

# State Representative Dan Miller

## *Newsletter*



SUMMER 2024

*Serving the 42nd District*

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



*Rep. Dan Miller talks with a self-advocate at Disability Pride Day in Harrisburg. Each year Rep. Miller hosts a Disability & Mental Health Summit, which you can read more about on page 7.*

**INSIDE:**

**Compromise is key in moving legislation; Advancing public safety in our communities; Supporting families, workers, and labor in our commonwealth; Plus: Talking about economic development with Gov. Josh Shapiro.**

# With a Divided Legislature, Compromise is Key in Harrisburg

It's no secret that the road to passing a bill through the legislature can be a long one. Each year, thousands of bills are introduced, most of which never get a hearing in a committee, much less a vote in the House chamber.

Getting a bill through committee, through the House, then through the Senate and onto the governor's desk is even more challenging this session, as the House is controlled by the Democrats while the Senate is controlled by the Republicans. This reality means that compromise is critical when it comes to passing laws.

Over the last year, as the House Majority Whip, I have worked hard to deliver as many bipartisan votes as possible that I believe will help increase opportunity and independence for people across our commonwealth. These efforts include several of my own bills and resolutions that I have either authored or co-written with legislative partners. Working together, I am pleased that so much of my own legislation has seen movement during this term so far. Here are some of these bills:



- **HB 843** – Modernizes urban search and rescue operations in Pennsylvania (passed the House in March with bipartisan support).
- **HB 181** – Creates a paid family leave program for all workers in Pennsylvania (reported out of committee).
- **HB 1381** – Amends and improves the state's juvenile justice system (reported out of committee).
- **HB 1463** – Recognizes 911 dispatchers as first responders (passed the House in April with bipartisan support).
- **HB 1481** – Provides unemployment compensation to striking workers (passed the House in November with bipartisan support).
- **HB 1665** – Increases access to school counselor support for students in public schools (passed the House in March).
- **HB 1479** – Codifies the rights of people with disabilities in our commonwealth to accessible digital content on state and local government websites (passed the House in October with bipartisan support).
- **HB 1806** – Restores the threshold for welfare fraud grading (reported out of committee).
- **HB 1943** – Requires the disclosure of chemicals used in fracking fluids by oil and gas companies (reported out of committee).
- **HB 2153** – Updates the state's prevailing wage contract law for public works (reported out of committee).
- **HB 478** – Requires child safety restraints in all truck classifications (passed the House in May with bipartisan support).
- **HB 1834** – Creates an office of the Executive Director within the Employment First Oversight Commission (passed the House in April with bipartisan support).
- **HB 1961** – Updates the Uniform Parentage Act (reported out of committee).
- **HR 260** – House Resolution recognizing the 30th anniversary of AmeriCorps (adopted by the House in March with bipartisan support).
- **HR 60** – Recognizing 'Union Organizing Week' in Pennsylvania (adopted by the House in June 2023 with bipartisan support).



# Advancing Public Safety in Western PA and in Our Communities

## Castle Shannon receives \$125,000 state grant to help with firehouse upgrades; Mt. Lebo fire training facility moving forward thanks to \$200,000 state grant

We need to do everything possible to support our firefighters so they can spend more time training rather than fundraising. That is why I was very glad to support both the Mt. Lebanon Fire Department and Castle Shannon Fire Department in their efforts to secure state funding for key initiatives.

Over the last year, my team and I worked with Shannon to secure a \$125,000 state grant to help replace three outdated doors around their fire engine bay with new, energy-efficient doors which will eliminate concerns about functionality and make sure their personnel can quickly and reliably respond to emergencies. And in Mt. Lebanon, we are excited to see that the commission will be moving ahead in the coming months with the installation of a new fire department training facility at their public works site with the \$200,000 grant we helped secure. As securing practice burn sites becomes more and more challenging, facilities like this will help make sure our firefighters get the training they need to respond when called upon.

Some of our departments are blessed to receive more funding from their municipalities, while others depend more heavily on fundraising. But running a department, purchasing apparatus, and crewing engines is not getting cheaper for anyone. As fewer and fewer people statewide sign up to be firefighters, we all must be aware of the limited time they have to answer calls, train, and sometimes to fundraise. One of those three likely needs to be eliminated entirely.

## House passes bipartisan bills to update urban search and rescue; extend workers' comp for first responders

As a retired volunteer firefighter, I know that when an emergency happens, politics doesn't matter. What does matter is making sure you have the tools, personnel, and training to get the job done – and making sure everyone goes home afterwards. After the Fern Hollow Bridge collapse in 2022, I was approached by local firefighters about improving our urban search and rescue capabilities, especially in our corner of the state.

Working with a bipartisan group of legislators, we crafted HB 843, and after hosting press conferences and technical demonstrations, we were finally able to get this bill through the House with a strong bipartisan vote. This bill helps reorganize and strengthen our regional response to large-scale emergencies that require very specialized responses, a need that was recognized a couple of decades ago shortly after 9-11. It is now over in the Senate where I hope it will receive consideration soon.

Trauma is a real danger for our first responders and, due to stigma, lack of parity, and ignorance, has led to the deaths of more firefighters than from fires. This is why I worked hard to pass HB 1632, a bipartisan initiative that recognizes the dangers of post-traumatic

stress for our first responders and gives them workers' comp coverage when they qualify.

There was pushback against this bill from insurance companies, and I accept that there is a risk of increased premiums. But I still do not understand how we are comfortable asking first responders to come save us, and then buckling when it comes to making sure they are ok for doing so. The status quo is just unacceptable, and I hope the Senate picks this bill up soon.

Speaking of first responders, a bill that establishes 911 telecommunicators as first responders that I have offered for the last couple of terms passed the House recently. Telecommunication operators are a critical part of an effective emergency response, often providing life-saving information in a timely and clear fashion. However, they also can bear the brunt of a traumatic response, talking people through horrific incidents and living through those moments with them. That's why, going forward, they must be part of our overall understanding of effective response and receive the recognition and support they deserve. This bill also awaits action now in the Senate.

*Rep. Miller is joined by Pittsburgh firefighters who were in Harrisburg to support his bill to modernize search and rescue operations in western PA. The bill was passed by the House and now awaits action in the state Senate.*



# Supporting Workers, Families, and Labor

## Across the Commonwealth and in Pittsburgh

Growing up, I remember how my family benefited when my mom got a union job that assured us healthcare benefits and a living wage. And as a former union member myself, I have always supported the rights of workers to make their own decisions. Over the past year, my caucus has advanced more pro-worker legislation in the House than in the prior decade combined, largely finding bipartisan support for almost every initiative. And we aren't done yet.

With Labor Day on the horizon as I write, I look forward to once again marching in our nation's largest Labor Day Parade right here in Pittsburgh. This is an important event that reflects our region's history but also our future, as we must have strong American businesses grow alongside our skilled workforce and with as much American-made

product as possible. Organized labor led the way in establishing our middle class, and in this age of income inequality we need them to again help to forge a new compact with our businesses that most assuredly recognizes that real economic success includes us all.



*Mayor Ed Gainey, Rep. Miller, Gov. Josh Shapiro, and legislators from across the state join labor leaders in Pittsburgh for the annual Labor Day Parade.*

## A Plan to Fix the State's Juvenile Justice System

In 2021, the state's bipartisan Juvenile Justice Taskforce issued a report that confirmed what many of us had already known -- that despite the best efforts of many, our juvenile justice system is falling short for too many of our kids.

Their research concluded that too many kids were needlessly detained, most with little or no prior history; that children of color were disproportionately impacted; and that the longer a child stayed in the system, the worse the results. This obviously is not acceptable.

Subsequently, the taskforce made 35 recommendations across a couple of sections of law, which they stated would not only improve outcomes and reduce out-of-home placement by 39 percent, but would do so while also saving taxpayers \$80 million.

Earlier this year I held an event in Pittsburgh to

talk about the findings and recommendations of the taskforce, as well as my bill, HB 1381, which reported out of the House Judiciary Committee and enact many of those recommendations. We had a fantastic discussion with state Sen. Jay Costa, along with state and national experts and advocates to talk about some of the changes we can make to address the system's shortcomings and improve outcomes for families, youth, and communities. I sincerely hope that the work of this bipartisan taskforce will not be forgotten, and that HB 1381 will make it to the governor's desk.

To watch a video recording of the hearing, scan this QR code.



*State Sen. Jay Costa, Rep. Miller, and experts and advocates who joined a panel earlier this year to discuss the state's juvenile justice system, its shortcomings, and legislation by Rep. Miller to improve it.*



## Pro-Worker Bills Pass the House

These are some of the pro-family, pro-worker bills that have passed the House in the last year.

- **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** creates 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 delivered 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.
- **HB 1449** establishes clear requirements that firms bidding on public infrastructure projects must meet, including having a state or federally registered apprenticeship program.
- **HB 1465** applies prevailing wage rates and minimum safety standards to all contracted construction work on underground systems regulated by the Pennsylvania Utility Commission.
- **HB 1481** extends eligibility for unemployment compensation to workers who are unemployed due to a work stoppage.



# Gov. Shapiro Tours Mt. Lebanon to Talk Economic Development

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to bring Gov. Josh Shapiro to Mt. Lebanon to talk about his plan to invest \$600 million to promote economic development opportunities on Main Streets across our commonwealth.

I was thrilled to show the Governor what makes our communities special – and the wonderful people and businesses who are making a difference in our area. Together with DCED Secretary Rick Siger and County Executive Sara Innamorato, we visited several local businesses along Washington Road to talk about support for small businesses and the commercial corridors that are the backbones of our communities.

Investing in and expanding existing state programs will enable even more communities to access the tools they need to create the Main Streets they desire.



*Gov. Josh Shapiro, Rep. Miller, Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Rick Siger and Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamorato in Mt. Lebanon to talk about business development.*

## Bringing Local Officials Together for an Economic Forum

My office is committed to working together with local officials and organizations to promote economic development and growth in our communities. Each year we host an economic development forum where we bring together local municipalities, businesses, organizations, and state agencies to talk about the issues and opportunities in our region. This is always an excellent, thought-provoking conversation, and we are blessed to have experienced leaders in our municipal governments who are willing to work together to get things done!



*Local government professionals attend the annual economic development forum.*

## Dormont Hollywood Theater Awarded State Grant

Building strong, resilient communities isn't just about supporting local businesses, but also the organizations that create the sense of community that binds us together. Earlier this year, with the support of state Sen. Wayne Fontana, we were able to announce a major state grant for Dormont's historic Hollywood Theater, which is undergoing renovations with a targeted re-opening for the end of this year.

The \$260,000 state grant, awarded through the commonwealth's Gaming Economic Development Tourism Fund, will enable the nearly 100-year-old theater to add accessibility features including a wheelchair lift; wheelchair and companion seating; closed captioning and hearing-impaired devices; a projector; and other renovations to the theater.

# Annual Disability & Mental Health Summit a Smashing Success



*Special guests at this year's Summit included Gov. Josh Shapiro, and state Reps. Nick Pisciotano and Joe Hohenstein.*

Every year our Disability & Mental Health Summit brings together hundreds of self-advocates, families, organizations, and elected officials for a one-of-a-kind event to share information on a wide range of topics in the disability and mental health arena.

This year's event in April was one of the largest we have ever hosted, and featured several special guests including Gov. Josh Shapiro, Lt. Gov. Austin Davis, County Executive Sara Innamorato, and a bipartisan slate of legislators from across the state.

In addition to our typical resource fairs and informational sessions, this year we added special events on Thursday night – the Festiv-ALL and the Futures Fair – which celebrated the artistic talents of our local community and provided a resource fair tailored specifically to young people making the transition from youth to adult-based services.

We had a fantastic time over both days of this year's Summit, and it was so wonderful to not only see many old friends, but also meet many new ones and help so many people find and access the services or programs they may need.

As always, this event would not have been possible without the countless volunteers who helped my office and our fantastic hosts at Beth El. I want to thank everyone who lent a hand! As promised, we continue to prioritize disability and mental health issues.



*Gov. Shapiro greets the public at the Summit.*



*Hundreds attend one of two resource fairs at the Summit, the largest event of its kind in western PA.*



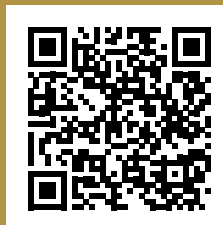
*New for 2024 was the Festiv-ALL & Futures Fair, special programs designed to celebrate people with a diagnosis and help them transition from youth to adult-based services.*



*Local musicians with a diagnosis, part of Band Together Pittsburgh, performed Thursday night at the Festiv-ALL event.*

## Missed the Summit? Catch up online!

If you couldn't join us for the Summit, many of the sessions were recorded and can be found at [RepDanMiller.com](http://RepDanMiller.com), as well as links to event programs past and present, and more!



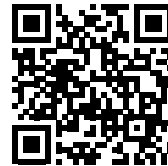




# Stay in Touch and Up-to-Date with my Office

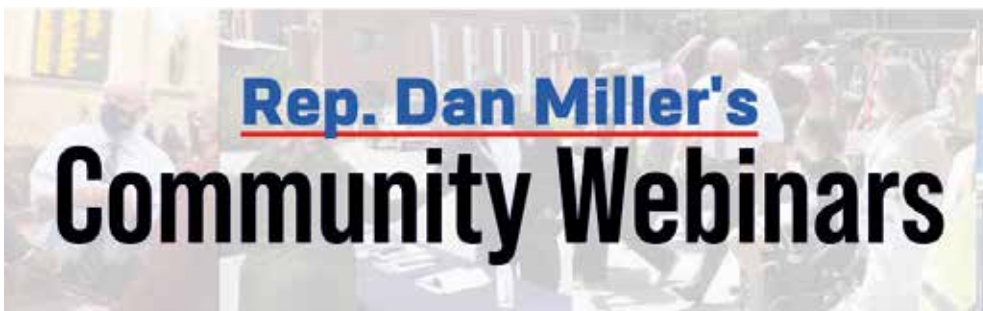
## Email newsletter

Each week my office sends out an email newsletter with information about upcoming events, important legislation in the House, state programs that could help you or your family, and other information. This is a great way to keep up to date with my office and what is happening in the state legislature – delivered to your inbox each week. All these emails are archived on my website, RepDanMiller.com, or you can scan the QR code to sign up for future updates.



## 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. To do so, call us at 412-343-3870.



## Community webinars

During the pandemic, my office explored using virtual events to continue to bring programming to you and our neighbors. The flexibility of this format was very successful, and I have continued to hold virtual events throughout the year. Recent events included a look at federal programs that provide incentives for renewable energy in the home; a review of the state budget and how that could impact mental health & disability services; and more.

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



# Upcoming Events!

Throughout every year my office hosts events across our district to connect with you and our neighbors on a variety of topics. Over the next several months we'll be out and about in communities across the region, so please watch my social media channels or visit [RepDanMiller.com](http://RepDanMiller.com) for more information as it becomes available.

## Summer Pop-Up Offices

Each summer we head out with a mission to bring state government to you – to locations throughout the community. This July and August we will bring a table full of state resources to public locations like pools, libraries, and community centers to make it easy for you to share your questions or concerns, hear the latest about what's happening in Harrisburg, or just simply say hello!

Our pop-up offices give us a chance to answer questions and share resources related to a range of state services. We will have information about REAL ID, Property Tax/Rent Rebates, and many other state programs. You'll be able to pick up a Senior Handbook, a Pennsylvania map, a 2024 PA Travel Guide, coloring and activity books, and much more. You can even apply for a Pittsburgh Regional Transit Senior ConnectCard if you are 65 or older.



## Senior Fair Brings Together Neighbors, Resources

Also, in late summer or early fall, we host an annual Senior Fair, which is one of our largest events and is specifically aimed at providing resources to our senior neighbors and their caregivers. Typically we have representatives from numerous government agencies, nonprofits, and senior-focused businesses available to provide resources, assist you and connect you to services.

Don't forget, you can always stop by our office to get your free Pittsburgh Regional Transit Senior Citizen ConnectCard or renewal, obtain help with PA Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications, and access other state services. Please call us at 412-343-3870 for more information.

## Annual Alzheimer's Event Covers Latest Developments

Today in America it is estimated that 6.7 million people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's Disease. We know that Alzheimer's has a devastating impact on individuals and families. Later this year we will convene a panel of experts to discuss Alzheimer's, the state's plan, and goals and recommendations for moving forward – we hope you will join us!

This is an event we have done for each of the last several years to not only raise awareness about the realities of families living with Alzheimer's, but to also help drive the state's response and get the latest facts and information out to the public.

Visit [RepDanMiller.com](http://RepDanMiller.com) for more information and details as they become available!

State Representative  
Dan Miller

Summer

Pop-Up

Office

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