

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Scott Conklin

77TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Rep. Scott Conklin is sworn into office on Tuesday, Jan. 3 for his 14th term in the PA House of Representatives.



Rep. Conklin oversees proceedings of the House State Government Committee as majority chairman.

Working to Improve State Government

I want to update you on the progress we are making in the House State Government Committee to help Pennsylvania government work better for our residents.

When the 2023-24 legislative session began in January, I was working with my colleagues as Democratic chair of the committee – a role that expanded to majority chair in March after the Democrats secured the majority in the House.

Under my leadership, the committee has approved nearly 30 bills and 25 resolutions. Nearly half the bills reported have been passed by the House, and one bill, which would bring greater transparency for state-related

universities, passed the General Assembly and has been signed into law.

In this newsletter, you'll learn more about legislation the committee has considered; a hearing we held about establishing open primaries in Pennsylvania; and updates about legislation I have introduced, including my bill to allow for earlier election pre-canvassing.

If you have any questions relating to state government or state services, please contact my State College office at (814) 238-5477 or my Philipsburg office at (814) 342-4872.

Improving the Election Process

Although mail-in ballots are now legal in Pennsylvania, current law does not allow county election officials to pre-canvass absentee or mail-in ballots until 7 a.m. on Election Day. Pre-canvassing refers to inspecting and opening envelopes containing official absentee ballots or mail-in ballots and removing them from their envelopes. It does not include the recording or publishing of the votes reflected on the ballots.

Unfortunately, officials throughout the state have complained that the current system does not provide adequate time for poll workers to inspect absentee or mail-in ballots. To address this problem, I introduced House Bill 847.

The bill would allow for pre-canvassing of ballots seven days prior to the primary or election and require county election boards to notify electors of minor issues with their ballots to allow for corrections. It would also prevent a ballot from being disqualified if it is missing the inner envelope.

By passing this legislation, we would expedite the process and eliminate delays that slow the democratic process, thereby restoring trust in the electoral system.

The committee approved the bill, which is under consideration in the House.



Rep. Conklin speaks in the House chamber.



Rep. Conklin speaks in the House chamber about his bill to empower the Office of the State Inspector General's law enforcement officers to carry firearms.

Protecting Law Enforcement

The Office of the State Inspector General works to deter and prevent fraud, waste, misconduct, and abuse in state programs and government operations. The OSIG's powers were expanded in 2017, and law enforcement officers who work for this important watchdog agency risk their lives in performing their duties.

To ensure they are better protected, I introduced H.B. 1706, which would empower these officers to carry firearms. The bill, which would benefit more than 120 OSIG officers, would help ensure these officers remain safe as they execute their duties.

The legislation passed the House by a vote of 201-2 and now awaits consideration in the state Senate. As the bill progresses, it offers the hope of creating a safer, more secure Pennsylvania, backed by a robust, empowered OSIG.

Moving Bills to Benefit Pennsylvanians

Since I began serving as the majority chair of the House State Government Committee, we have approved bills to:

Prohibit discrimination based on hair type, hair texture, and hairstyle, ensuring equality for all Pennsylvanians.

- House Bill 1394, sponsored by Rep. La'Tasha D. Mayes, D-Allegheny, and Speaker of the House Joanna McClinton, D-Phila., passed the House and now awaits consideration in the Senate.

Provide cost-of-living adjustments for long-time retired state teachers and public workers.

- The legislation includes House Bill 1415, sponsored by Rep. Dan Deasy, D-Allegheny, and H.B. 1416, sponsored by Rep. Steven Malagari, D-Montgomery. Rep. Deasy's legislation is awaiting House consideration, while Rep. Malagari's bill passed the House and is awaiting Senate consideration.

Increase transparency about our state-related universities, which receive funding from taxpayers, by directing them to comply with the Right-to-Know Law.

- The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Kate Klunk, R-York, passed the General Assembly and has been signed into law as Act 29 of 2023.

Help ensure the state is better prepared to deal with future emergencies by requiring that biannual reports submitted to the governor contain an assessment of any weaknesses or risks within departments.

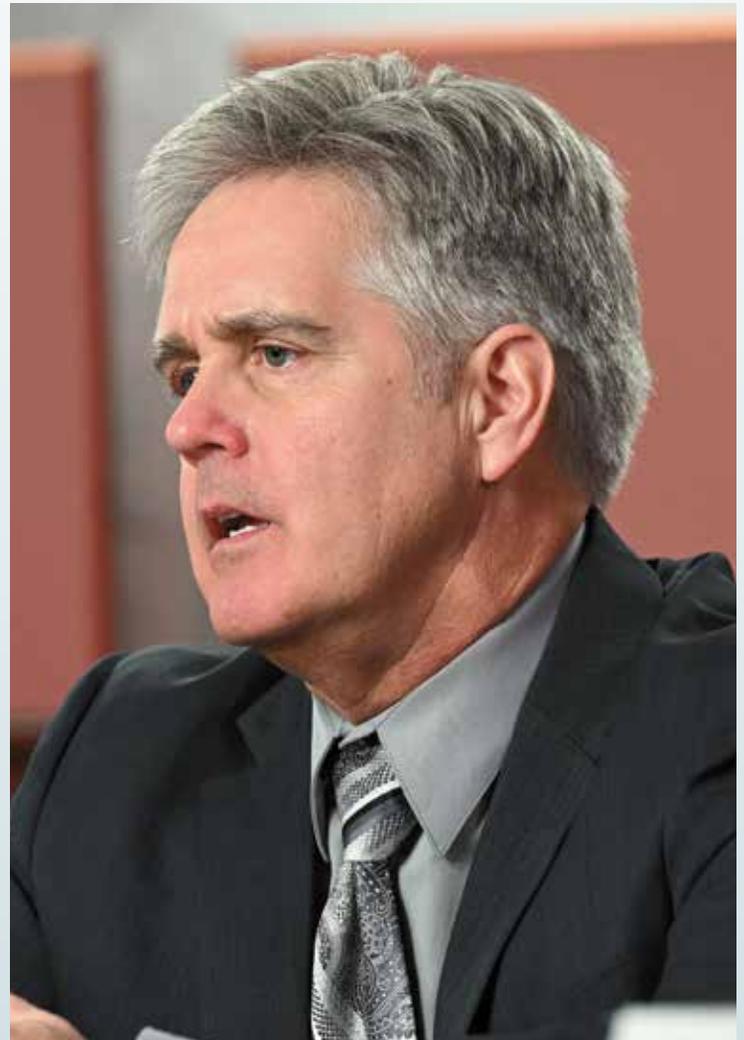
- House Bill 573, sponsored by Rep. Jessica Benham, D-Allegheny, is awaiting House consideration.

Require fiscal notes for ballot referendums relating to public debt, ensuring voters have all the information available to them when deciding a ballot question.

- House Bill 1332, sponsored by Rep. Brett Miller, R-Lancaster, is awaiting House consideration.

With these bills, we have the opportunity to improve the transparency of Pennsylvania's electoral system, ensure equality for people of color in Pennsylvania, make the cost of living more affordable for retirees, establish transparency for our state-related universities, address issues within our state departments to prepare for emergencies, and so much more.

As of the majority chair of the House State Government Committee, I will continue working with committee members to advance measures to help better serve the residents of our commonwealth.



Rep. Conklin works to advance bills to improve state government for all Pennsylvanians.



Scott Conklin

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Mark Your Calendar for the April 23 Primary Election!

The primary is currently scheduled for
Tuesday, April 23, 2024.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
If you prefer, you may cast your ballot earlier
through an absentee or mail-in ballot.

To locate your polling place for the presidential
primary, visit [https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/
Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx](https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx). You can also update
your voter registration at the Centre County Board
of Elections, located at Willowbank Office Building,
420 Holmes St., Bellefonte, PA 16823, or apply
online at [https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/
VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx](https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx).



Visit my website at www.RepConklin.com to learn more about my work in office.