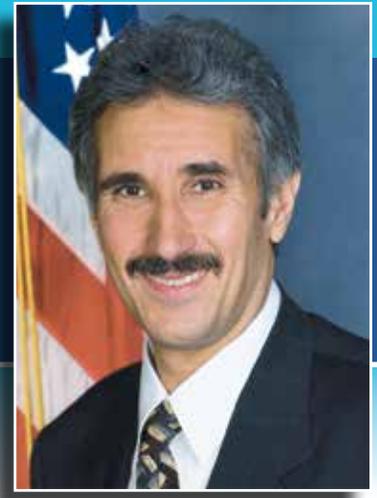


Rep. Chris

Sainato

Senior Report



Capitol Office: 326 Main Capitol Building • P.O. Box 202009 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009 • (717) 772-2436

District Office: Z-Penn Building • 20 S. Mercer St. • New Castle, PA 16101 • (724) 656-1112 • Toll free: 1-800-866-2215

Website: www.pahouse.com/sainato • Email: csainato@pahouse.net

Working for you at home and in Harrisburg

Ensuring that our seniors have access to the best programs and services is an important part of my job. Equally important, though, is making sure that the laws we pass in Harrisburg reflect their needs and interests.

As you can see from the graphic below, 2019 was a productive year. Some of the bills I'm co-sponsoring would directly benefit our community's seniors. Here's a brief look



at several of them. (Bear in mind that these proposals are bills and would have to be passed by the legislature before they became laws.)

- **Expanded Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.** These bills would expand the income limit for property owners from \$35,000 to \$40,000 and would allow federal civil service retirees receiving a Social Security substitute pension to deduct 50% of their income for purposes of qualifying.
- **Tax credit in exchange for volunteer service.** The bill would allow townships, boroughs and municipalities to provide a tax credit for seniors in exchange for volunteer service.
- **Exclusion of savings bonds from being counted toward income.** This bill would exempt proceeds from the cashing of savings bonds from being counted toward income when seniors 65 or older apply for lottery-funded programs such as prescription drug assistance and Property Tax/Rent Rebate.
- **Exclusion of Social Security cost-of-living increase being counted toward Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.** This bill would reinstate a Social Security COLA moratorium so that an increase does not prevent seniors from qualifying for the program.

I'll continue working to pass these measures and others – including my bill that would extend a property tax exemption for certain disabled veterans to their surviving spouses.

It's going to be a great year!

Income limits raised on some senior prescription assistance programs

The income limits to qualify for one of PA's senior prescription assistance programs have been increased since my last Senior Report.

For the PACE program, guidelines remain the same. Total income must be \$14,500 or less for single people and \$17,700 or less for married couples.

For the PACENET program, however, the upper limits are now higher. Single people can qualify if their income is between \$14,500 and \$27,500 (up from \$23,500), and married couples can qualify if their income is between

\$17,700 and \$35,500 (up from \$31,500).

As before, eligibility is determined by the previous calendar year's income, and Social Security Medicare Part B premiums are excluded. Applicants must be 65 or older, Pennsylvania residents for at least 90 days prior to the date of application, and not enrolled in the Department of Human Services' Medicaid prescription benefit.

To learn more about these programs – and about the PACE Plus Medicare program – please call my office at (724) 656-1112.



The Union Township Lions Club Annual Balloon Quest Breakfast provided fun, food and good fellowship.



The Moravia Presbyterian Church Fall Festival featured great food and terrific company!



It was an honor to join my colleague, Rep. Parke Wentling, and Westminster College President Kathy Richardson to present a House of Representatives citation to Eugene DeCaprio for his dedication to Westminster College and his community service in Lawrence County.



I was proud to present the New Castle Area Honor Guard with a House of Representatives citation for their 25 years of service to Lawrence County.



The Holy Spirit Parish Easterfest at Mary Mother of Hope Hall in New Castle drew a huge crowd, thanks to the many amazing volunteers!



The Freedom Fair Fireworks Festival in New Castle provided outstanding food, live music, entertainment and a chance to chat with wonderful folks in the community.

CHECK OUT THESE SENIOR DISCOUNTS!

A reminder that Pennsylvania seniors are eligible for a wide range of discounts. Just call or stop by my district office for help with any of these offers – or learn more by visiting the sites listed below!

■ **Car registration.** Retirees 62 or older whose income from all sources does not exceed \$19,200 may be eligible to register their car for just \$10. To learn more, visit PennDOT at www.dmv.pa.gov and search the phrase “retired status registration.”

■ **Auto insurance.** Under Pennsylvania law, drivers 55 or older are eligible to receive a 5-percent discount on their vehicle insurance by completing the Basic Mature Driver Improvement Course. To learn more, visit www.dmv.pa.gov and search the phrase “mature driver improvement.”

■ **Hunting licenses.** Residents 65 or older can purchase a one-year hunting license for \$13.90 and a lifetime license for \$51.90. To learn more, visit the Pennsylvania Game Commission at www.pgc.pa.gov and search the phrase “resident senior hunting license.”

■ **Fishing licenses.** Residents 65 or older can purchase a one-year fishing license for \$11.90 and a lifetime license for \$51.90. To see additional senior fishing license discounts, visit www.fishandboat.com and search “2020 fishing licenses.”

■ **Dental care.** Many dentists who are members of our state dental association participate in the Senior Dental Care Program, offering reduced rates to seniors. According to the Department of Health, more than 1,700 dentists participate statewide. Ask your dentist if he or she participates in the program.

■ **Camping at state parks.** Seniors 62 or older receive a discounted campsite price. To learn more, visit the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources at www.dcnr.pa.gov and search the phrase “discounts to campsite price.”

The Department of Aging offers a comprehensive online guide to state services and benefits for seniors. Visit www.aging.pa.gov and search “benefits and rights.”

Remember these tips to steer clear of scammers

According to the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, older Americans lose about \$2.9 billion each year to scammers. Although the schemes have grown more sophisticated over time, knowledge and a little vigilance still go a long way in staying safe. Here are some tips to remember:

■ *Don't assume the name listed on caller ID is legitimate.* Scammers commonly use “caller ID spoofing” technology to make it appear that they are calling from a government agency such as the IRS or Social Security Administration, a credit card company or another legitimate organization.

■ *Remember that the IRS will never call, text or email you demanding immediate payment or personal information.* Likewise, Medicare and Social Security will never call to ask for your Social Security number or bank account information or to tell you that your Social Security number has been suspended.

■ *Don't fall prey to fear tactics.* Scammers often attempt to pressure a caller by impersonating agency or law enforcement officials. In a recent scheme, scammers told callers that their Social Security numbers had been compromised and that the information was being used to open credit cards in their names to make payments to terrorists. The callers were then pressured to provide payments to avoid an arrest.

Scammers also attempt to prey on a senior's fears by calling to claim that their grandchild has been arrested for an offense such as drunken driving and needs money for bail or attorney fees to help get them released.

■ *Be cautious when receiving unsolicited offers – particularly those involving an advance fee.* Common schemes involve the caller requesting an up-front fee for collecting sweepstakes winnings or providing services such as tech support, home improvement, financial advice, mortgage modification, prepaid funerals and other services.

■ *Be alert to genetic testing scams.* Scammers sometimes attempt to gain access to Medicare information by pretending to offer free genetic testing. Don't accept any test kits in the mail unless they were ordered by your doctor, and don't agree to any free testing at community events. Check your Medicare summary of benefits for the words “gene analysis” or “molecular pathology,” which could indicate questionable genetic testing.

■ *Never give out or confirm personal or financial information in response to a call or contact you did not initiate!*

■ *Report scams.* If you fear you've been a victim of financial fraud, report it promptly by calling the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Elder Abuse Helpline at 1-866-623-2137 or the Bureau of Consumer Protection at 1-800-441-2555.

On a related note, you can also add yourself to the state's Do-Not-Call list by calling 1-888-777-3406. The law in this area was strengthened recently so that phone numbers registered with the state database no longer have to be re-registered every five years.



STATE REP. CHRIS SAINATO

326 Main Capitol Building
P.O. Box 202009
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009

lpo.ad.0120

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
- Birth and death certificate issues with the Department of Health
- Department of Human Services issues such as 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
- Inquiries about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Issues with insurance companies
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program problems or questions
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens

Any issue with state government!

Are you getting your fresh fruits and vegetables?

As we age, the nutrients and fiber provided by fresh fruits and vegetables are more important than ever. Thanks to Pennsylvania's Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, seniors of all incomes can afford these diet essentials.

The program provides fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs from approved farmers markets in Pennsylvania. To qualify, seniors must be age 60 or older by Dec. 31 of the program year and must meet income eligibility guidelines.

Recipients receive a list of participating farmers and farmers' markets, where they can redeem checks for fresh fruits and vegetables.

To learn more and find out whether you qualify, call the Department of Agriculture at (717) 772-2693, the Lawrence County Area Agency on Aging at (724) 658-3729 or my office at (724) 656-1112. We can also help you apply!

HELPING FAMILIES IN NEED BEAT THE CHILL

With winter in full swing, remember that the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help eligible residents pay their heating bills and deal with heating emergencies such as broken furnaces, fuel shortages or utility service shutoffs. Grants are sent directly to the utility or service provider and do not need to be repaid.

To learn more visit the Department of Human Services at www.dhs.pa.gov and search "LIHEAP," or contact my office at (724) 656-1112. My staff can also help you apply!

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM INCOME
1	\$18,735
2	\$25,365
3	\$31,995
4	\$38,625
5	\$45,255
6	\$51,885
7	\$58,515
8	\$65,145
9	\$71,775
10	\$78,405



EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON: ADD \$6,630