

Rep. Chris

# Sainato



Fall 2020

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## A path through the pandemic – together

In early March, the first cases of COVID-19 were reported here in Pennsylvania, dramatically changing the way we work, play, shop and learn.

In Harrisburg, the normal business of budget planning came to a halt as lawmakers on both sides of the aisle joined forces to pass protections for residents and small businesses facing a new and unfamiliar enemy.

During those first weeks, we passed measures clearing the way for students to finish the school year through remote learning, suspending certain requirements for filing unemployment claims, postponing state tax deadlines and allocating \$50 million to hospitals and healthcare providers for additional medical supplies and equipment.

In the months that followed, we passed legislation to replenish funding for volunteer fire and EMS companies, require comprehensive COVID-19 testing, and provide low- or no-interest emergency assistance loans to small businesses.

We also passed a spending plan allocating \$2.6 billion in federal CARES Act funding, including \$692 million to address the devastating impact of the pandemic on long-term care residents.

Through it all, our Lawrence County healthcare workers, first responders, delivery drivers, cashiers and other frontline workers have never wavered, showing up day after day – despite the risks to themselves and their families – to keep us connected to essential goods and services.

In fact, our entire community has made a difference. None of our work in Harrisburg would matter without your successful efforts to flatten the curve of new cases and keep our economy open.

I am so proud to represent our strong, supportive community. Together, we will forge a path through this pandemic, and together, we will come through this.



## A perfect record – inspired by you

It is an honor to serve our district.

Countless times, I have been inspired by the kindness and charity of our working families, the civic pride and patriotism of our residents, and the dedication and fair dealing of our local business owners.

These past months have only reaffirmed those feelings. From the essential workers who show up every day, to the veterans and retirees who offer words of support and encouragement, we are an extraordinary community.

I hope I have made you proud, as well. During my 26 years serving you, I have never missed a single day of session in the House of Representatives. I maintained that perfect record of attendance this year, as well, traveling to Harrisburg every session day during the pandemic so I could be there to represent your interests.

I will continue showing up and being there for you for as long as I am fortunate to represent you, and I will continue doing everything in my power to make sure Lawrence County has a loud and clear voice in Harrisburg. You deserve nothing less.



# Standing up for small business

In late May, even after Lawrence County moved to the green reopening phase, many of our small businesses – already reeling from weeks of shutdowns – were still facing restrictions that limited operations and frustrated attempts at recovery.

Although I believe business guidance in many cases has helped keep employees and patrons safe, I have also made it clear when I have not supported restrictions.

For example, in July, after an uptick in cases, the governor announced a rule ordering restaurants and bars to reduce indoor capacity to 25%. I believe this measure is arbitrary and unnecessarily restrictive and will threaten the survival of these local businesses, which are so important to our economy.

I have written to the governor, calling on him to lift this restriction. Rather than punish an entire industry for the negligence of a few



bad actors, we would be better served by more vigilant enforcement of the prior 50% capacity rule.

I will continue speaking out on behalf of our small business owners, who do so much to sustain and support our local economy, as we navigate a path forward through the pandemic.



## Trouble meeting housing payments? *These programs can help*

If you are at least 30 days overdue on your rent or mortgage, the CARES Rent Relief and Mortgage Assistance programs can help.

Homeowners may qualify for up to \$1,000 per month for a maximum of six months of assistance for payments due between March 1 and Dec. 30. Renters may qualify for up to \$750 per month for a maximum of six months' assistance for the same period.

To be eligible, you must have become unemployed or suffered a 30% or more reduction in income after March 1 due to COVID-19 and must meet certain income and other requirements. Visit [www.phfa.org](http://www.phfa.org) to read program guidelines and apply. You can also call PHFA toll free at 1-855-U-Are-Home.

## Nearly \$47 million back to the district so far this year

*Here is a look at funding I helped secure for Lawrence County from January 2020 through mid-August:*

- **\$32 million** (including a \$19 million grant and the remainder as a low-interest loan) for major improvements to the New Castle Sanitation Authority's water treatment plant.
- More than **\$7.7 million** in CARES Act funding to Lawrence County to cover COVID-19 response and preparedness costs.
- More than **\$3.3 million** in CARES Act funding and nearly **\$75,000** in state funding to school districts to support remote learning; nearly **\$84,000** in CARES Act funding to Lawrence County Career and Technical Center; and more than **\$33,500** to New Castle School of Trades for COVID-19 safety funding.
- **\$1.25 million** in federal funding to rehabilitate Lawrence County housing.
- **\$350,000** to bolster security for Lawrence County Schools.
- Nearly **\$479,000** in CARES Act funding to support critical food, housing and community development programs.
- More than **\$260,000** to support trauma-based treatment for youth and improve law enforcement coronavirus response and preparedness, nearly **\$150,000** to combat opioid use disorder in county inmates and nearly **\$117,000** for criminal justice diversion programs.
- More than **\$205,000** in CARES Act funding to help Lawrence County childcare providers reopen safely.
- **\$150,000** to educate students about high-priority career paths; **\$140,000** to provide paid internship opportunities; **\$100,000** to help teachers tailor curriculum to meet workforce needs; and **\$70,000** to expand computer science learning for Lawrence County Students.
- Nearly **\$134,000** in grants to fire and EMS companies and **\$8,000** to help guard against the threat of wildfires and brushfires.
- More than **\$102,000** to help fund new senior housing.
- Nearly **\$20,000** to enhance storm water management.
- **\$4,000** to support the Lawrence County Historical Society and nearly **\$2,000** in CARES Act funding to support operations at Hoyt Art Center.

### SHARED FUNDING

In addition, to combat regional homelessness, Lawrence County received more than **\$3.35 million** in CARES Act funding to share in and distribute among 15 counties, and another **\$1.7 million** to share in and distribute among 20 counties.



# Around the district

One of the best parts of my job is getting to work with the open-hearted, civic-minded members of our community. Here is a look at just a few of those great groups.



*I added a few notes at the Union High School Band Alumni Reunion during the 2019 homecoming game!*



*I had a wonderful time at the Memories Car Cruise in New Castle last year!*



*During the Annual Legislative Farm Bureau Tour last year, I got to catch up on all the great work the Beaver-Lawrence County Farm Bureau does.*



*I enjoyed great food and great company at the 2019 St. Elias Syrian Festival.*



*Enjoying beautiful scenery and great company at the 2019 Moose Lodge Cascade Park picnic.*



*We rocked for a great cause – funding community outreach activities – at the Gussie M. Walker 2019 Rock-A-Thon last December.*



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## Mail-in voting a safe bet this year

This year for the first time, Pennsylvania joins many other states offering no-excuse, mail-in voting.

In addition to the advantage of being able to vote from the comfort and convenience of your own home, the new option offers another obvious benefit: the opportunity to avoid long lines and crowded poll conditions in the midst of a pandemic.

Vote-by-mail is simple, secure and available to any registered voter without the need to offer any excuse.

To apply online for a mail-in ballot, visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com). At the top of the page, you will see a link titled "Voting in PA." From the drop-down menu, select

"Mail-in and Absentee Ballot." From there, you will find complete instructions – including whether you should apply for a mail-in or an absentee ballot – and the online application.

After your ballot arrives, complete it, seal it in the inner and outer envelopes provided, and simply drop it in the mailbox. (You can also drop off your ballot at the county election office.)

Deadlines are approaching, however, so you should apply for your ballot, complete it once you receive it, and return it as soon as possible.

Making your voice heard has never been simpler or safer!

## Remember these important dates:

**Oct. 19:** This is the last day to register before the general election.

**Oct. 27** by 5 p.m. The county election office must receive your application for a mail-in ballot by this time.

**Nov. 3** (Election Day) by 8 p.m. The county election office must receive your voted ballot by this time. Postmarks are not enough.



*Preparing for New Castle's annual Light up the Night parade and festivities is always half of the fun!*