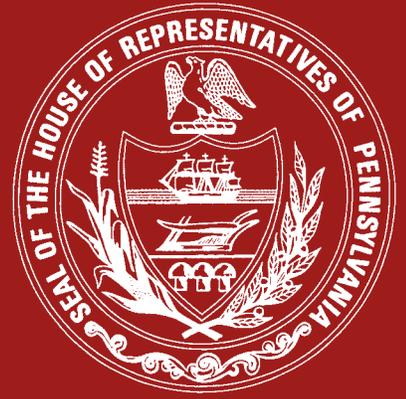


# State Representative Dan Miller

## *Newsletter*



SUMMER 2023

### *Serving the 42nd District*

Baldwin Twp., Mt. Lebanon, Castle Shannon, Dormont, and parts of Upper St. Clair

*State Rep. Dan Miller takes a look around the Gilfillan Farm with Rachel Carlson, president of the Historical Society of Upper St. Clair, after the society received a \$65,000 state grant. Read more: Page 5*



### INSIDE:

Legislative Leadership | Supporting PA Workers | Making Our Communities Safer  
Disability and Mental Health Update | Keeping You Connected

# Focus on Legislative Leadership

Early this session I was honored by my colleagues to be elected as the new House Majority Whip – a leadership position that provides a greater opportunity to influence a legislative agenda, which I hope can advance issues for more Pennsylvanians and grow our middle class.

This is the first time in over a decade that Pennsylvanians have elected a Democratic majority in our state House. The state Senate remains under Republican control. We are now the only state with a full-time legislature but a divided House and Senate.

While partisans may applaud or condemn this shared authority, I believe that this offers both sides an opportunity to begin anew. To be certain, the House majority is slim, so I hope that this will bring people together. In doing so, I am certain that those who wish governance from the far left or far right may be disappointed; however, those who are willing to compromise may help our state advance forward together. I hope that a less partisan but more substantive and active legislature is the result.

As I write this, we are deep into 2023-24 budget negotiations, but the last couple of months in Harrisburg have been fruitful. Every one of the efforts listed below were bipartisan votes, which I hope to see more of as this legislative term continues.



**Here is a brief summary of a few of the bills that were passed by a bipartisan vote in the House to kick off session:**

## ✓ **Protecting People from Discrimination**

All Pennsylvanians deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and no one should be discriminated against for who they are or who they love. After 22 years of delay, House Bill (HB) 300, better known as the Fairness Act, passed the House to prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

## ✓ **Addressing our Teacher Shortage**

Pennsylvania is facing a serious teacher shortage. As part of our longtime commitment to invest in quality public education, the House passed four bills that would attract and retain educators to this noble profession:

- HB 100 –Would amend the Public School Code to require the State Board of Education to establish a tutoring program for students in grades eleven and twelve to tutor students in lower grades.
- HB 141 –Would establish the Grow Our Own Educators Program.
- HB 688 –Would amend the Public School Code to establish the PA Teacher Pipeline Scholarship Program.
- HB 1331 – Would provide a \$2,500 tax credit for three years for new PA teachers (as well as for new nurses and police officers).

## ✓ **Providing Lifesaving Cancer Screenings**

After passage through the House and Senate, Gov. Josh Shapiro signed a new law that that will save lives and help prevent breast cancer and other hereditary cancers. This new law removes out-of-pocket costs associated with genetic testing for hereditary breast, ovarian, prostate, and other cancer syndromes, as well as supplemental breast screenings for women with a high lifetime risk of breast cancer.

# Supporting PA Workers



Few businesses can thrive without trained workers and quality staff, and our government has a responsibility to make sure that our economy roars, PA attracts businesses, and our workers have a real chance to reach the middle class.

There are a number of components to this equation, and the state House has been busy trying to address many of them. In recent times, we have cut our corporate net income tax, doubled down on education support, and we have begun to take advantage of unprecedented federal investment in transportation, infrastructure, and broadband. These are good steps. But in this age of deep income inequality, I believe we should support PA workers more, strengthen their right to unionize, and make sure that everyone buys American as much as possible.

To that end, we have been busy this session advancing legislation that increases workplace safety standards, makes sure more workers have access to paid leave, and finally voting to raise PA's ridiculous minimum wage. We have also voted to help people get into the workplace by expanding access to quality childcare, increasing the earned income tax credit, and expanding the state's clean slate program to remove employment barriers for people who have paid their debt to society.

There is a lot to do, and business interests and worker interests are different sides of the same coin. Middle class growth requires both to succeed.

## House Delivers for Workers

In a series of bipartisan votes, early this year the state House passed several labor bills which now await further action in the state Senate.

- HB 299 creates the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act, which establishes workplace safety standards for public sector employees that are consistent with federal OSHA requirements.
- HB 413 increases specifications for classifying employees as independent contractors in the construction industry.
- HB 577 would create the Keystone Saves Plan – a voluntary retirement account for workers who don't have access to an employer-based plan.
- HB 760 allows workers' compensation claimants to have benefits via direct deposit.
- HB 930 ensures that workers who suffer from serious and permanent disfigurement are eligible for workers' compensation benefits, increases the number of eligible weeks for compensation, and allows claimants to collect disability and disfigurement benefits simultaneously.
- HB 950 guarantees workers the right to organize and collectively bargain and prohibits any other laws that may interfere with or diminish collective bargaining rights.

Scan here to listen to me speak about the importance of union organizing rights:



# Making our Communities Safer: Securing \$200,000 to Fund Fire Training Facility



As a retired Mt. Lebanon volunteer firefighter, I know firsthand how important training is to keep our emergency responders safe and to help make sure such critical services are ready to go at a moment's notice. Training is also essential for the onboarding of new firefighters. We need everyone who answers the call to make it home safely.

Currently, there is no dedicated fire training facility in our area, and most departments have to travel to county facilities as local structure burns become less viable. This is why I was glad to support the effort by the Mt. Lebanon Commission and the Mt. Lebanon Fire Department (MTLFD) to secure a state grant to help fund a new training facility right here in our community.

Working with our local partners, we were able to bring home a \$200,000 state grant to assist with the purchase and construction of this new facility, which would be at the public works lot.

The goal of the MTLFD is to design their own dynamic facility constructed with shipping containers that will be tailored to meet the training scenarios as specifically identified by the MTLFD. This would reduce travel time and delay in arranging for area training and will likely be a training asset for neighboring mutual aid departments.

I look forward to seeing this important addition come to fruition next year!

# PA Must Address Equitable Education Funding After Court Ruling

Here at home, we are blessed to have some of the best schools in the state, with some of the best educators and staff – but not every community is so lucky. In too many places, a child’s zip code can determine the quality of their education.

Our state’s constitution requires that the legislature must “provide a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.”

In the past, we have attempted to do so using two different formulas to determine how much state assistance each school district receives. The first formula uses enrollment numbers from the early 1990s, which guarantees districts won’t lose funding even if enrollment has declined.

In 2016, a second funding formula for schools was enacted, one that considers factors like how many students are learning English or experiencing poverty when doling out cash. But only new funding is sent through the formula — about 20% of state education spending.

Once that state money is allocated, districts are then left to balance their budgets using property taxes, which creates lopsided outcomes in which wealthier districts can afford more resources and poorer districts struggle to properly educate children.

Earlier this year, Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania ruled that the state’s current two-tier school funding system violates the constitutional requirement – but stopped short of laying out the specific steps necessary to remedy what many of us have known for some time. It is now up to the General Assembly and the governor to work together to meet our constitutional obligation and to fund education fairly across the commonwealth.

This will not be a small or easy task. Clearly, the state must comply with the court’s findings, and just as clearly, we have a moral responsibility to do so. These discussions will evolve over this term and – in a divided legislature – compromise will be needed.

Recently I had the opportunity to discuss education with the majority chair of the House Education Committee, Rep. Pete Schweyer. To listen to our conversation, scan this QR code:



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## Gilfillan Farm Secures \$65,329 Historic Preservation Grant

I am pleased to report that the Gilfillan Farm in Upper St. Clair was recently awarded a \$65,329 state Historic Preservation Grant to help fund several projects at the Big Red Barn to help preserve this historic property for future generations.

The Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grant will fund the restoration of the barn’s foundation, including the installation of a drainage system to divert water away from the foundation and masonry repair to the stone mortar. This project and related grant application build upon the PHMC Planning Assistance Grant for the Gilfillan Farm Master Plan awarded in 2013 and a PHMC Keystone Preservation Construction Grant for the work on the Summer Kitchen in 2018.

I was happy to support this application by the Historical Society of Upper St. Clair with the Pennsylvania Historical and

Museum Commission, as well as the farm’s ongoing mission to provide unique, positive, and enjoyable experiences for the community and visitors that utilize the 174-year-old farm, its programs, and recreational trails.

I want to congratulate the historical society and all the volunteers and local officials who have supported this project and helped make this grant happen!

My office is always working with local organizations and municipalities to identify priorities or funding shortfalls that the state may be able to help. In just last the few years, we’ve helped secure grants for fire equipment in Castle Shannon; major public park improvements in Mt. Lebanon and Baldwin Townships; and state funding to improve traffic signals and roadway safety in Dormont.

# Embracing New Technology to Bring Harrisburg Home to You

As a state Representative, I am a leader in the House in embracing new ways to connect with our neighbors in the district and around the state.



During the pandemic, we explored using virtual events to continue to bring programming to you and our neighbors. The flexibility of this format was very successful, and we have continued to hold virtual events throughout the year. Recent events included a look at the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence in our society and a partnership with St. Clair Health to present information new moms and families about mental health.

All these webinars were recorded and are available for viewing by scanning the QR code to the right.

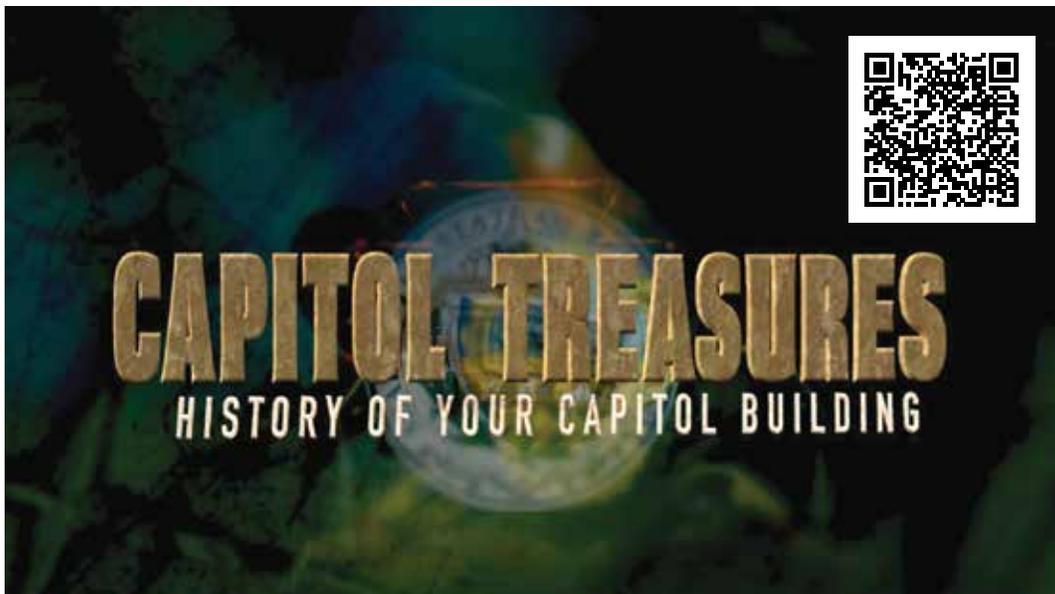


A podcast cover for "ON THE TABLE" featuring an image of the Pennsylvania State Capitol dome. The text on the cover reads: "ON THE TABLE", "An Inside Look at the Pennsylvania State Legislature with Rep. Dan Miller".A square QR code located to the right of the podcast cover, which links to the "ON THE TABLE" podcast.

Last year I launched my 'On the Table' Podcast, where I regularly sit down with other legislators or outside experts to talk about issues and legislation that impact our commonwealth. Now in its second season, the 'On the Table' Podcast is available free online. You can access it by scanning the QR code above.

## Capitol Treasures Video Series

The Pennsylvania State Capitol is a beautiful building dedicated to our commonwealth's democracy. Unfortunately, not everyone can travel to Harrisburg to see it in person. I created a video series that explores many aspects of the Capitol's historical and artistic treasures. My office can also help you schedule a tour of the Capitol if you would like to explore it in person!



# Focus on Disability and Mental Health

Disability & Mental Health Summit Brings Legislators, Self-Advocates, and Professionals Together



As you may know, disability and mental health issues have always been at the top of my legislative priorities. Since taking office I have tried to bring attention to these areas, which impact many families yet for too long have often been neglected or shunned. That is why I was excited to offer our 10th annual Disability & Mental Health Summit at the Beth El Congregation this spring.

Thanks to our host and St. Clair Hospital, we were excited to be fully back in person, offering the largest disability and mental health resource fair in western PA and bringing together bipartisan legislative panels on disability and mental health topics. We were also very pleased to hear from Human Services Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh, about the related priorities under our new administration.

There is still much to do in this area. We have to get more people with disabilities into the workforce, increase independence, make mental health treatment more accessible, decrease stigma, and make sure that workers who provide necessary services are appropriately paid. Given the current makeup of the House, I hope to see such legislation advancing in coming months.

To review our Disability & Mental Health Summit sessions, scan this QR code



Below are some of the bills that I have authored that could help meet the needs of people in our community.

For a full list of legislation that I have introduced this year, scan the QR code to the right.



**House Bill (HB) 183** requires insurance plans to cover the necessary wheelchair maintenance twice a year to ensure that people with mobility disabilities have full access to their wheelchairs.

**HB 193** recognizes that to increase community participation and engagement, adult changing tables in certain locations are a logical extension of the ADA.

**HB 341** requires school districts to evaluate their needs for trained, professional support services based on school population and requires a necessary complement of school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses to ensure that access to help is never a problem and that caseload management is never an issue.

**HB 346** would require schools to report the number of suicides or attempts on school property to our Office of Safe Schools.

**HB 348** provides for greater hiring and promotion authority for Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

**HB 661** indexes salary rates for our DSPs (Direct Service Providers) to help stabilize the workforce and improve career possibilities.

**HB 746** requires all government websites to be compatible with software that helps people with vision loss to read and hear the information.

**HB 814** creates a mental health bed registry to help hospitals find appropriate treatment options for people who agree to seek help.

**House Resolution (HR) 38** would create a taskforce to identify barriers to accessible transportation and related services at the local and statewide levels.

# Save The Date: Fall Senior Fair!



**Look for our annual Fall Senior Fair and senior-related programming coming this Fall! We will be teaming up with Senator Fontana so be sure to contact our office or visit [RepDanMiller.com](http://RepDanMiller.com) for further details!**

**Save the date!**  
**Friday, Sept. 22**  
**9 a.m. to noon**

Already in 2023, my office has helped more than 2,000 people with questions about state programs or benefits, legislation in the House or Senate, seniors getting ConnectCard Transit Passes, or any number of other services.

#### **Did you know that my office can help you with:**

- Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups

For help with these or other matters, please contact my office at (412) 343-3870.

## **Don't Miss These Upcoming Town Hall Meetings!**

I hope you will join us at one of my upcoming town halls. We'll talk about what's happening in our community and how state government can help you.

### **Mt. Lebanon Library**

**7 p.m.**

**Wednesday, August 30**

### **Dormont Recreation Center**

**7 p.m.**

**Thursday, September 7**

### **Castle Shannon Library**

**7 p.m.**

**Thursday, September 28**