, with the assistance of my office staff and Gov. Tom Wolf.

Scranton School District Superintendent Alexis Kirijan said the money will provide some relief as the district attempts to balance the budget and find solvency. She stressed that the money is not a bailout.

"I know the money doesn't come without the governor and state wanting to see improvement. Hopefully this will help get us where we need to be. I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity, a new light, a new beginning," she said.

Blake added: "This additional \$2 million in state funding is provided out of sincere concern for the Scranton School District's 10,000 students



School directors visit Harrisburg, from left to right – Robert Lesh; Paul Duffy; Paige Gebhardt Cognetti; Rep. Flynn; Board President Barbara Dixon; Robert Casey; Katie Gilmartin; and Thomas Schuster.

and their families, the district's hardworking teachers, and, of course, for the city's taxpayers."

Restrictions and conditions were placed on the use and distribution of the \$2 million.

Major issues take center stage at House Policy hearings

Property taxes, workforce development and education on agenda



Throughout the year, I attend House Democratic Policy Committee public hearings and roundtable discussions across the state to discuss important issues affecting you such as property taxes, jobs and education.

At a public forum in East Stroudsburg, we discussed property tax concerns with residents, business owners and local officials. During the open dialogue, reasonable reforms were mentioned that could bring relief to homeowners while still meeting community needs.

Reducing property taxes is a main focus in the House Democrats' Plan4PA. (You can read more at <http://planforpa.pahouse.com>.)

We discussed workforce development needs in the Northeast, adequate school district funding and better health care access at events in the Lehigh Valley. We also talked about the importance of investing in quality health care access to preventative, mental health, vision and dental care.



Five years and still growing!

This winter season marked the fifth year of the ongoing coat drive that benefits young and old in the greater Scranton area. Over 5,000 coats have been distributed to groups and organizations that include Friends of the Poor, Catholic Social Services, local elementary and middle schools, a local veterans group and a homeless shelter. Rep. Flynn's office also collected and distributed hats, gloves and scarves with the coats.

Flynn votes for strong animal abuse law

State ranked 'most improved' for animal protection laws

There is a new era in Pennsylvania where animals have a new lease on life thanks to Act 10 of 2017, an animal abuse penalty law, which I strongly supported as a longtime advocate for protecting animals.

Pennsylvania was ranked "most improved" by two national organizations, the Humane Society of the United States and the Animal Legal Defense Fund, that issued reports ranking all 50 states' animal protection laws.

Act 10 will help put an end to instances of torture and extreme neglect that are too rampant. Our animal friends deserve better and this law does just that. The biggest change is that for the first time in Pennsylvania, it will be possible to file felony-level penalties for first-time cruelty offenses outside of animal fighting or killing an endangered species.

The Boston terrier pup, Libre, helped to get the momentum going for this law. Libre was left for dead but was



nursed back to health and is now with a loving family.

The legislation breaks down penalties for different grades of cruelty and different penalties based on the severity of the conduct and how many prior offenses there have been.

Here is a breakdown of what you need to know about Pa.'s animal cruelty law

Neglect of an animal – failure to provide necessary food, water, shelter or veterinary care.

■ Summary offense – up to 90 days in jail and/or a \$300 fine.

■ Penalty – if neglect causes bodily injury or places the animal in imminent risk of serious bodily injury.

■ Second- or third-degree misdemeanor – up to one year in jail and/or a \$2,000 fine.

Animal cruelty – intentionally, knowingly or recklessly beating, abandoning or abusing the animal and the treatment causes bodily harm.

■ Summary offense – up to 90 days in jail and/or a \$300 fine.

■ Penalty – if neglect causes bodily injury or places the animal in imminent risk of serious bodily injury the penalty is a second-degree misdemeanor – up to one year in jail and/or \$2,000 fine.

Aggravated cruelty – torturing an animal or violating either of the above sections and causing serious bodily injury or an animal's death.

■ Penalty – third-degree felony and up to seven years in jail and/or a \$15,000 fine.

A dog may not be tethered for longer than 30 minutes in temperatures below 32 degrees Fahrenheit or when it's 90 degrees or warmer.

Additionally, a dog may not be tethered more than nine consecutive hours within a 24-hour period.

A leash must be at least three times the length of the dog or 10 feet, whichever is longer.

The area where the pet is kept must be clear of excessive feces and have access to drinkable water and shade.

The dog must have a well-fitted collar – no tow, logged or pinch, choke or prong collars – and no open sores or wounds on the dog's body.

Civil immunity is provided for veterinarians, vet techs and Humane Society Police Officers for reporting animal cruelty in good faith.

Reducing property taxes focus of public hearing



Rep. Flynn and members of the House Democratic Policy Committee listen to testimony at a November public hearing held in Scranton on property taxes and their relationship to school funding.

In early November, I hosted a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing at the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel to discuss property taxes.

I requested the hearing to discuss the need for property tax relief in Lackawanna County and to help inform residents of the constitutional amendment ballot question they were asked to vote on at the polls on Nov. 7, and which was approved overwhelmingly.

The relationship between school funding and property taxes was also explored.

It's important that residents are aware of the many factors that play a role in property taxes. I believe this hearing gave good insight into the process. The approved constitutional amendment allows the General Assembly to increase the property tax exemption from 50 percent to 100 percent of homestead values. Passage of this amendment could result in additional property tax relief for Lackawanna County and across Pennsylvania.

House Democratic Policy Committee Chairman Mike Sturla said: "Now that the ballot question was passed, the legislature will be able to work on developing a new law that provides even more significant property relief. I commend Representative Flynn for bringing more public awareness to the constitutional amendment issue."

The committee heard testimony from Dr. Michael Mahon, superintendent, Abington Heights School District; Ronald Koldjeski, deputy director, Lackawanna County Tax Claim Bureau; and Brian Rinaldi, business manager, Old Forge School District.

If you're interested in learning more about the hearing, materials are available online at www.pahouse.com/PolicyCommittee.

Recognizing a true American hero



Recently, I joined members of the Pennsylvania Department of Veterans Affairs and Pennsylvania's Secretary of Aging Teresa Osborne at the Gino Merli Veterans Home in Scranton to celebrate the 100th birthday of World War II Veteran Edgena Jones.

Ms. Jones was a sergeant in the Women's Army Corps from November 1943 until June 1946. Edgena said she joined the armed forces because she felt worthy of it and wanted to step up and serve her country. Her niece Brenda Lee Marmo said, "She was a sergeant in the Air Force and of course she still tries to be the sergeant."

It was a particular delight that day to be with Secretary Osborne who not only is a dear and caring friend to all of our senior citizens – but is one of my constituents!

While extending birthday wishes from her agency and from the governor, she spoke of her great appreciation for the depth of character of our senior citizens, particularly for those of the greatest generation and those like Ms. Jones, who served our country in World War II.



Rep. Flynn had the pleasure of presenting a 100th birthday citation to a young lady in the neighborhood! Ms. Anna Cloruri celebrated her 100th birthday in November and Flynn was able to stop by her residence and wish her a Happy Birthday. If you would like special recognition for a family or business milestone, please contact Flynn's office at (570) 342-4348 to discuss it.

Former department store/county offices project revitalizing downtown Scranton

I was excited to stand together with Gov. Tom Wolf, state Sen. John Blake, my fellow state Reps. Sid Michaels Kavulich and Karen Boback, our Lackawanna County Commissioners, Mayor Bill Courtright and the fabulous Scranton Knight Rhythms as the governor announced the approval of the \$1 million grant that will allow for the consolidation of county government services offices into one building – the former Globe Store.

Currently, county offices are spread from Carbondale to Moosic and throughout our downtown. This project is going to make it easier for you to do government business, help save taxpayer money, return a former government building to the tax rolls and grow business in our downtown.

The further development in our downtown is critical to the development of our entire region. We have a new vibrancy growing in our downtown.

The Marketplace at Steamtown continues to re-invent itself with a community college, a gym, and soon, a giant aquarium and new medical complex. Just two blocks away we have a multimodal terminal and a National Park Service site. Additionally, in just the past few years, developers have added over 2,000 residents to our downtown. Approximately 21% are from outside the city and 65% are from out of state, opening new businesses, filling professional positions, paying taxes and supporting our community.



As a result of this trend and an increase in entrepreneurs, the many vacant storefronts that have permeated our downtown have been replaced with new small businesses. Now, this office and government services consolidation project will generate continued growth in our downtown in particular and in our region in general, as well as the private development of the former administration building.

Now if we can just get them to fix up that back corner of the building – and reopen the Charl-Mont restaurant!

65th anniversary recognized



From left to right – Rep. Flynn, Louise and Gene Passarella, Cathy Van Wort (daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Passarella) and Rep. Boback.

I had the honor, together with my friend state Rep. Karen Boback, of presenting a Certificate from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, honoring the 65th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Gene Passarella!

Mr. Passarella is also known to many regional residents as “Gene Dempsey” of the Gene Dempsey Orchestra.

Mr. Passarella is a World War II veteran, wounded in action when he was hit with a bullet from a German sniper while in Belgium. Mr. Passarella is also the “favorite” uncle of Rep. Boback who shared many stories with us of growing up in Lackawanna County and the many joys of family life we all enjoyed at that time.

If you would like special recognition for a family or business milestone, please contact my office at (570) 342-4348 to discuss it.

**STATE REP. MARTY FLYNN**

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My office can help you with:

- PennDOT issues – vehicle registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Obtaining and completing state forms
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Requests for literature – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications



From left to right – Joe Triano, Thom Welby, Angela Rempe Jones, Rep. Flynn, Greg Gianacopoulos and Nolan Trently.

- Unclaimed Property/Treasury Department claims
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- PACE/PACENET prescription-drug applications
- Consumer complaints
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups

Upcoming Events/Save the Dates!**Gun Safety/Castle Doctrine Seminar**

Saturday, April 7 – 2 p.m.

Roll Call

701 Rear N. Keyser Ave., Scranton

Shredding Event

Saturday, April 28 – 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Rep. Flynn's District Office

Jay's Commons

409 N. Main Ave., Scranton

(limit 3 boxes, no businesses)

Diaper Drive

Month of May

District Office

National Night Out

Tuesday, Aug. 7

Scranton High School parking lot

Legislative Family Day at the Waterpark!

Wednesday, Aug. 22

Montage Mountain

**Senior Fair**

Friday, Aug. 24

St. Joseph's Hall

Divine Mercy Parish, Scranton