

Rep. **Rob**
MATZIE
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

AMBRIDGE OFFICE:
1240 Merchant St.
Ambridge, PA 15003
(724) 266-7774
(412) 565-3569
Fax: (724) 266-7634

CAPITOL OFFICE:
121 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202016
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2016
(717) 787-4444
Fax: (717) 780-4772

Website: www.pahouse.com/Matzie

THE 16TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT SERVING BEAVER AND ALLEGHENY COUNTIES

Beaver County: City of Aliquippa; Boroughs of Ambridge, Baden, Conway, East Rochester, Economy, Freedom, Monaca, South Heights and Rochester; and the Townships of Harmony and Hopewell.

Allegheny County: Leetsdale Borough and Leet Township.

Matzie secures \$3 million for Monaca Gateway Project

A \$3 million grant awarded to the Monaca Gateway Initiative project will be used to improve more than 6,000 feet of State Route 18 and to construct a roundabout at the intersection of State Routes 18 and 51.

The community presented me with their vision, which I shared with state Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Dennis Davin, who endorsed the project.

I worked alongside Gov. Tom Wolf and Davin to secure the funding, in order to improve pedestrian and vehicle safety in our neighborhood. The grant is administered in cooperation with PennDOT through economic development funding.

I believe employment opportunities and infrastructure development are simultaneous. The project will reach to our industrial corridor on the Ohio River in Monaca while helping to alleviate current and future traffic issues on Routes 18 and 51. This is a huge win for Monaca and for Beaver County.

Everyone worked together to get this funding secured. It's a prime example of how state and local governments can get things done and effectively make a positive change.

This project adds to the more than \$100 million spent on state road projects over the past 10 years in and around the 16th District.



I joined Mayor Simon Short, DCED Secretary Dennis Darvin, and Governor Tom Wolf in addressing the community about the impact of the project.



Joined at the event by Governor Tom Wolf, DCED Secretary Dennis Davin, PennDOT District Executive Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, the leadership of Monaca and staff.

Message from Rep. Matzie

Dear Neighbors,

For the first time in a long time, we were able to pass a bipartisan budget on time.

The \$32.7 billion state spending plan, which I voted in favor of, emphasized strengthening education and career training in the commonwealth, while promoting school safety and attacking the opioid crises.

Education is extremely important to me, as I believe our children deserve good schools. Workers also need access to training, and high school students should have affordable options available to them upon graduation. While more can certainly be done, I'm pleased that there was a \$100 million increase in basic education funding, \$15 million more was allotted toward special education funding and we saw a \$25 million increase for early education. Another \$60 million will be used to address school safety.

Meanwhile, \$4.5 million in new funding to treat opioid addiction will provide an initiative for home-visiting services for up to 800 families affected by substance use.

While no budget is perfect, I believe this one adequately delivers the core functions of government while trying to live within our means as a commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Rob

Expanded School Breakfast Initiative for Beaver County children



More Beaver County students will start their day with a healthy breakfast under a new state funding initiative designed to help area schools set up or expand breakfast programs. The funding – part of the governor's School Breakfast Initiative – will provide nearly \$50,000 in funding to these 6 area school districts:

We've known for a long time that it's easier for kids to learn and retain information when they start the day with a decent breakfast. Making sure our area students have a healthy meal at the start of the day goes hand-in-hand with ensuring that we're providing them with energy to succeed in the classroom.

Ambridge Area SD – \$3,000
Beaver Valley IU – \$1,500
Central Valley SD – \$17,001
Hopewell Area SD – \$8,800
McGuire Memorial School – \$4,000
Rochester Area SD – \$14,980



I joined Pennsylvania Department of Education Executive Deputy Secretary Dr. David Volkman, along with Rep. Jim Marshall, Laura DelVecchio, Asst. Administrative Director of the BCCTC, David Wytiaz, Administrative Director of the BCCTC and Dr. Pete Carbone, Superintendent of the City of Aliquippa School District.

Early education grants awarded in 16th Legislative District

In July, the state Department of Education's Office of Child Development and Early Learning awarded the Ambridge Area School District and other entities that serve children in the district with grants to help create more pre-K seats and Head Start slots.

The competitive grants will help secure nearly 2,125 new pre-K seats and 490 new Head Start slots across the commonwealth. In addition to the Ambridge Area School District, the following entities that serve all school districts were among the 2018-19 recipients:

- Hap Enterprises Inc., a childcare center in Beaver County;
- Lifesteps Inc., a licensed nursery school operating in Armstrong, Beaver and Butler counties; and
- PIC of Westmoreland/Fayette Inc., for Head Start programs in Allegheny, Beaver, Fayette and Westmoreland counties.

Early childhood education programs give children a chance to grow, learn and compete to be successful.



Speaking in the House chamber in honor of Robert F. Kennedy.

Honoring the life of Robert F. Kennedy

A resolution I introduced, H.R. 951, was unanimously adopted by the House and commemorated the 50th anniversary of Robert F. Kennedy's assassination. The resolution was passed on June 6, the same day Kennedy died in 1968.

It was important that I honored a man who was a fierce advocate for social justice and civil rights during one of our country's most turbulent times.

Kennedy reminded us that without social justice and equality, all other victories are meaningless.

Here are other resolutions I've introduced that were adopted:

- **H.R. 649:** designated Feb. 2, 2018 as Rheumatoid Awareness Day in honor of approximately 2 million Americans living with the disease.
- **H.R. 676:** recognized March 11, 2018 as Charter Day in Pennsylvania. This resolution commemorates the charter that England's King Charles II granted William Penn on March 4, 1861, defining the land that is now Pennsylvania.
- **H.R. 726:** recognized the week of March 11 as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week.
- **H.R. 720:** designated March 11-17 as Sunshine Week in Pennsylvania and highlighted the importance of an open and accessible government.
- **H.R. 743:** declared April as Limb Loss Awareness Month in the state of Pennsylvania.
- **H.R. 863:** recognized May 1 as World Asthma Day in the commonwealth in an effort to raise awareness and improve asthma care.
- **H.R. 864:** designated May 12 as National Train Day in Pennsylvania to help educate the public about the rich history of trains and the advantages of rail travel.
- **H.R. 971:** recognized the week of June 18-24 as Pollinator Week in the state to highlight the role pollinators, such as honey bees, play in production of the state's food supply.

Fighting for fair reimbursement practices

As co-chairman of the state Community Pharmacy Caucus, I called attention to the unfair practice that has injured the state's taxpayers and consumers, while damaging the ability of local pharmacies to purchase prescription medications.

I believe that pharmacy benefit managers are overcharging patients and taxpayers, possibly by millions, and are trying to drive local pharmacies out of business in order to fatten their own bottom lines.

Pharmacy benefit managers negotiate with drug companies and insurers to help define which drugs are covered by health insurance plans. They also set drug reimbursement rates for community and chain pharmacies.

I applaud state Auditor General Eugene DePasquale for his efforts in agreeing to investigate the pharmacy benefit managers involved in these practices.

Hearings are now taking place around the commonwealth through the fall.



My bill would create commission to review impact of potential plant closures

As co-chairman of the House Nuclear Energy Caucus, I have introduced legislation that would create a commission to review any potential adverse impacts of deactivating coal and nuclear electric plants before making decisions on whether to close those plants.

The proposed commission would be required to render final statewide decisions concerning deactivations – and would require the owner of a coal-fired plant to remediate the facility and the surrounding area in order to receive approval to deactivate.

The legislation is both worker- and industry-focused. It would provide notifications to the employees of a closure, set minimum requirements for severance payments and stipulate the continuation of health care benefits.

The group would be made up of affected employees, business owners and other stakeholders. I believe we need state oversight of Pennsylvania-based coal or nuclear energy facility deactivations in order to assess the economic, electricity reliability and environmental impacts these deactivations could have should they occur.

To be clear: I support an all-encompassing energy portfolio and I hope that the Beaver Valley Power Station 1 and the Bruce Mansfield Power Plant remain in operation to ensure energy reliability and that family-sustaining jobs continue in our region.

Local school districts receive Pennsylvania Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program awards

Nearly 200 elementary schools across the commonwealth have been selected for grants totaling almost \$5 million to provide students with fresh fruits and vegetables during the school day.

The program's goals are to create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices, expand the variety of fruits and vegetables in students' dietary experience, increase fruit and vegetable consumption, and positively impact students' present and future health.

The local grant awards were:

- Aliquippa SD – Aliquippa Elementary School – \$33,744
- Ambridge Area SD – Ambridge Elementary School – \$23,920
- Rochester Area SD – Rochester Area Elementary School – \$17,704

I applaud these school districts' efforts to incorporate and promote healthy eating.



Celebrating the opening of Beemac Trucking's Driver and Training Recruiting Center in Harmony Township with Beaver County Commissioner Dan Camp; Richard Macklin, Beemac CEO; Loren Dworakowski, Beemac president; and state Sen. Elder Vogel, Jr., 47th District.



Meeting with Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Dennis Davin, Mayor Simon Short and Borough Manager Mario Leone to review the Monaca Gateway Initiative project.

Foresight on sports betting in the commonwealth

As you may know, sports betting is now legal in the commonwealth. I fought hard last year to ensure that language from my sports-betting bill was included in the 2017 gaming legislation signed into law by the governor, so that Pennsylvania would be competitively positioned to offer sports betting when it became legal.

In May, I wrote a letter to the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board commending them on their swift action in approving temporary regulations that moved our state closer to offering sports betting. Though the path is clear for casinos to offer sports betting, several of them have yet to apply for a license. Competition is everything, and I'm hopeful that once one casino starts to offer sports betting, the others will fall into line.

Aliquippa to Monaca rail freight project awarded \$3.8 million



A \$3.8 million grant was awarded to Shell Chemical Appalachia LLC to construct 10 miles of track from Aliquippa to Monaca in Beaver County. The new track will be used to transport construction materials for Shell's plant and outbound product from the completed plant.

In total, Beaver County and southwestern Pennsylvania have been awarded more than \$14 million through the Rail Freight Assistance Program and the Rail Transportation Program. Grants like these are imperative to retaining and creating jobs, and have a positive effect on the economy.

As Democratic chairman of the House Transportation Committee's Subcommittee on Rail, I was pleased to see these rail projects funded throughout the commonwealth, including in our own backyard in southwestern Pennsylvania.

These projects also will help reduce truck traffic and increase safety on our local roads.

Update on Big Sewickley Creek Road bridge replacement

While road and bridge construction projects are necessary to ensure safe and efficient travel, they have an unfortunate impact on our businesses and residents.

The last decade has seen multiple bridge replacements on Big Sewickley Creek Road, State Route 4036. While these are needed improvements, the impact of another long-term closure and detour for residents, businesses and emergency personnel led me to reach out to PennDOT, seeking an alternative to a long-term closure of the road.

As a result, the bridge will be bid as a "design-build" project and will give the prospective contractors two construction options. The first is to maintain a single lane of alternating traffic during construction, using temporary signals. The second is to allow the contractor to close the road for no longer than two weeks to replace the bridge in an accelerated manner.

It is my hope that these options will allow contractors to bid on the option that best suits their strengths to get the best value for the project, while effectively minimizing impacts to the local community.

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2020. Once the project is under contract, a public meeting will be held to inform municipalities, local residents and business owners of the anticipated impacts and schedule for the project.

House passes Matzie-sponsored bill that would limit use of Automatic License Plate Readers

Earlier this year, the House passed H.B. 1811, of which I was prime co-sponsor, which would limit use of Automated License Plate Reader Systems to law enforcement purposes.

ALPRs are systems that combine mobile or fixed high-speed cameras with computer algorithms that convert images of registration plates into computer-readable data. States, counties and local agencies use the data for law enforcement.

While ALPRs provide vital data, controls are needed to protect motorists' personal information. I have previously voiced concerns over the sale of data collected by the state Transportation Department and have introduced legislation to prohibit third parties from selling such information. I fear that without proper regulation, data generated by ALPR systems may be sold to, or shared with, third parties, compromising motorists' privacy.

I have been leading the fight to protect personal data – in any form – for many years. While ALPR data is a valuable and necessary tool for law enforcement, the consequences of that data falling into the wrong hands can be devastating and can ruin lives. It is critical to protect that information.

In addition to limiting ALPR use to law enforcement purposes, the bill I support would provide that government entities may not sell or distribute captured data. It would also set time limits for the destruction of captured data and establish other safeguards.



STATE REP. ROBERT F. "ROB" MATZIE
 P.O. Box 202016
 Harrisburg, PA 17120-2016

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INSIDE:

- Fighting for fair reimbursement practices
- Expanded School Breakfast Initiative
- Resolutions I've introduced

STAY INFORMED!

If you would like to be kept informed via email about what is going on in Harrisburg and in the district, visit www.pahouse.com/Matzie and click on Email Me to sign up.

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Matzie's office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial aid 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
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Getting answers to your Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- PACE/PACENET prescription-drug cards for senior citizens



My legislation would allow voting by mail in Pennsylvania

In an effort to increase voter participation, cut election costs and reduce voter fraud, I introduced H.B. 1546, which would permit any eligible Pennsylvania voter to have the option of casting their ballot by mail.

As elected representatives in state government, I believe it is our duty to find ways to make voting for our constituents easier, more accessible and more secure. One of those ways, as other states have shown, is to allow any eligible voter to cast their ballot for any and every election by mail.

Currently, 22 states have provisions allowing certain elections to be conducted entirely by mail, and three of those states – Oregon, Washington and Colorado – hold all elections entirely by mail. California began holding all-mail elections this year.

My bill would direct the Department of State and the commonwealth's county election boards to establish a vote-by-mail system in Pennsylvania. Voters would only have to request a mail-in ballot once, and then would be sent ballots for every subsequent election unless they opted out.

This bill also calls for measures to monitor and ensure voter and ballot integrity, a thorough review and updating of voter rolls, and it prescribes penalties for fraud.