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State Representative | 21st Legislative District

SARA INNAMORATO



THE STATE BUDGET IS A MORAL DOCUMENT

The Pennsylvania state budget outlines where and how we spend our revenue, but it's more than just simple accounting. As a document, it reflects our priorities, our values and our positions as a state.

There is a human cost, a human story and a human being impacted by every item in the state budget.

This year, my first in office as your representative, I voted 'no' on our state budget.

I could not support a state budget that, in a time of surplus, turns its back on our most vulnerable citizens in their time of need by eliminating the General Assistance program. Nor

could I support a budget that did not include a raise in the minimum wage for our working families, or a budget that strips funding from environmental protection programs.

With every vote, I remember why I ran: to give every one of my neighbors a seat at the table in Harrisburg. Although the state budget has been passed, the legislature has a lot of unfinished business that we will address later this year. I want to assure you that I will be there, advocating for our communities and our priorities, and working to solve the issues that are impacting our families and neighborhoods.

Together, we can make a difference.



MODERNIZING THE VOTE IN PENNSYLVANIA

In June, Pennsylvania marked the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which ultimately gave women the right to vote.

Voting is a precious right, and in the century since the 19th Amendment, we have made great strides toward ensuring that everyone's voice is heard at the ballot box. However, society has changed a lot since 1919, and it is time that we update our voting and voting registration laws to keep pace.

Participatory government demands equal access to participation, which is why I have joined my fellow legislators in introducing legislation calling for automatic voter registration, no excuse absentee voting, same day voter registration and campaign finance reform.

Pennsylvania has 8.6 million registered voters, but less than 55 percent of voting-age citizens turned out in the 2018 midterm elections, with varying reasons impeding participation, including work, illness, and other unforeseen circumstances. Research shows higher voter turnout in states that have enacted some or all of the reforms we are seeking.

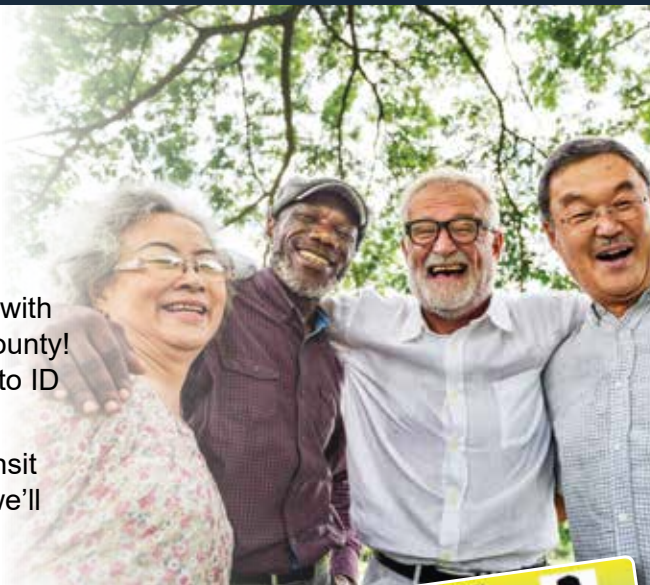
The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy, and we need to be removing barriers to participation, not erecting new ones. These are the first steps in the fight for a fair, secure democracy in our commonwealth and our communities.

SENIOR BUS PASSES NOW AVAILABLE!

Your dedicated district office staff is trained and ready to provide you with the new senior bus passes through the Port Authority of Allegheny County! This new card replaces your blue or yellow pass with a four-year photo ID ConnectCard and allows seniors to travel on public transit for free.

Ready to get your own? Bring your identification and any existing transit passes to our office to snap a quick picture, fill out a form, and then we'll call you two weeks later to come retrieve your new pass.

There's no rush: You can still use your Medicare card or existing pass until Jan. 1, but we're ready to help anytime.





COMBATting OPIOID ADDICTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

One of the most challenging issues affecting our community is the opioid crisis. As someone who lost a family member to addiction, I know and understand from personal experience the struggle that many families in our communities are facing.

Whether it's fighting to preserve programs that help folks in recovery while I'm in Harrisburg or hosting naloxone distribution and trainings in our communities on how to save lives, I am dedicated to ensuring that those who need help in our community receive it.

Addiction is impossible to defeat alone. By working together and harnessing the power of our friends, families and community, we can save lives and help end this crisis in Pennsylvania.

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Crisis center receives state support

I'm so proud to share that our neighbors at the Crisis Center North (CCN) were awarded a grant through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Crisis Center North's mission is to empower victims of domestic violence and cultivate community attitudes and behaviors that break the cycle of violence.

CCN has provided services to the community for 40 years. The center provides a 24-hour hotline

(412) 364-5556, where individuals can access supportive counseling, information referral, and a connection to CCN's 24-hour in-person advocacy services. Beyond this, CCN offers counseling services, medical advocacy, case management, legal advocacy, and educational programming.

Lending state support to organizations like this provides necessary resources and funding that directly improves the lives of our residents in their most vulnerable hour.

Neighborhood affordable housing redevelopment receives funding

A project to rebuild a spate of fire-damaged properties in Polish Hill, and renovate three additional homes in central Lawrenceville, has been selected to receive state housing support funding.

The Lawrenceville Corp.'s Community Land Trust Phase 3, which would create eight affordable housing units and rehabilitate three other structures, was selected to receive \$120,000. The project location in Polish

Hill has been vacant since a fire destroyed several structures on the site in 2007.

When we can take a fire-ravaged property and restore it to provide housing and benefits for the entire community, that's a good thing. Projects like these help restore our communities, while ensuring that existing homeowners and community members can continue to live in the neighborhoods where they have built their lives.

WORKING TO ENSURE YOUR ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

In June, UPMC and Highmark agreed to a new 10-year deal that ensures that most people with Highmark insurance will have access to UPMC facilities for the immediate future. This agreement was only possible because thousands of senior citizens, cancer patients, family members and others made their voices heard, and cried out against UPMC closing its doors to people across the region.

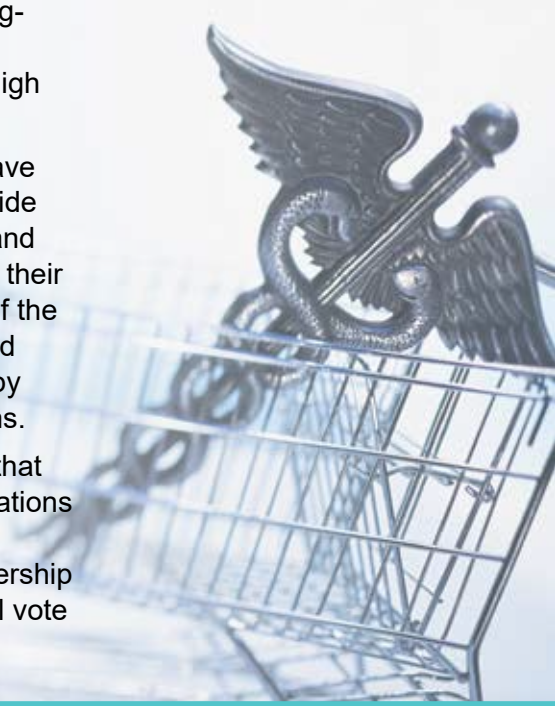
This agreement will alleviate – but not solve – the issues that have caused fear and concern for the millions of people who have been caught up in this dispute.

While this is a win for the people of western Pennsylvania in terms of preserving access to health care in

the short term, we still need a long-term solution to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to high quality, affordable health care.

Non-profit hospitals should not have the power to single-handedly decide where patients can access care and whether they can continue to see their trusted doctors. The simple fact of the matter is that people's lives should not be used as bargaining chips by nonprofit health care organizations.

There is legislation in the House that would prevent these types of situations in the future, and I have and will continue to call upon House leadership to bring it to the chamber for a full vote as soon as possible.



Historic mural preservation project receives state support

A project to preserve a one-of-a-kind artistic masterpiece in Millvale was selected in June to receive a state grant.

The \$25,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission will allow the Society to Preserve the Millvale Murals of Maxo Vanka to conduct a comprehensive study of the murals, the church in which they are housed, and the murals' future requirements for preservation and presentation.

The murals of Maxo Vanka are a one-of-a-kind artistic treasure to our region and the world. I am proud to have supported the society's grant application, and applaud the state's decision to help preserve these vibrant, passionate and striking works of art.

Created between the years of 1937 and 1941, the 25 murals are unique, evocative and larger-than-life representations of faith and family; the immigrant experience in America; social justice and injustice, and the horrors of war. They are housed on the walls of St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church and are widely considered some of the best examples of the nation's mural art movement of the early 20th Century.

Although more than 75 years old, Vanka's work speaks to many of the social issues we continue to grapple with today, and are a fascinating fusion of faith, art and social justice that continues to inspire.

IN THE COMMUNITY



In an effort to connect with everyday transit users, earlier this year I hosted a town hall on a Port Authority bus during its regular route.



Throughout this year, we've been visiting senior centers and retirement communities to connect with seniors and help them engage with state programs and the legislative process.



Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to tour Shaler Middle School and Scott Primary. It's wonderful to see their investment in students, especially in the areas of anti-bullying, mental health, ESL and STEM.



As your state representative, I was delighted to host an open house for my new district office this year.



Ronnie Lopez from your district office recently celebrated the Latino Family Center's 10th Anniversary and presented the organization with a certificate of appreciation for all of the work it does for our community.



In April, I co-sponsored a town hall meeting on the legislative process and issues affecting our region with Pittsburgh Councilwoman Deb Gross.

MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance 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
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Health and Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)

- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – 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
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Information about federal, state and local government agencies

If you need help with any state or government-related services, please feel free to contact my office at (412) 781-2750 for assistance.



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DON'T MISS MY UPCOMING EVENTS!

Sept. 29 | Veterans' Symposium with Rep. Jake Wheatley Duquesne University | 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Connect and engage with 30 national, regional and local veteran non-profit organizations concerning services and benefits.

Plus, interact with local and state government officials on veterans' concerns and issues, and learn about state programs and legislation specific to veterans.

This resource fair and town hall is a great opportunity for veterans and their families to learn about and connect with resources related to jobs, health and overall well-being.

Oct. 18 | Senior Wellness Fair with Rep. Adam Ravenstahl Ross Township Community Center | 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mark your calendars! Join us this fall for flu shots, blood pressure screenings, wellness activities, and more!