

# BOB MERSKI

## DEAR NEIGHBORS,

As you may have heard, the boundaries of the Second Legislative District are changing based on the recent redistricting that occurred following the U.S. Census. To the right is a map of the new district lines.

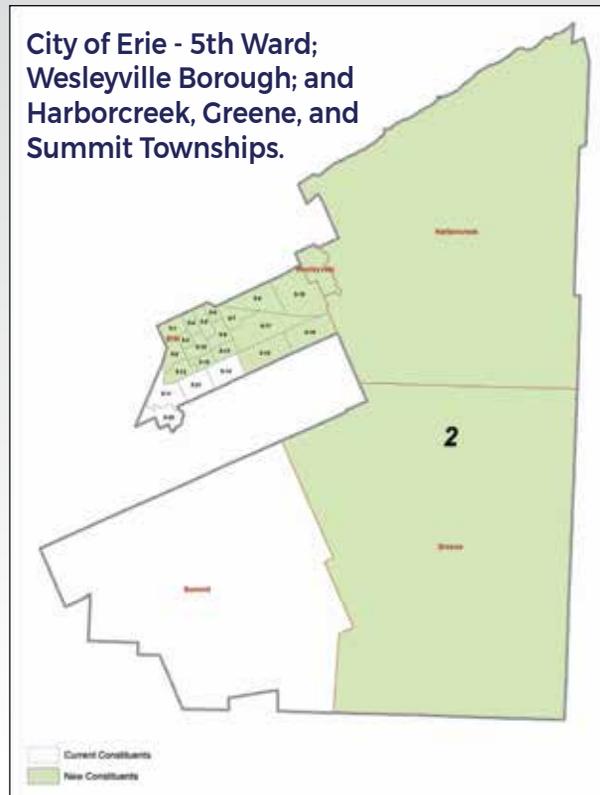
Regardless of how the district boundaries change, one thing that will never change is my dedication to the people of the district and my commitment to you. Serving as your State Representative is an honor and a privilege, and I thank you for making this place we love "home."

In the pages to follow, you will find news about recent state laws and helpful resources for residents. Please remember that my talented staff and I are ready to help you navigate state programs and services. On the back page, you'll find a list of some of the ways we can assist. Stop in or give us a call - we're here for you!

*Bob Merski*

## NEW 2ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

**City of Erie - 5th Ward;  
Wesleyville Borough; and  
Harborcreek, Greene, and  
Summit Townships.**



## HARBORCREEK



*Nostrovia Brewing Co. is a welcome addition to the local brewery scene. Thanks to owner Jeff Lukasik for the tour. Na Zdrowie!*

## GREENE TOWNSHIP



*Greene Township had a wonderful National Night Out event. Pictured above are some of our amazing volunteer firefighters from Kuhl Hose Co.*

## WESLEYVILLE



*American Legion Post 571 in Wesleyville held a moving Memorial Day ceremony. Please remember that my office can retire your worn or tattered American flag with all the dignity Old Glory demands.*

## ERIE



*How exciting it was to honor Mercyhurst University Head Baseball Coach Joe Spano for 700 career wins at Mercyhurst! His family joined us for the presentation. With this milestone, Coach Spano becomes the 25th active coach to win 700 games, 19th coach to do it with one program, and the 2nd PSAC Head Coach to accomplish this feat!*



**CAPITOL OFFICE:**  
221 Irvis Office Building  
P.O. Box 202002  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2002  
(717) 787-4358

**DISTRICT OFFICE:**  
3901 Liberty St.  
Erie, PA 16509  
(814) 455-6319  
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. M-F

**SATELLITE OFFICE:**  
Summit Township Municipal Bldg.  
1230 Townhall Road W.  
Erie, PA 16509  
12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays or  
by appointment.

[www.RepMerski.com](http://www.RepMerski.com)

## ENJOYING NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



Meeting up with families was one of the many highlights of National Night Out.

## SUPPORTING OUR POLICE



It was great catching up with Erie Police Department Lieutenant Jamie Russo this August at an event hosted by the Strengthening Police and Community Council. Thank you to our police!

## STRENGTHENING CELL CONNECTIONS



Joining us for our live town hall on cell service problems on Erie's lakeshore were Presque Isle Advisory Board Chairman Don Benczkowski and Bob Zawadzki from the SONS of Lake Erie.

## VISITING CLARK ELEMENTARY



I love having the chance to get back to the classroom and engage students about the importance of civics and public service. The students at Clark Elementary asked some great questions!

## SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS



I recently had a great, productive meeting with Fort LeBoeuf School District Superintendent Rick Emerick and School Board President Bruce Hordusky. More funding in the state budget for education this year will help ensure that our kids get the best possible education -- and help local school boards hold the line on property taxes.



I recently helped secure a \$150,000 Ready to Learn grant for the Harbor Creek School District. Kelly Hess, Harbor Creek Superintendent of Schools, joined me for the check presentation ceremony.

## HONORING TALENT AND ACHIEVEMENT



Recognizing Mercyhurst Preparatory School Baseball Coach Randy Durkoske with a PA House of Representatives Citation to honor his 300th career win!

Honoring Paula McGinnis on the occasion of her retirement from the Fort LeBoeuf School District after a long career of dedicated service. Paula is pictured with her sisters.



Proud to honor Nancy Veshecco for her 46 years of dedicated service as Athletic Director at Saint James School.

## STOPPING IN SUMMIT



A recent outreach event in Summit gave me a chance to chat with residents of all ages! Please note that my satellite office, located in the Summit Township Municipal Building, is open from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesdays or by appointment.



# BRINGING YOUR TAX DOLLARS BACK TO THE DISTRICT

One of my most important jobs as your representative is bringing your tax dollars back home to the district. So far this year, I have worked to help secure more than \$27 million, including:

- **More than \$8.3 million** to help stabilize Erie child care centers.
- **Nearly \$8 million** for projects to boost regional economic development and business growth, including funding for development of the former Erie Malleable Iron plant into a high-tech business park, among other projects.
- **Nearly \$4 million** for infrastructure improvements and community programs, including projects to upgrade traffic intersections, fund recycling projects, repair docks and improve fishing opportunities, upgrade the Blasco Memorial Library, and create a workforce training center, among other projects.
- **More than \$3 million** to bolster early education programs.
- **More than \$1.5 million** to fight crime, improve probation services, strengthen services for sexual assault victims, better equip our first responders, and respond to student mental health needs.
- **Nearly \$1 million** to expand housing-related services for families in need.
- **\$1 million** total in Ready to Learn Block Grant funding to the Erie City School District, Iroquois School District, and Harbor Creek School District.
- **More than \$350,000** to bolster resources and training for our first responders.

# UKRAINE AID DRIVE BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN OUR ERIE COMMUNITY



*How do you measure the generosity of Erie residents? In truckloads! I am so very proud of our Erie community for the overwhelming response to our Ukraine aid drive. Thanks to your generosity and help from Erie's own Logistics Plus, truckloads of donations were shipped to our sister city of Lublin, Poland! Our office was proud to help lead the effort.*

## Funding for District 2 schools will increase by

### Basic Education Funding

Erie City - 17.9%  
Harbor Creek - 4.8%  
Fort LeBoeuf - 4.6%  
Iroquois - 10%  
Wattsburg Area - 7.3%

### Special Education Funding

Erie City - 11.6%  
Harbor Creek - 14.6%  
For LeBoeuf - 6.2%  
Iroquois - 12.4%  
Wattsburg Area - 7.8%

Additionally, each school district will receive **\$100,000 + \$15** for each student from a **\$100 million** fund for school safety and mental health.



## NEW FIREWORKS LAW ALLOWS MUNICIPALITIES TO RESTRICT USE

There are some commonsense restrictions now in place for consumer fireworks use.

Under the new law, municipalities will have the authority to restrict the use of fireworks between 10 p.m. and 10 a.m., except during July 2-4 and on Dec. 31, when they can be used until 1 a.m. the following morning. (Fireworks will also be permitted over the Memorial and Labor Day weekends.)

There will also be enhanced penalties for improper sales or illegal use.

Most importantly, the new law gives local governments the power to ban fireworks in situations where they cannot be used in compliance with existing rules, including those prohibiting their use within 150 feet of buildings.

# SERVING OUR SENIORS

**Seniors: I want to make sure you are aware of these programs and services, including some that are new for this year.**

## PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE BONUS

Residents who qualify for rebates on property taxes or rent paid in 2021 will see a one-time bonus rebate under the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. The bonus rebate will equal 70% of an applicant's regular rebate. For example, an applicant who received a regular rebate of \$500 can expect to see a bonus rebate of \$350.

Applicants who have already filed for or received their regular rebate do not need to do anything to receive the bonus rebate, which will be sent via the same method – direct deposit or check – used to deliver the regular rebate.

Please note: if you have not yet filed for your standard rebate, the deadline has been extended to **Dec. 31**. You can apply online by visiting [www.revenue.pa.gov](http://www.revenue.pa.gov) and scrolling down to the "My Path" link – or contact my office for help applying!

## SENIOR FOOD BOX PROGRAM

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania is the local distributor for this U.S. Department of Agriculture program, which provides eligible seniors with

boxes of nutritious, nonperishable food items to supplement their household purchases. Applicants must be at least 60 or older and fall within certain income guidelines.

To learn more and apply, visit [www.nwpafoodbank.org](http://www.nwpafoodbank.org), click on the Providing Food link at the top and scroll down to "Programs" and then "Senior Box Program."

You can also call the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) at (814) 459-4581 to learn more about this program and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, which provides vouchers for use at local farmer's markets.

## 'ONE-STOP-SHOP' FOR YOUR SENIOR BUS PASS!

This is a reminder that seniors can stop into our office, apply for an EMTA senior bus pass, and receive the pass all in one visit! Please remember to bring valid proof of age!

## PRESCRIPTION ASSISTANCE EXPANDED

Earlier this year, a new law I supported expanded the income guidelines for the PACENET prescription assistance program.

My office can help you apply!

# SIGN UP TO STAY IN THE LOOP!

Don't miss out! Each week, I send out an e-newsletter to keep folks up to date on new state programs and services and the latest happenings here at home and in Harrisburg. You can sign up for my e-newsletter by visiting [www.RepMerski.com](http://www.RepMerski.com) and scrolling down to the signup form. You can also sign up for text alerts by checking the box that says "I would like to receive text updates."



You can also find me on Facebook here: [www.facebook.com/RepMerski](http://www.facebook.com/RepMerski).

## BOB MEANS BUSINESS

Business owners: if you need help completing a grant application or securing licensing, scan this QR code to find out how my office can help!



*It was an honor to give Charles and Audrey Casey a House of Representatives Citation honoring their 60th wedding anniversary!*



*Seniors at Mercy Hilltop Center asked some great questions during my July visit to discuss senior-related services my office provides!*

**2022 General Election Important Dates**

 <b>Register to vote</b> or update your registration Deadline: <b>October 24</b>	 <b>Request mail-in or absentee ballot</b> Sign up by: <b>November 1</b>
 <b>Deadline for mail-in or absentee ballots</b> Due: <b>November 8</b> <small>(Must be received by 5 p.m.)</small>	 <b>Election Day</b> Polls open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. Date: <b>November 8</b>

[vote.pa.gov](http://vote.pa.gov)

# MERSKI EMBRACES LEADERSHIP ROLE



*This year, I was honored to be elected chairman of the Northwest Delegation – our group of lawmakers representing Erie and Northwest PA – and to be named the sole legislator from PA selected to participate in a national 2022 Emerging Legislative Leaders Program. I am looking forward to continuing to build relationships on both sides of the aisle and collaborating in ways to move Erie forward!*

## A TAX CREDIT TO HELP WORKING PARENTS

Working parents and guardians will soon be able to claim a child care tax credit on their PA state taxes under a new program created in the 2022-23 state budget.

The state program is modeled after the existing federal child care tax credit program and benefits working families with children in daycare who already qualify for the federal program. The state credit is for 30% of the federally approved expense.

Under the state program – expected to benefit more than 220,000 families – filers in households earning more than \$43,000 could be eligible for \$180 (for one child) or \$360 (for two or more children), while filers in households earning less than \$43,000 could be eligible for \$315 (for one child) or \$630 (for two or more children).

Parents and guardians will be able to claim the state credit beginning in 2023.

## STATE PROGRAM CAN PROVIDE MORTGAGE HELP

This is a reminder that residents who are behind on their mortgage because of pandemic-related hardship may be eligible for the **Pennsylvania Homeowner Assistance Fund**. The program can provide eligible households with up to \$30,000 in assistance, including mortgage reinstatement, forward mortgage payment, property charges, and delinquent utilities.

The program is available to residents who have a household income equal to or less than 150% of the area median household income and who meet several other requirements.

To learn more and apply, visit [www.pahaf.org](http://www.pahaf.org) or call PHFA toll free at 1-855-U-Are-Home.

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like your help. Please contact me at: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like you to speak to my group or organization \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to know your views on: \_\_\_\_\_

**The issues important to me are:**

- Education
- Property Taxes
- Unemployment
- Energy
- Healthcare
- Economy
- Environment
- Agriculture
- Voting/Elections
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Snip off this form, insert it in an envelope, affix postage and address it to:  
**State Rep. Bob Merski, 3901 Liberty St., Erie, PA 16509.**



221 Irvis Office Building  
P.O. Box 202002  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2002

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*State Representative Bob Merski*

***We're here to help!***

***My team and I can help with:***

- **Property Tax/ Rent Rebate Program**
- **Information on State Grant Programs**
- **Driver Licenses and Vehicle Registration**
- **Free Notarization Services**
- **Senior Bus Pass Program**

**Providing you with the highest level of service in state government.**



✉ RepMerski@PAHouse.net

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Erie, PA 16509

📱 @RepMerski



## TITUS TAKES ON: HAPPY TRAILS WITH YOUR BEST FRIEND

Hi! Titus here! I love fall walks! The temperature is perfect, and the pavement isn't too hot for my paws!

Dad recently took me to McClelland Park, and it made me realize how great it is to get out in the fresh air with my best friend. Our area offers a number of excellent dog-friendly parks, as well as hiking trails and even campgrounds! For more on walking, hiking and camping with your best friend, visit [www.dcnr.pa.gov](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov) and enter "Pets in Parks" in the search bar.



*The only thing better than a good long walk with my human is the nice long nap afterward.*  
-- Titus