



State Representative

Bob Merski

2nd Legislative District

Capitol Office:

103A East Wing
P.O. Box 202002
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2002
(717) 787-4358
Fax: (717) 780-4774

District Office:

3901 Liberty St.
Erie, PA 16509
(814) 455-6319
Fax: (814) 455-6593

Summit Office:

Summit Township Municipal Bldg.
1230 Townhall Road W.
Erie, PA 16509
Tuesday & Thursday ONLY
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Honored to be your voice in Harrisburg

As we begin our first term, I wanted to thank you for placing your trust in me to serve you in Harrisburg. Public service has been my life's calling. From a school teacher to elected office, service to the Erie community has been important to me. As we move forward, I wanted to recognize the amazing example of a public servant that the late Rep. Flo Fabrizio has been for this community. While we can never fill his shoes, we hope to build upon his legacy of faithful service to the people of the 2nd legislative district.

Our office is here to serve you. I am very pleased with the team we have assembled. Everyone who wanted to stay from Rep. Fabrizio's staff is with us, and we have some new faces to assist you as well. Additionally, we are expanding our district outreach, serving Erie and serving you right in your neighborhood. You can count on us to put you first for all of your state-related concerns.

In the months ahead, as we work to represent you, we want to hear from you. It's important to listen to your thoughts and concerns, so that we truly represent your voice in Harrisburg.

I believe we need to place people first, over special interests, as part of our Plan4PA. In that regard, some of my legislative priorities will include:

- Further **strengthening our schools** to ensure that our kids receive the best possible start, from strong early education programs to comprehensive STEM and computer science training.
- Bolstering **apprenticeships and other job training programs** that will help our region's young job seekers build the lifelong skills they need for good-paying, family-sustaining jobs.
- Making sure residents have access to **quality, affordable health care** and that no resident – and especially no senior – ever has to choose between paying for food and paying for prescription drugs.
- Finding new ways to tackle the opioid and heroin **addiction crises** that affect so many in our community.
- Working to pass legislation that ensures workers receive a **living wage** – one

that enables them to support a family and contribute back to the economy.

- Bringing **tax dollars back to the district** to enrich our school curricula; create job training opportunities for residents; and fund infrastructure improvements that address blight and attract businesses, investors and consumers.
- Ensuring that our **veterans and seniors**, who are the backbone of our community, have the resources and services they need to thrive.

Service is the heart of what we do. Our district office staff and I are here to help YOU, whether you have questions or need help navigating state programs or services, would like assistance completing applications for benefits or services, or simply want to express your thoughts or concerns about a state or local issue. Our door is open, and we'll be listening!



Mark your calendar for our open house April 11!

Our office is moving, and to welcome everyone to our new digs, we'll be hosting an open house!

The event will be held from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. **Thursday, April 11**, at our **new office location: 3901 Liberty St., Erie, PA 16509**. I'm looking forward to meeting you and hearing your thoughts on how we can make life in our community even better! Light refreshments will be served.

In addition to our district office, which is open 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. every Monday through Friday, I'd like to remind you that we have a satellite office in Summit Township.

That office is open from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday and is located in the Summit Township Municipal Building, 1230 Townhall Road W., Erie, PA 16509.

Finally, you can visit us from 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. on the first Wednesday of every month at Erie City Hall, located at 626 State St., and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month at GECAC W. Senior Center, 1210 W. 8th St. It's a pleasure to serve you!



In Harrisburg and Around the District



Visiting with Sister Rita Brocke, who was instrumental in planning and developing McClelland Park when she ministered at House of Mercy.

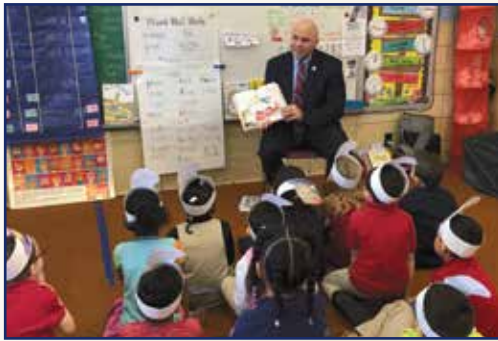


Honoring the young men of the Order of DeMolay's Erie Chapter.



With the late Victoria, the inspiration for the state bill to ban puppy mills.

Right: Sharing my love for reading with first-graders at Grover Cleveland Elementary School.



Below: Speaking with a constituent at our Home Heating Workshop.



Above: With my lovely wife, Emily, at the governor's inauguration.

Left: An excellent visit to Plumber's Local 27 to discuss apprenticeship programs.



Above: At the new JOY Senior Center ribbon cutting.

Left: State Rep. Pat Harkins (far left) and I recently toured the training facilities of the Steamfitters Local 449 and Sheet Metal Workers Local 12.



State Rep. Jordan Harris discussing the "Clean Slate Law" he co-authored, at the "Second Chance Expo." This was a well-attended and successful event.

See how our office can help!

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Help with 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 Health and Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature, including bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps and senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery

More than \$1 million in grants will enrich educational resources, job opportunities for local residents

It's wonderful to see our district receive grants that will enhance programs and services for residents. The following recent grants totaling nearly \$1.4 million will enhance job training opportunities and educational programs for residents in our district:

- **\$500,000** that will allow the Erie City School District to provide the foundation for a K-12 computer science college and career pathway for more than 11,000 students throughout 16 schools.
- **\$460,000** through five grants – all part of the PAsmart initiative – to connect students and other area job seekers in the northwest region with employers in the advanced manufacturing, plastics, and building and construction industries, with a major focus on apprenticeships.
- **\$157,160** to a local workforce development board that will give students from low-income families a chance to explore career pathways in the manufacturing and health care industries.
- **\$141,900** to a northwest Pennsylvania employment and training program that will help working families retain jobs by providing reliable transportation assistance.
- **\$83,122** from the state Department of Labor and Industry that will give Erie County students a chance to benefit from paid summer internships.
- **\$70,000** to the Erie City School District and Erie Rise Leadership Academy Charter School to fund the necessary training and equipment to bring computer science to the curricula.

In addition to these grants, I'm thrilled to report that more than 650 higher education students received nearly **\$2 million** in state grant aid for the 2018-19 school year.

My bill to help unsung heroes



It's fair to say that most Pennsylvanians deeply appreciate the sacrifices made by our military members, whether they're serving here or abroad, and whether they're on active duty or are veterans.

Often overlooked, however, are the non-military spouses who provide aid and support to their husbands and wives in uniform. These "unsung heroes" often make significant sacrifices – particularly when they live with their service-member spouses who are deployed outside the commonwealth. Under these circumstances, non-military spouses often face repeated career interruptions and other challenges related to raising a family as their military spouses are re-deployed to different locations.

In the near future, I'll be introducing legislation that will make life easier for these non-military spouses by providing them with a tax benefit already available to active-duty military members.

Under state law, Pennsylvania residents who are active-duty service members are exempt from paying taxes on income earned for their military service while on active duty outside Pennsylvania. Active-duty service members are also exempt from paying local earned-income taxes on their active-duty service pay, regardless of whether their service occurs outside or inside Pennsylvania.

Currently, neither of these exemptions apply to non-military residents who are living with their active-duty service member spouses deployed outside of Pennsylvania. My legislation would correct these disparities in our state law by extending both tax exclusions to non-military spouses in this situation. It's my hope that the bill would make life easier for these Pennsylvanians who provide such important companionship and support to their family members in uniform.



A look at my committee assignments

I'm excited to report that I have been appointed to serve on the following committees.

- **Game and Fisheries.** This committee reviews bills that affect the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission. Both are independent entities that rely on licensing and use fees for a significant portion of their funding.
- **Gaming Oversight.** This committee works with the state Gaming Control Board to evaluate bills that affect gaming in Pennsylvania, rules for casinos and the use of gaming proceeds.
- **Urban Affairs and Local Government.** This committee reviews bills that pertain to cities and counties of the first, second and third class, while the **Local Government Committee** reviews bills that affect counties, cities, boroughs and townships.

In addition to the aforementioned committees, I sit on the House Democratic Policy Committee, which is addressing issues such as fair school funding, "toxic" poverty that reaches across generations and impacts public health, and substance use disorder and its link to mental health issues.

Finally, I have been elected treasurer of the Democratic Caucus' Northwest Delegation, a position I hope will give me a chance to further strengthen Erie's voice in Harrisburg.



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Rolling up our sleeves (and reaching across the aisle) to work out a fair budget

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I attended Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget address. As I listened to the governor’s proposals for the 2019-20 budget, I was encouraged by his focus on education.

As a former teacher for more than 20 years, I’ve seen firsthand the impact of a strong pre-K through grade 12 program that instills fundamental concepts at an early age. I’ve seen how providing the right start in life promotes self-confidence, leads to better grades and puts kids on the path to achievement.

I was also encouraged by proposals to bolster career education programs and workforce training initiatives. Programs such as apprenticeships help regional industries grow more competitive while providing non-traditional students the skills training they need to compete for good, family-sustaining jobs.

Importantly, the proposed budget calls for no new taxes. Hardworking families – whose tax dollars already fund so many essential programs and services – should not be forced to shoulder new financial burdens.

Of course, the governor’s proposals are just a starting point. Now come the negotiations, as we roll up our sleeves and work to achieve a budget that’s fair and efficient and works for the benefit of all Pennsylvanians. Fortunately, there’s plenty of room for bipartisan agreement, and I plan to reach across the aisle as we work to iron out the details. As I do so, be assured that the needs and interests of Erie’s working families will be my top priority.



HANDY NUMBERS FOR LOCAL INFORMATION

Our office is ready to assist you with any state-related matter. You may also find the following numbers helpful for assistance with local matters.



County of Erie
(814) 451-6000
Website: www.eriecountypa.gov

City of Erie
Citizen Response Hotline:
(814) 870-1111
Police non-emergency:
(814) 870-1125
Public Works after-hours emergency: (814) 870-1340
Website: www.erie.pa.us

Millcreek Township
Board of Supervisors: (814) 833-1111
Police Department: (814) 838-9515
Public Works: (814) 833-4527
Website: www.millcreektownship.com

Summit Township
1230 Townhall Road, West • Suite 100
Erie, PA 16509
(814) 868-9686
Website: www.summittownship.com

Magisterial District Judges

City of Erie

Hon. Timothy S. Beveridge – 6th Ward
1571 West 38th Street
Erie, PA 16508-2348
(814) 451-6520

Hon. Tom Carney – 3rd Ward and part of 4th Ward
809 West 12th Street
Erie, PA 16501
(814) 451-6528

Hon. Sue Mack – 4th Ward, Districts 1 and 6 - West of State Street, North and 3rd Street to Walnut, then North of 4th Street to Cranberry.
824 East 6th Street
Erie, PA 16507-1808
(814) 451-6524

Summit Township
Hon. Brian McGowan
1230 West Townhall Suite 300
Erie, PA 16509
(814) 451-6532

Belle Valley
Hon. Susan Strohmeier
9333 Tate Road Suite 109
Erie, PA 16509
(814) 451-6511