



STATE REPRESENTATIVE MIKE ZABEL

163RD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Summer 2020

HERE TO SERVE YOU AT TWO LOCATIONS

My office and staff are ready to help you. If you have any state-related concerns or if you cannot reach an unemployment compensation official about a claim, we can help. **Call us to set up an appointment, or email my staff at RepZabel@pahouse.net.**

Drexel Hill office

5248 Township Line Rd.
Drexel Hill, PA 19026
(484) 200-8262

Clifton Heights office

236 West Baltimore Ave.
Clifton Heights, PA 19018
(484) 200-1563

Dear Neighbor,

The last few months have been unlike any other time during my lifetime. My patience has been tried – my nerve tested. We have experienced the highest unemployment figures since the Great Depression. Our nation has officially entered a recession.

In the first six months of the year, the emergence of COVID-19 has changed everything about our lives. Schools and day cares closed throughout our country. Workers have been furloughed and jobs have been permanently lost. Many of our favorite traditions, such as Memorial Day parades and baseball, have been canceled or put on hold.

Like many of you, I worry about my loved ones, hoping my children and wife remain healthy and safe. I worry about my friends and neighbors who have been laid off.

Yet, there is reason for hope.

- I look at my family members and their coworkers, who risk contracting COVID-19 while they continue to work long hours as health care professionals in an effort to help as many residents, neighbors and strangers as they can.
- I look at my neighbors who have helped organize food drives and meal delivery services for no other reason than their desire to help people who are hurting.
- I look at the hundreds of people who participated in a food drive to restock Delaware County food pantries, donating as much as they could afford.

People in our community continue to step up during this time of need. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, know you are not alone. Reach out to my office if you are experiencing an issue with any state-related program. My staff has already helped process more than 600 unemployment claims. We have compiled a resource guide – www.bit.ly/zabelresourceguide – to help people find the services they need with direction on how to navigate common online issues.

On my worst days, I try to remind myself, these days filled with uncertainty and stress will eventually pass. In the coming months, life will eventually return to normal. We all feel a heavy burden right now, but better days will return.



1. Thank you to the hundreds (yes, hundreds) of people who came to our Shredding and Safety Event in February! We look forward to organizing another event in the future when it will be safe for all to attend.

2. In March, the Renewable Energy and Environmental Expo was a great success. Several environmental advocacy groups and Rep. Greg Vitali co-hosted and played a role in helping put together this inspiring and informative event.

3. In March, I read to second-graders at Manoa Elementary during National Read Across America Day.

Congratulations were in order for Upper Darby Professional Firefighters on another successful Pour for the Cure. The event raised funds for muscular dystrophy. I was happy to be joined by Sen. Tim Kearney, Rep. Jennifer O'Mara, and Tim Boyce of Delaware County Emergency Services 911 for the festivities.

4. Thank you to everyone who came to my Senior Breakfast in February at Aldan Memorial Legion Post 1000. We had a packed house that heard terrific and useful presentations from Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging Robert Torres, Delaware County Controller Joanne Phillips, and Anthony Luker from the office of Attorney General Josh Shapiro on a variety of scams that attempt to target seniors in our community.

5. I'm proud to be a supporter (and board member) of Grands Stepping Up, an organization that provides support and resources to grandparents raising grandchildren due to issues such as the opioid epidemic, mental health issues, incarceration, death,
(continued)



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or illness. Karen Barnes, pictured center, has been leading the charge for the group and is doing remarkable work.

6. In early February, I met with Josh, David, and Sarah from the Youth Art & Self-empowerment Project. YASP provides ongoing, year-round workshops for youth under 18 in the Philadelphia prison system's adult jails. They offer continued support and leadership development for youth who have come home from those jails.

Working on the Juvenile Justice Task Force, in our first meeting we heard several hours of incisive discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the juvenile justice system in Pennsylvania.

7. In April, we helped distribute Meals, Ready to Eat or MREs from the National Guard to food pantries, homeless shelters and senior centers.

We also helped prepare meals given to health care workers through the Food for the Frontline program.

8. In May, it was an honor to assist residents as they dropped off food and supplies during the Delco Drive Thru to restock Delco food pantries. Members of the community helped fill multiple truckloads of goods to help people in need.

9. The neighbors of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes Parish came out in droves to deliver bags and bags of food for St. Bernadette's Drive By Food Drive to restock their food pantry, and I was happy to help.

10. It was an honor to take part in the Memorial Day service in Aldan.



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LEGISLATION I'VE RECENTLY INTRODUCED

PROTECTING OUR WORKERS: It's time for Pennsylvania to support its workers and sign into law mandatory severance pay. In 2019, several large employers in the Philadelphia-area region handed down mass layoffs, including Philadelphia Energy Solutions, Hahnemann University Hospital and Johnson & Johnson. In some of these instances, workers received little to no severance pay and walked out the door with no health insurance. My legislation would require companies with more than 100 full-time employees to pay one week of severance pay for each year of service to a laid-off employee if a mass layoff includes more than 50 employees. There is no reason our state cannot pass this legislation, considering neighboring New Jersey has already passed similar legislation.

PROTECTING PUBLIC DOLLARS: As the pandemic and economic recession have highlighted, some executives continue to receive bonuses in the wake of mass layoffs and plant closings. In a perfect world, we wouldn't need this legislation: Executives should not be getting rich while they hand out pink slips and other workers walk away with nothing. Yet, this continues to happen, and that's why in 2019 I introduced legislation to prohibit companies entering

bankruptcy from paying out bonuses to already high-compensated executives if those companies have received public funding.

STRENGTHENING THE WARN ACT: I've introduced legislation that would require workplaces to provide workers with a 180-day notice prior to a plant closing with 50 or more employees or mass layoffs of 500 or more employees. In 1988, the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act required companies with more than 100 employees to provide notice 60 days before a plant closed or mass layoffs occurred.

TROUBLESOME OPIOID PRACTICES: Every area of our state and nation has been touched by the opioid epidemic, and I have introduced legislation to limit the gift amount that a pharmaceutical manufacturer may gift a health care provider – with a \$50 limit in a calendar year. A study by the University of Pittsburgh found that health care providers who received gifts from pharmaceutical companies were more likely to prescribe a higher amount of opioid prescriptions. There is no need to allow this gift-giving practice to continue while our communities struggle to recover from the opioid epidemic.

PennDOT: Driver's license, photo ID and learner's permit deadlines have been issued deadline extensions during the COVID-19 pandemic. For up-to-date information, contact my office or go to www.penndot.gov.

IMPROVING PENNSYLVANIA

JUVENILE JUSTICE TASK FORCE: I'm excited about the work I'm doing, serving as a co-chair on the bipartisan Juvenile Justice Task Force. I'm optimistic that we can target areas for reform and improvement, while reinforcing our areas of strength. Our children, families and communities deserve nothing less. Working side-by-side with members from multiple branches of government, we are producing a report later this year to detail policies to strengthen the state's justice system when it comes to our youth.

COVID-19 RESOURCE GUIDE:

Find Delco and state-specific information during the pandemic at www.bit.ly/zabelresourceguide.



SIGN UP FOR REGULAR EMAILS:

I send out weekly emails with important state-related information. Sign up now at RepZabel.com/emailsignup.



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lpo.ad.0720



NO HEROES OVERLOOKED

Health care professionals have paid a heavy price for working on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses and doctors throughout our community have put their own health in jeopardy because of their willingness to continue to fight this deadly virus.

And while no call is routine for EMTs, their work has become even more dangerous as they transport COVID-19 patients to hospitals while continuing to answer the call every day and come to our aid during health emergencies.

Thank you to every EMT, nurse, doctor and health care professional who answers the call — and continues to serve us — in our nation's time of need.