

# PATRICK J. HARKINS

## DEAR FRIENDS,

With the new year underway, I want to let you know about some helpful new programs and update you on our progress over the past year. I also want to thank you for the honor of serving you.

Representing you – and our community – in Harrisburg is the most important work of my professional life. Since 2018, I have brought **more than \$80 million** back to our district, and I will continue working hard to bring home more of your tax dollars in the year ahead. I will also continue fighting to expand benefits and protections for families, workers, and seniors.

Here at home, my talented staff remains ready to help with any state-related question or problem. (On the flip side, you'll find a list of some of the many ways we can help.) Our door is open!

## BRINGING YOUR TAX DOLLARS HOME

Since 2018, I have worked to bring **more than \$80 million** in funding back to our district.

Here's a look at more than **\$23 million** we brought back home in 2021 alone:

- ✓ More than **\$18 million** for **urban renewal and infrastructure projects** to expand affordable housing, fight blight, expand business development, upgrade our regional food bank, and more.
- ✓ More than **\$3.8 million** to bolster **criminal justice and victim services programs** and educate children and families about the dangers of opioid use.
- ✓ More than **\$1.2 million** to area schools and colleges for food, tech, curricula, and other resources. This funding is in addition to more than \$100 million in federal pandemic relief funding.
- ✓ More than **\$100,000** to local fire and EMS companies, **\$50,000** to area senior centers, nearly **\$50,000** to bolster security at several area nonprofit organizations, and additional funding to aid in vaccine education efforts.

In addition to bringing your tax dollars home, I also fought successfully to bring an additional **\$14 million in recurring budgetary aid** to help stabilize Erie School District operations and restore solvency as the district emerges from financial watch status.



*With Erie Insurance CEO and President Tim NeCastro (center) and Rep. Bob Merski at the expERIENCE Children's Museum for the governor's announcement of \$5 million to fund the museum's expansion. Tim has been a great community advocate, working with us on many business initiatives to help the district.*

### Capitol Office:

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## CHECK OUT THESE NEW PROGRAMS

New programs this year can help with the following services:

- ✓ **Water.** The **Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program** can provide eligible households up to two \$2,500 "crisis" grants – one for water service and one for wastewater service. Visit [www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov) and enter "LIHWAP" into the search bar.
- ✓ **Internet.** The **Affordable Connectivity Program** can help low-income households access Internet by providing monthly discounts of up to \$30 per month. Visit [www.fcc.gov/acp](http://www.fcc.gov/acp). Households already enrolled in another FCC assistance program – Lifeline – do not have to apply again for the ACP but can contact their Internet company directly to enroll. To learn more, visit [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov) and enter Lifeline into the search bar.
- ✓ **Mortgage assistance.** The **Pennsylvania Homeowner Assistance Fund** can help eligible homeowners suffering hardship because of the pandemic by providing help with mortgage and housing-related expenses. Visit <https://pahaf.org/>.
- ✓ **Free tax preparation.** Residents earning less than \$57,000 may be eligible for free tax preparation services through United Way's **ERIE FREE Taxes** program. Call 1-888-829-5680 or visit [www.unitedwayerie.org](http://www.unitedwayerie.org).



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## MY BILLS TO BENEFIT FAMILIES, WORKERS, AND SENIORS

My efforts to get Pennsylvania's public-sector workers covered by the same level of safety protections that already protect private-sector workers gained steam last fall when Gov. Tom Wolf issued an executive action urging passage of my bill, The Jake Schwab Worker Safety Bill. I won't stop fighting until *all* PA workers are safe on the job.

I have also introduced legislation to crack down on the misclassification of employees that deprives workers of a fair wage; curb workplace bullying and abuse; create a hazard pay program for frontline workers in food banks, homeless shelters, and other nonprofit organizations; and improve PA's mental health system and how it impacts our criminal justice system; among other measures.

### Protection from surprise medical bills

A new federal law protects against surprise medical bills – those patients receive when they unknowingly or unintentionally obtain health care from out-of-network providers. To learn more, visit [www.insurance.pa.gov](http://www.insurance.pa.gov) and enter "no surprises act" into the search bar.



*With City Councilman Mel Witherspoon and Bishop Dwane Brock, who do so much for our community.*



*At a ribbon-cutting for Sacred Divine Femininity, a new Erie natural health and wellness practice for women, with owner Shawntá Pulliam-Brown.*

## MY OFFICE CAN HELP WITH:

- ✓ Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles, driver's license applications
- ✓ Information on financial assistance for higher education
- ✓ Obtaining and completing state forms, including applications for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, the Low-Income Household Energy Assistance program, and other programs
- ✓ Problems/questions involving unemployment, disability, workers' compensation
- ✓ Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- ✓ Birth and death certificates
- ✓ Problems with the Department of Health and Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- ✓ State 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, insurance, other consumer issues
- ✓ Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications

## NEW LAWS EXPAND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ASSISTANCE, BROADBAND

Last year, I helped pass legislation to expand prescription drug help to more seniors. The new law increases the income eligibility limits for the PACENET program from \$27,500 to \$33,500 for a single person and from \$35,500 to \$41,500 for a married couple. For more on PACENET, visit [www.aging.pa.gov](http://www.aging.pa.gov) and click on the prescription assistance link.

Another new law I supported will bring historic advancements in broadband access by creating the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority, which will expand reliable, affordable Internet to unserved or underserved residents.