



State Representative

**RYAN A. BIZZARRO**

3rd Legislative District



FALL EDITION

WWW.PAHOUSE.COM/BIZZARRO

**CAPITOL OFFICE:**

27B East Wing  
P.O. Box 202003  
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**CONSTITUENT SERVICE OFFICES:**

**District Office**  
Peninsula Plaza  
1101 Peninsula Drive, Suite 209  
Erie, PA 16505  
(814) 835-2880 • Fax: (814) 835-2885  
*Open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays,  
Thursdays and Fridays*  
*Open 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesdays*

**Satellite Office**  
McKean Township Municipal Bldg.  
9231 Edinboro Road  
McKean, PA 16426  
(814) 476-7414  
*Open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursdays*

**Website:**  
www.pahouse.com/Bizzarro

**DEAR NEIGHBORS,**

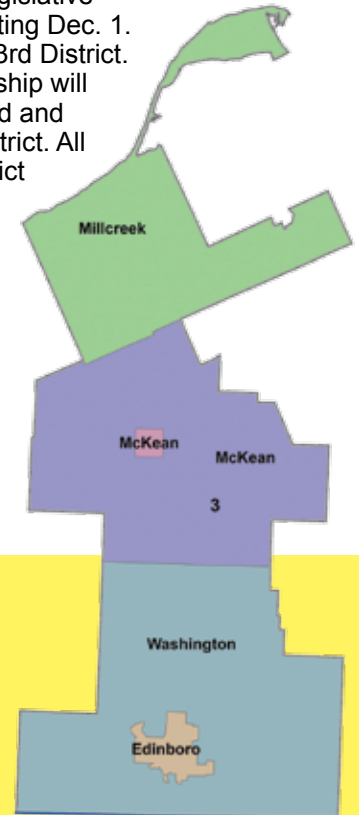
I hope you've had an enjoyable summer with family and friends. I wanted to take the time to remind you that if there's ever anything I can do to help you access state services or programs, please feel free to contact my district office. You can call (814) 835-2880 or visit 1101 Peninsula Drive, Suite 209 in the Peninsula Plaza in Millcreek. It is my great privilege to serve as state representative of the 3rd Legislative District. I take this honor very seriously and represent our region with great pride!

I'd also like to point out that with the new state legislative redistricting plan, the 3rd District will change starting Dec. 1. Edinboro and Washington Township will join the 3rd District. Fairview Township (District 4) and Franklin Township will leave to become part of the 6th District. Waterford and Waterford Township will depart to join the 4th District. All other municipalities currently part of the 3rd District will remain. I hope this reminder is helpful as the new districts will soon take effect.

As always, if you have any questions, comments and/or concerns, my office is here to help. Please do not hesitate to call or reach out. We're here for you!

Sincerely,

**The  
New 3rd  
District**



**BUDGET BASED ON  
GIMMICKS IS BAD FOR PA**

Again, the majority party in the state House and Senate forced Pennsylvania into a downward spiral by approving the irresponsible 2014-15 state budget.

The budget uses \$1.7 billion of unsustainable funding gimmicks to try to make up the massive deficit the governor created. At a time when the state needs to explore new revenue sources to help move its economy forward and take the burden off the middle class, the other side of the aisle has employed some tricky math that will hurt all Pennsylvanians in the long run.

The so-called "Big Gimmick" woefully underfunds public education yet again. Public education funding from the state

has been cut by more than \$1 billion and is now below 2008-09 pre-stimulus levels (and will near \$3 billion, cumulatively). In Erie County, schools have experienced larger class sizes, teacher and staff layoffs, reduced course offerings and more. If the state is serious about fostering a skilled workforce for the future, it cannot continue to take away important resources from students.

Ultimately, I could not support the budget, which was crafted without Democratic input. I believe a budget should reflect a state's priorities, and this budget does not address the needs of our students, middle-class families or seniors. It's politics as usual from this administration, as we've unfortunately come to expect.

# Veterans' Corner

*As Democratic secretary of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I wanted to make you aware of the following programs and issues:*

## Veteran's designation now available on Pa. driver's licenses, ID cards

Pennsylvania veterans now have an easy way to prove their eligibility to obtain benefits or get a discount at a hotel or retailer.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is now offering a veteran's designation on driver's licenses and identification cards for free. The designation – an American flag with the word “veteran” under it – is the result of a law I supported.

The veteran designation is available to eligible veterans at the next date of renewal of their license or ID card. If veterans want the designation before their next renewal, they must pay the fee for a duplicate license. Once the veteran designation has been added, it will automatically appear each time the license or ID is renewed.

The law was needed because the military generally only provides a veteran status identification card for those who have a retired designation, which requires 20 to 30 years of service. Many people serve their country for several years, and then work in the private sector, leaving them with only their discharge papers to prove their status. Now, they won't have to bring that paperwork with them.

This is just a small way of saying thank you to veterans, whose service to our country is priceless.

Veterans holding a non-commercial driver's license or identification card can immediately apply for the designation by visiting [www.dmv.state.pa.us](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us) and clicking on the American Flag/Veterans Designation icon.



## Helping our veterans through treatment courts



*I held a news conference to draw attention to the importance of veterans courts. I was honored to stand with my colleagues and several veterans to call for the establishment of these courts statewide.*

Pennsylvania has one of the largest veteran populations in the country, but sadly, only 17 counties have opened veterans courts. These courts utilize effective tools to help rehabilitate our veterans, who've sacrificed so much. My **House Bill 2180** would establish a veterans court in any county that does not have one.

Specifically, under a veterans court, a veteran struggling with mental illness, addiction or a similar condition and charged with a nonviolent crime pleads guilty to the charges. The veteran then voluntarily enters rehabilitative treatment, while under the supervision of specialized judges and probation officers. He or she may also receive guidance from a veteran mentor. If the judge feels the veteran has been successfully rehabilitated, the charges will be dismissed.

These courts don't provide a “get out of jail free card,” nor do they service violent offenders. They simply offer treatment that's specifically designed for veterans' needs while saving counties money in the process. I am proud that Erie County is taking the steps to set up its own court and look forward to watching its progress in the coming months. In the meantime, **H.B. 2180** has been referred to the state House Judiciary Committee, where it awaits further consideration. It is my sincere hope that someday in the near future, all veterans will be able to obtain the help they need through this important system.

## Free veterans assistance at district office

The second Tuesday of every month, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., a Department Service Officer from the American Legion Department of Pennsylvania visits my district office at 1101 Peninsula Drive, Suite 209 in Millcreek to help with veteran-related services.

The Department Service Officer can help with a wide range of resources, including compensation and pension claims, education benefits, enrollment in the VA Health Care system, burial and survivor benefits, state benefits, and obtaining military personnel and medical records.

No appointment is necessary and veterans do not need to be American Legion members to participate. Please call (814) 835-2880 if you have any questions about this service.



*I was honored to attend the dedication of the Erie County Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Memorial Day. I hope all residents take time to visit the memorial to pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.*



# Increasing convenience for driver's license applicants

Currently in Pennsylvania, people looking to take the road test portion of the state driver's license examination must do so at an official Transportation Department location. Because of the backlog experienced at these facilities, it can take Erie County residents up to six weeks to even schedule their exams.

Many people need to obtain their driver's licenses in a timely fashion to be able to travel to work, school or other obligations – which is why I'm sponsoring a bill designed to make it more convenient for Pennsylvanians to take their driver's tests.

**House Bill 1159** would allow third parties to administer the road test portion of the driver's license examination. Under the bill, PennDOT would approve all outside providers administering the test, which would be the same as the exam given by the department for free. It would also ban layoffs of certain PennDOT positions. The bill unanimously passed the state House and now awaits further consideration by the Senate Transportation Committee, where I'm hopeful it will come to a vote in the near future.

## Protecting against elder abuse

Elder abuse is unfortunately becoming increasingly common in Pennsylvania, which has one of the largest elderly populations in the country. My **House Bill 2007** is designed to crack down on such abuse by targeting people acting with power of attorney.

**H.B. 2007** would require all agents acting with power of attorney to sign a document acknowledging the possibility that certain actions could bring about criminal penalties. Many times, when caught committing fraud against an older Pennsylvanian or incapacitated person, these agents claim they didn't realize they were committing a crime. This legislation would negate this excuse. It would also make it easier for local agencies on aging and other organizations to secure certain financial documents in cases of suspected abuse.

The bill passed the state House and has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee, where it awaits further action. In the meantime, if you or someone you know may be the victim of elder abuse, please contact the state Attorney General's Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-866-623-2137.

## Appointment to House Insurance Committee

I am pleased to report that earlier this year, House leadership appointed me to serve on the House Insurance Committee. In this capacity, my colleagues and I consider important legislation that regulates home, auto and health insurance, as well as fraternal society group benefits.

I know many Pennsylvanians have worried about rising insurance costs and limited accessibility to coverage in recent years. It's my belief that insurance should be affordable, accessible and comprehensive – and that's what I'll be fighting for as a member of this committee. I will be sure to keep you informed of any proposed changes to insurance law within the next few months.



## Preserving Our Heritage

The Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society is now the rightful owner of three historic properties in Waterford, thanks to legislation I was proud to co-sponsor. Gov. Tom Corbett recently signed into law **House Bill 1945**, which grants the historical society ownership of Fort LeBoeuf Museum, Judson House and Washington Monument Park in early September.

I've advocated for the historical society to oversee these sites since I first took office, so I'm thrilled to see this mission come to a successful end. These treasured sites have attracted visitors from all corners of the state for years, and I am confident that they will continue to do so under the historical society's oversight. Thanks to this law, future generations will have the opportunity to learn more about Erie County's rich heritage through these important sites – which is a great success.

*I recently attended Waterford Days, an annual event organized by the Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society that celebrates Waterford's history. Here I am with the group's president, Judy Nelson.*



## My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Public Welfare (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Information about federal, state and local government agencies

**Any problem with state government!**

## Sign up for email updates

I want to alert you to House rules that prohibit when a state representative, who is on the ballot, can contact you leading up to an election. **Unless you specifically opt in to keep receiving my emails**, I am prohibited from sending you legislative email updates for 60 days before the 2014 general election.



Opting in will allow you to continue to receive notices about important issues that matter to you, including:

- Updates on legislation
- News and events in the district
- Other relevant government-related information

You can sign up to receive email alerts – and opt in to continue to receive them around elections – by visiting my website at [www.pahouse.com/Bizzarro](http://www.pahouse.com/Bizzarro), clicking “E-MAIL ALERTS” and filling out the form.

## Do you need help with your Property Tax/Rent Rebate application?

The state has extended the deadline to apply for a Property Tax/Rent Rebate until Dec. 31 of this year. My office is available to help you with any questions you may have regarding the program, which benefits older Pennsylvanians and those with a disability. While there are companies that offer to help with your application for a fee, this is **NOT** necessary. Please contact my office at (814) 835-2880 for free assistance with filing your forms.

The program is open to residents 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people 18 or older with disabilities. The income limit to qualify is \$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters. Applicants must count all sources of income toward the limit but only half of any Social Security, Supplemental Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I benefits toward their local income.

The maximum property tax or rent rebate for most qualifying Pennsylvania residents is \$650.



*My colleagues, Erie officials and I participated in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge to help raise awareness of Lou Gehrig's disease.*



# Out and about

...always working for you!



*I was honored to spend some time in the House chamber with Keystone Boys State participants.*

*I was proud to take part in the annual Highmark's Walk for a Healthy Community at Presque Isle State Park.*



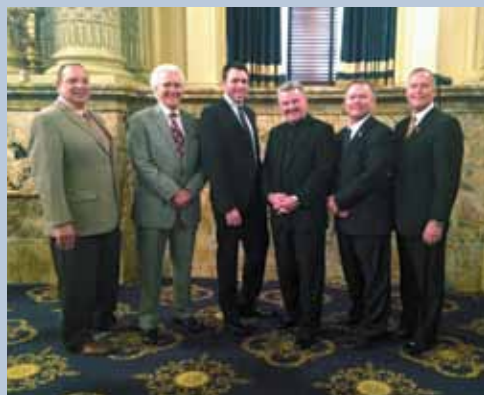
*My colleagues, Reps. Flo Fabrizio and Pat Harkins, Sen. Sean Wiley, and I spent some time at Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Awareness Day at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center. The purpose of this program is to bring quality pre-kindergarten to the state's 3- and 4-year-olds.*



*My colleague, Rep. Marty Flynn, and I enjoyed learning about various types of animals when Erie Zoo representatives visited the state Capitol.*



*The Groszkiewicz family and I enjoyed being a part of Fr. Daniel Hoffman's induction ceremony at Our Lady of the Lake Church in Edinboro.*



*The Erie delegation (from left, Reps. Greg Lucas, Flo Fabrizio, myself, Pat Harkins and Curt Sonney) welcomed Fr. John Detisch of Saint Jude the Apostle Church to the House.*

*I had a great time meeting with the wonderful ladies at the Millcreek JOY Center.*



*I had the privilege of touring the local Coca-Cola distribution center to see how the facility operates.*



*I was honored to present citations to Joseph Scott and Stephen Schroeck, who earned their Eagle Scout badges. Congratulations to these gentlemen for obtaining the Boy Scouts' highest award!*



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**RYAN A. BIZZARRO**

P.O. Box 202003  
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## INSIDE:

- Veterans assistance programs
- Protecting Erie County history
- Giving back to the community

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# STATE REPRESENTATIVE RYAN A. BIZZARRO



**Rep. Bizzarro partnered with fellow Erie County Rep. Pat Harkins to host a public hearing on bullying.**

FALL 2014  
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