



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Tony DeLuca
32ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
LEGISLATIVE REPORT
SPRING 2018

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PROUD TO SERVE THE 32ND DISTRICT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and trust you are looking forward to spring as much as I am. As always, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve all constituents in the 32nd Legislative District. I consider this job an honor and you are always on my mind as I fulfill my duties as your legislator.

I am constantly on the lookout for policies that may help the people who live in our district. I want you to know that I continually communicate the needs of our district to the General Assembly, and will do so again once budget negotiations begin. For this, my tenure and experience really matter in Harrisburg. As one of the senior members of the PA House of Representatives, I speak directly and regularly with those preparing the budget. I make certain that all concerned know of my interests in making sure our schools get adequate funding; that law enforcement get the tools they need to keep violent offenders, drug dealers and child predators off our streets; and that we have proper funding of programs with proven success such as those funded by the lottery, which benefits older Pennsylvanians.

As you know, consumer protection is of utmost importance to me, and always has been. I've included an update on

legislation that I have sponsored, supported, and helped pass to protect consumers in a variety of ways.

As Democratic Chairman of the Insurance Committee, I am working hard to ensure all of our children have sufficient health coverage. I was a proud co-sponsor of House Bill 1388, which Gov. Tom Wolf recently signed into law to reauthorize Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for two more years.

While this is an accomplishment on its own, I would like to point out that CHIP and similar programs are fundamental to the success of our commonwealth on many levels. Children with insurance are less likely to be sick, they do better in school because they miss fewer days, their parents miss fewer days to care for them at home, and so on. This is an example of a fundamental need that must be met because it impacts so many other areas of development in our state.

As I continue to work to ensure that policies passed into law are fair and equitable for my constituents, please also know that my office is available to act as an advocate for you in many ways related to state government.

Your opinions and concerns are important to me, and hearing from you helps me know and understand what is important to the people I am elected to serve. Your feedback helps me do my job. I invite you to stop by or call my office in Penn Hills at 412-793-2448 if you need help with any state-related matter. Not only do I welcome your visits with me personally, but I remind you that my staff stands ready to serve you.

State Representative Tony DeLuca
Democratic Chairman of the House Insurance Committee



Consumer Protection – Greater Transparency on Pharmaceutical Costs

As health care costs continue to climb, I am actively exploring ways to save you and your family money. This session I have introduced legislation, House Bill 161, which would require greater pharmaceutical price transparency.

I want consumers to have information, currently not available, in order to understand why prescription drugs cost so much. At a time when we are being asked to be more informed health care consumers, providing this information seems to be a step in the right direction.

Since passage of the Affordable Care Act, the health care industry has experienced dramatic changes. New requirements, such as essential health benefits, are impacting insurance products across the country. The ACA has allowed millions of people to gain access to life-saving care, including the benefits of cutting edge, curative prescription drugs.

Every day we are barraged with television commercials and advertisements extolling the virtues of the newest drugs and of how they can make your life better. But consumers don't have the proper amount of information, considering some of these drug therapies can cost upwards of \$100,000 annually. We are also witnessing a significant cost increase in drugs that have been on the market for years, such as insulin. This is out of control, and the cost of paying for needed drugs impacts every other financial decision in a household.

I understand that research and development are part of overhead costs of a prescription drug. However, as many drugs reach an annual cost of \$100,000, we must ask if this trend is sustainable. And, as I'm sure you know, it is not. I worry about my constituents' ability to continue to afford their prescription medication, and an insurer's ability to keep pace with the cost of many drugs they cover on their formularies.

I think it is about time we put the pharmaceutical industry on notice and require them to explain to us why their drugs cost so much money. As I said during a public hearing on my bill, House Bill 161, the pharmaceutical industry "has a direct and significant impact on the public and it continues to operate with little to no transparency." We need to get this under control and my bill endeavors to do just that.

Taking Care of Our Kids – Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

I am working hard to ensure all Pennsylvania children have sufficient health coverage. On Dec. 15, 2017, Gov. Tom Wolf signed House Bill 1388 into law as Act 58, reauthorizing Pennsylvania's CHIP. As a proud co-sponsor of this bill, I know parents struggle to provide health insurance for their families and are sometimes unaware that programs exist to help them. I want to remind all of you about an excellent program called the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, that offers health insurance to 180,000 children in Pennsylvania.

Fully subsidized coverage is available to a family of four whose income does not exceed \$50,544. Low-cost plans are available to families whose income is higher, but below certain thresholds. A family whose income exceeds all thresholds may be able to purchase CHIP at full cost, which may still be less expensive than adding a dependent to your family policy. Additionally, for families whose incomes fall in the full-cost CHIP range, CHIP is an excellent choice since a comparable insurance policy in the private market may be unavailable, unaffordable, or both.

Pennsylvania residents up to the age of 19 who are not currently covered by an insurance plan nor have been for six months are eligible for CHIP. Services included with CHIP are as follows: preventative care, diagnostic testing, emergency care, prescription coverage, hospitalization, vision and dental care.

I also sponsored House Resolution 622, which was approved by a unanimous (189-0) vote of the House on Dec. 5, 2017. My resolution urged the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the U.S. Congress to pass CHIP funding, and get these kids the health care they need. Ten days later, the House passed House Bill 1388.

On Jan. 22, 2018, Congress approved, and the president signed into law, funding for CHIP for the next six years.

Covering children is an investment in our future. Children who have health insurance have better access to health care and historically perform better academically. So, as I see it, CHIP is an important investment in our children.

If your children have no health insurance and you believe they might be eligible for this low- or no-cost program, or you have questions about eligibility, call 1-800-986-5437 or visit www.chipcoverspakids.com.

Rep. DeLuca Discusses Education Issues in Fox Chapel

I was an invited participant at the Fox Chapel Area School District Forum at Fox Chapel Area High School in O'Hara Township.

The forum provides an opportunity for parents and residents in the community to discuss districtwide topics of interest with the district administration. The items discussed at the forum that I attended included: property tax reform, commonly referred to as Senate Bill 76; the Property Tax Independence Act; PSSA/Keystone testing; the state Public School Employees' Retirement System; and the district's charter school costs.

I thoroughly enjoyed interacting with residents and officials in Fox Chapel and discussing state policies and issues of interest to them.

My Good Government Bills

I remain dedicated to the ideals of voter involvement and good government, and have introduced a set of four bills to encourage these most basic and important civic values. The first two, House Bills 945 and 946, would hold up the ideal that any eligible citizen should be able to vote, and we should strive to make it reasonably convenient to do so, by allowing same-day registration and also early voting. Participation is crucial to our democracy. We should make it simple and easy to vote while maintaining proper controls over the process.

The second two pieces, House Bills 947 and 948, would establish further controls on elected officials in ways that you have conveyed to me are important to you. The first would require a candidate to resign any other position in order to run, and the second would limit outside income once in office. In general, putting these safeguards in place would eliminate possible conflicts of interest. Personally, I feel as though anyone interested in serving in the General Assembly should make it their first and primary focus.



Protecting Consumers – Tattoo Process

As you know, consumer protection and my constituents' health are of paramount importance to me. As such, I am moving my House Bill 456 through the legislature, and it's designed to ensure the safe practices of tattooing and body piercing in the state. Remarkably, Pennsylvania is one of only a handful of states that do not have comprehensive oversight of this industry. Studies have found that about 40 percent of people under the age of 40 have or had a tattoo. Yet there are no state health standards for tattooing establishments or tattoo artists. We want to make sure that these procedures are taking place in sterile environments to decrease the risk of disease and infection occurring as a result of these invasive procedures.

Under my proposal, any person performing tattooing or body piercing would be required to pass a written examination on health, sanitization, sterilization, and safety standards prior to the department issuing their registration. Further, the Department of Health would be mandated to inspect each location at which procedures will be performed prior to issuing that facility a license. The legislation was successfully voted out of the House Health Committee on Dec. 4.

Making Sure Benefits are Paid – Life Insurers Must Now Check Master Death File



Last session I co-sponsored a bill that would require insurance companies to compare in-force life insurance policies with the U.S. Social Security Death Master File and identify matches. I'm proud to report that this bill was signed by Gov. Tom Wolf and became law on Nov. 3, 2016 as Act 132.

Many insurance companies have been using the Death Master File for the annuity side of their business so they know when to stop paying on them. But, many insurance companies do not do the same for life insurance. In turn, beneficiaries do not receive payments and the cash value on these policies is depleted.

Act 132 requires insurance companies to semi-annually check the Death Master File against their records. If a match is found, the insurance company will locate all beneficiaries and provide them with claim forms and instructions. In the event that benefits go unclaimed, life insurance companies will notify the Pennsylvania Treasurer's Office and transfer the funds per the commonwealth's unclaimed property laws.

If you believe that you are the beneficiary of an unclaimed life insurance policy, visit <https://www.patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property/> to perform a search.



Safeguarding Constituents – Protecting Against Unscrupulous Charities



As you may be aware, I am very concerned with how charities spend the money they collect. There are numerous charities that spend a disproportionate amount of money on advertising, fundraising – or worse yet, on perks for their CEOs and staff instead of putting their money where their donors believe it is going. People donate money only to find out after the fact that just a few of their dollars actually went toward the charity's stated mission. The public should have confidence as to where their money is going. While there are many fantastic charities, we need to be on guard for those that are more in business for themselves than for their mission.

This is why I have introduced House Bill 1669. The intent of this bill is to prevent any charity from soliciting the citizens of this commonwealth if a minimum of 65 percent of revenue is not dedicated to their programs. It is not my intent to harm nonprofits, or keep them from fulfilling their mission. My intent is simple: to ensure charities spend well over 65 percent on their mission. If a charity currently spends appropriately on its mission and programs, its compliance with this law shouldn't be a problem. Below I've listed the 10 worst charities.

The ten worst charities, ranked by money wasted on soliciting costs

Totals from the latest 10 years of available federal tax filings. Data updated in December 2014.

Rank	Charity name	Total raised by solicitors	Paid to solicitors	% spent on direct cash aid
1	Kids Wish Network	\$137.9 million	\$115.9 million	2.5%
2	Cancer Fund of America	\$86.8 million	\$75.4 million	1.0%
3	Children's Wish Foundation International	\$92.7 million	\$61.2 million	10.6%
4	Firefighters Charitable Foundation	\$62.8 million	\$53.8 million	7.4%
5	International Union of Police Associations, AFL-CIO	\$66.6 million	\$50.4 million	0.5%
6	Breast Cancer Relief Foundation	\$63.9 million	\$44.8 million	2.2%
7	American Association of State Troopers	\$48.1 million	\$38.6 million	8.9%
8	National Veterans Service Fund	\$70.2 million	\$36.9 million	7.8%
9	Children's Cancer Fund of America	\$43.7 million	\$34.4 million	4.6%
10	Children's Cancer Recovery Foundation	\$38.5 million	\$28.9 million	0.7%

Source: Tampa Bay Times listed at <http://www.tampabay.com/topics/specials/worst-charities.page>

Paper Shredding and Donated Food Event on May 14



I will host my next free Paper Shredding Event on Monday, May 14 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the parking lot in front of my office, 7205 Saltsburg Road, in the Alcoma Plaza in Penn Hills (weather permitting). In addition to the shredding of paper, I also accept non-perishable food items at this event, which I distribute to various food banks within my district. Donations are not required to participate in the Shredding Event. The Shredding Event is for individuals only and is limited to paper – absolutely no electronics, floppy discs, or CD/DVDs. We also do not accept magazines, telephone books, spiral notebooks, binders, rubber bands or paper clips. Documents to consider bringing to be shredded are those that contain personal information, including Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, etc.

PAPER MUST BE IN PAPER OR PLASTIC TRASH BAGS. NO BOXES. PLEASE ALSO CHECK THE DATES ON NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS YOU ARE DONATING AS WE CANNOT ACCEPT EXPIRED ITEMS!

Penn Hills School District Gets Special Grant

The **Penn Hills School District** has received a \$2 million Empowerment Grant from the Department of Education to help administrators deal with their severe fiscal issues.

The school district is eligible for the funding because it is experiencing a serious financial situation. For over two years Penn Hills has been wrestling with an approximate \$170 million debt. The Allegheny County District Attorney and the Pennsylvania Attorney General have been investigating the district's finances.

In July I was successful in getting the state to place the

district on its financial watch list. At the end of the year the state Department of Education assigned, and is paying for, a certified public accountant to review district records, serve as a financial consultant and provide expert guidance.

I am pleased the education department is trying to help the district address its financial status and move it toward solid footing. State Sen. Jay Costa and I are committed to examining all state revenue streams to help Penn Hills. The burden for resolving this situation cannot continue to be placed on the shoulders of the local taxpayers.

Serving the District – Grant Money Coming to Us

I am excited to announce that over the past few months, I have been successful in securing money from various commonwealth departments for very worthwhile projects and programs in my 32nd Legislative District. It is extremely rewarding to lead the way to help the state invest in our local communities, which enables them to grow and provide much-needed services to my constituents.

- TruFood Manufacturing Inc. was approved for an \$850,000, 10-year term loan at a fixed 2 percent rate through North Side Industrial Development Co., to assist in the purchase and installation of new machinery and other equipment to be installed at the company's manufacturing facility on Gamma Drive in **O'Hara Township**. The project will enable the company to retain 440 jobs and create 85 full-time jobs within three years. The loan was made available through the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority program.

- The Commonwealth Financing Authority approved a \$50,000 grant for a Tiny Homes Community in **Penn Hills** to assist area homeless veterans. The Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard Inc. project will consist of 15 to 17 tiny homes, a community center, shared community garden, greenhouse, gathering pavilion, storm water retention pond and walking trail on a four-acre vacant site on Jefferson Road. The community center that will be part of the project will serve as a focal point where both residents and veterans can take classes, learn new workplace skills and come together for social events.

The grant was awarded by the Pennsylvania Gaming Economic Development and Tourism Fund Program, which was established to fund community and economic development projects in Allegheny County from revenue generated from the state's casinos.

- Communication will be better in **Blawnox Borough** thanks to a \$121,500 matching grant secured through the Department of Community and Economic Development's Early Intervention Program. The funds will be used to help pay for technological upgrades – information technology infrastructure purchases/ upgrades, hardware, software and professional services to improve communication throughout the borough.

- The Pennsylvania Department of Education awarded **Plum Borough School District** a \$60,000 grant to help pay and train school resource and police officers. The **Penn Hills School District** received a \$20,000 Safe Schools Equipment grant to help purchase the proper resources to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff.

The purpose of the Safe Schools Initiative Targeted Grants is to assist schools by providing funding for programs under their comprehensive safe school plans, which includes the planning and implementation of activities that prevent or reduce violence in the classroom.

- The Municipality of **Penn Hills** received a \$1 million grant through the state Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) to help fund its new Government Center being constructed on Duff Road at the former Penn Hebron Elementary School site.

The center will be the hub of **Penn Hills** government, housing municipal employees, the Police Department and Emergency Medical Services (ambulances). It will replace the existing structure on Frankstown Road that is very outdated, too small and riddled with maintenance problems that were too costly to repair and/or update. There is also a large training center being developed on the new site for the municipality's volunteer firefighters. Ground for the new Government Center was broken late last April and construction continued even through the winter so the targeted completion date is still summer 2018.

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony



Penn Hills Mayor Sara Kuhn (right) joined me at the official ribbon-cutting festivities at U-Pull-And-Pay (UPAP) at 250 Eastgate Drive (once East Hills Shopping Center) in Penn Hills. UPAP, now located in seven states, is a retail self-service used auto parts store. The Penn Hills site can stock over 1,600 used cars and trucks arranged in rows separated by manufacturer. Customers bring their own tools to remove any part of the vehicle for purchase. The Penn Hills facility is beautiful and a welcome addition to the community. Twenty-five individuals are employed at the nearly 22-acre site.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE TONY DELUCA

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Meet My Staff



District Chief of Staff (seated) Liza King and Legislative Assistants (standing from left) Marianne Scolieri, Cathy Mowry and Debbie McCarthy. In addition to being active in their communities in their free time, these very competent individuals staff my office Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. I am so proud of the quality of work my staff consistently provides daily to, and on behalf of, my thousands of constituents. If we can assist you with free notary service; filling out applications for state programs such as Property Tax/Rent Rebate; obtaining printed materials such as maps and brochures; PennDOT work; ordering birth and death certificates; or other state-related matters, feel free to stop by the office, 7205 Saltsburg Road in Penn Hills or call us at 412-793-2448.



Pride and Honor Vietnam Veteran Pinning Ceremony

I was honored to be able to participate in the Pride and Honor Vietnam Veteran Pinning Ceremony at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Southwestern Veterans Center



in the East End. During the event, over 70 Vietnam veterans who reside at the facility were recognized. I presented citations to them that I had specially drafted from the state House of Representatives recognizing their service. The veterans also received a Vietnam Veteran ball cap to which was attached a commemorative lapel pin.