

# **GREG VITALI**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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## ***LEGISLATIVE REPORT***

NOVEMBER 2024

# **GREG VITALI**

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## ***Property Tax Rent Rebate Program – Application Deadline Approaching***

The deadline to apply for the 2023 Property Tax Rent Rebate Program has been extended to Dec. 31, 2024. The state began mailing rebate checks on July 1. This program provides a state rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2023 to income-eligible residents who are 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older.

This year, the maximum standard rebate increased from \$650 to \$1,000. To be eligible, your household income in 2023 would need to be \$45,000 or less for both renters and homeowners. An annual cost of living adjustment has also been established for the income level, so the program will keep pace with inflation and increases in Social Security benefits.

When applying, only count half your Social Security or Federal Railroad Retirement Tier I benefits toward your total income. Applications can be submitted online at [www.mypath.pa.gov](http://www.mypath.pa.gov) or by mail with a paper application. You can obtain further information, a paper application and free help applying through my office.

## ***File Federal and State Taxes for Free Through IRS Direct File***

Starting in 2025, Pennsylvania will join the Federal IRS Direct File program, allowing you to file your Federal and State income taxes online for free through a streamlined process. Direct File will build on myPATH, Pennsylvania's free tool to file state taxes and apply for tax programs such as the Property Tax/Rent Rebate.

Using the Direct File online filing tool, qualifying taxpayers will first be able to complete their 2024 federal tax returns. Then, qualifying taxpayers will be directed to Pennsylvania's state income tax filing system, myPATH, where they can file their 2024 Pennsylvania state returns. Some information, including W-2s and demographic information, will automatically be uploaded to their state return to help save time and ensure filers don't have to input their information twice.

IRS Direct File will be open for filing in early 2025, and the online Eligibility Checker will be available later this winter to help you find out if Direct File is right for you. For more information, visit: [www.irs.gov/filing/irs-direct-file](http://www.irs.gov/filing/irs-direct-file)

## ***Finding State Grant Money Made Easier***

The Commonwealth Office of Digital Experience (CODE PA) has launched a new resource to make it easier for residents, businesses, non-profits, schools and local governments to find and apply to grant programs from state agencies. Previously, information about grants was scattered across numerous agency websites, making it difficult for potential applicants to know what programs are available, whether they qualify and how and when to apply for them.

The new discovery tool allows users to search for, sort and filter information about grants based on the type of applicant (business, individual, non-profit, public agency, school, etc.), category, application deadline, location and other criteria. The search results include links to each program, including information on who the funding is intended for, the application process, key dates and deadlines, eligibility criteria and where to apply.

For more information, visit <https://pa.gov/en/grants.html> or email the Commonwealth Office of Digital Experience at [RA-OACODEPA@pa.gov](mailto:RA-OACODEPA@pa.gov).

## ***REAL ID Reminder***

The enforcement of REAL ID will start May 7, 2025. A REAL ID is a federally compliant driver's license or ID card with enhanced security features. After May 7, you will need a REAL ID or another federal form of identification (such as a passport or military ID) to fly domestically, enter a military base or enter certain federal facilities.

To obtain a REAL ID, you must take proof of your identity (such as your birth certificate or valid US Passport), proof of your Social Security number, two proofs of your current PA address (such as an unexpired driver's license or utility bill) and proof of all legal name changes to a REAL ID center. The exact documents needed can be quite stringent, however, you no longer need to provide your Social Security Card as proof of your Social Security number. Instead, you can now use a W-2 form, a 1099 form or pay stubs that have your name and full Social Security number as proof.

Before you visit a REAL ID center, you should review the PennDOT REAL ID document checklist to make sure you have all the needed materials at [www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID](http://www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID). The closest REAL ID Centers are in Media (1097 W. Baltimore Pike, 19063) and King of Prussia (43 S. Gulph Road, 19406). My office can assist in obtaining copies of Pennsylvania birth certificates or direct you to the proper agencies to obtain other needed documents.

# ***Senior Prescription Assistance Through PACE and PACENET***

## ***Savings Bonds No Longer Considered Income for Financial Eligibility***

Pennsylvania's prescription assistance programs for older adults, PACE and PACENET, offer low-cost prescription medication to qualified residents ages 65 and older. The program works with Medicare Part D plans and other prescription drug plans such as retiree/union coverage, employer plans, Medicare Advantage and Veterans' Benefits to lower out-of-pocket costs for medications. For 2025, savings bonds' principal and interest will no longer be considered when calculating income eligibility for the PACE and PACENET programs.

Financial eligibility is calculated using your previous calendar year's income. For PACE, your total income must be below \$14,500 for a single person or below \$17,700 for a married couple. For PACENET, your total income must be between \$14,500 and \$33,500 for a single person or between \$17,700 and \$41,500 for a married couple.

You may obtain an application from the Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA), pharmacy, senior citizen center or my office. You do not need to include documentation with your completed application. The programs mentioned above will verify your information with other agencies.

If you have questions about PACE or PACENET, call my office, the PACE Helpline (1-800-225-PACE) or COSA (610-490-1300).

## ***Shop for Health Insurance Online***

Pennsylvanians can now enroll in health insurance coverage for 2025 through Pennie until Jan. 15, 2025. Pennie is Pennsylvania's official health and dental coverage marketplace and offers free meetings with Assistors, who can help you understand what options are available for you.

To have a coverage effective date of Jan. 1, 2025, you must enroll by Dec. 15, 2024. After Dec. 15, enrollments will have a coverage effective date of Feb. 1, 2025. Health care coverage through Pennie can only be purchased during Open Enrollment unless a person experiences a Qualifying Life Event, such as a loss of health coverage or changes in their household.

If you have questions or need enrollment assistance, call Pennie Customer Service at 1-844-844-8040 or visit [www.Pennie.com/connect](http://www.Pennie.com/connect).

## ***Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program***

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is now open and accepting applications until April 5, 2025 or when funds are depleted. LIHEAP offers cash grants to help with home heating bills and emergency situations, such as a broken furnace or an unexpected fuel shortage.

Applicants can be renters or homeowners, and the grant will be sent directly to your utility company or fuel provider and credited on your bill. You do not need to be on public assistance or have any unpaid heating bills. Grants do not need to be repaid.

This season's annual income limit for LIHEAP grants begins at \$22,590 for an individual. This limit increases by \$8,070 for each additional person in the household. Grant awards range from \$300 to \$1,000 based on household size, income and fuel type.

You can apply for LIHEAP online, [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us), or by submitting a paper application to the Delaware County Assistance Office (701 Crosby Street, Suite A, Chester, PA 19013). My office can also help complete and submit paper applications, or you can call the Delaware County LIHEAP Hotline at 610-447-3099 for assistance.

## ***New License Plate Design Available***

This year, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) launched a new specialty plate inspired by PA Sportsman, with artwork featuring iconic Pennsylvania hunting, fishing and boating imagery.

The license plate costs \$40 plus the registration fee. \$14 of the purchase will be deposited into a Youth Hunting and Fishing Restricted Account to be allocated evenly to the PA Gaming Commission and Fish and Boat Commission to promote youth hunting and fishing activities.



My office can provide the needed forms for this plate and submit them to Harrisburg. For more information, visit the registration plates page on PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website [www.dmv.pa.gov/VEHICLE-SERVICES](http://www.dmv.pa.gov/VEHICLE-SERVICES).

## ***Notary Service for Government-Related Documents***

Many official, government-related documents can be notarized for free in my district or satellite office. Our general policy is that the form must be going to a local, state or federal government agency – such as the school board, the state Department of Revenue or the U.S. Treasury – and even then, there are limitations to some of the documents we are able to complete.

Some of the documents my office cannot notarize include birth certificates, car titles, wills, deeds, marriage certificates, mortgages, powers of attorney, personal financial documents, non-state pension documents and the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9.

The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in-person and provide proof of identity. Please call ahead to make sure our staff can notarize your type of document.

## ***Receive my Newsletter Electronically***

To reduce postage costs and paper waste, you can opt out of receiving the paper version of my newsletter and receive only the electronic version. Just email your name, request and address to my office at [RepVitali@pahouse.net](mailto:RepVitali@pahouse.net)

## ***Follow me on Facebook***

You can follow me on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/RepVitali](http://www.Facebook.com/RepVitali). There you will find updates from Harrisburg, district news and other important state-related information.

## ***Visit My District & Satellite Offices***

My Havertown district office is open to help with your state-related matters from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays. If you have difficulty climbing stairs, we can come down to your vehicle.

You may also visit my Broomall satellite office, located at Keyboard with Kimmy (144 Lawrence Road, 19008), on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This office is on the ground floor and disability accessible. It is located near the corner of Sussex Boulevard and Lawrence Road, next to St. Pius.

No appointments are required to visit my district or satellite offices. For questions about our office or service over the phone, call 610-789-3900.