

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It remains my honor to represent you in Harrisburg and a privilege to serve you here at home. My staff and I are always available to help with any state-related matter at my district offices in Hazleton and Mahanoy City. Simply stop by or contact us by phone or email.

We send these mailings every few months to keep you up to date on news from the state Capitol and here in the 116th Legislative District. I hope you find them to be interesting and informative. Another great way for us to stay connected is to register for my Friday email updates at www.RepWatro.com, under the "Resources" tab.

Thank you,

Dan S. Watro



MY BILL WOULD GIVE TAX BREAK TO NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS

I have introduced legislation that would exempt income derived from an individual's service in the Pennsylvania National Guard from the Commonwealth's Personal Income Tax (PIT).

The unselfish service and sacrifice of the brave individuals in our armed forces ensures our country and communities stay safe and prosperous. In honor of those sacrifices, it is my hope we can reward these heroes for their bravery and valor by freeing them of this tax burden. The PIT rate currently stands at 3.07%.

The exemption would also help in the Guard's recruitment efforts at a time when all branches of the military are struggling to attract and retain new enlistees.

HONORING OUR TRUE AMERICAN HEROES

I am the prime sponsor of a House resolution that recognized March 25, 2024, as "National Medal of Honor Day" in Pennsylvania.

Over 3,500 individuals have received the Medal of Honor since its establishment in 1863, of which 63 are alive today. Pennsylvania has a rich history of Medal of Honor recipients, as 379 of them were born here, meaning that more than one in 10 of those heroes have come from the Commonwealth.

One of those Pennsylvania-born Medal of Honor recipients attended the committee meeting where the resolution was approved. Retired Army Colonel Walter Joseph "Joe" Marm Jr. received the medal in 1966 for his heroic actions in a battle during the Vietnam War. It was an honor to have a picture taken with him.



MY BILL WOULD REQUIRE CURSIVE TO BE TAUGHT IN PA SCHOOLS

I am the prime sponsor of legislation that would require cursive handwriting to be taught in Pennsylvania classrooms.

In our increasingly digital world, cursive has fallen by the wayside. However, there are many compelling reasons for students to have at least a basic grasp of cursive writing. Our nation's founding documents, such as the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, are written in cursive. Many people sign their names in cursive, and it's often needed to complete a business document. Recent studies also indicate learning cursive has many developmental benefits including increased hand-eye coordination, critical thinking and self-confidence.

House Bill 1934 would mandate instruction in cursive handwriting to be taught in the appropriate grade levels. Should my proposal become law, Pennsylvania would become the 19th state in the nation to legislate a requirement for basic instruction in cursive handwriting.

The bill is currently under consideration by the House Education Committee.



STATE FUNDING FOR LOCAL STREETSCAPE PROJECTS

More than \$700,000 in state funding was recently approved for street improvement projects in Hazleton and Mahanoy City.

These grants will go toward ongoing projects designed to enhance the business districts in both municipalities, which is critical to attracting new development and jobs.

The grants were derived from the Multimodal Transportation Fund, which provides funding to encourage economic development and ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to Pennsylvania residents.

POLICY COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS STATE, REGIONAL CHALLENGES

The Policy Committee has convened several hearings across the state in recent months aimed at addressing issues facing our communities and the Commonwealth as a whole.

One of the hearings took place in Tamaqua and I attended.

We heard from local stakeholders about building ordinances and other cost-prohibitive issues developers face when trying to build or renovate properties in the Commonwealth.

For more information about the Policy Committee schedule and past hearings, visit www.PAGOPolicy.com.



SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL FIRE, EMS AGENCIES

Twenty-four fire and emergency response organizations in the 116th Legislative District were awarded nearly \$406,000 in state funding through the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Grant Program.

The funding comes from an ongoing grant program created by the Legislature and is derived from slot machine gaming proceeds, not General Fund tax revenue.

Projects eligible for funding include construction or renovation of a fire or ambulance company facility, purchase or repair of equipment, training, or reduction of existing debt.

We are grateful for our hard-working and dedicated first responders, who do an amazing job protecting lives and property in communities across the region. This annual program provides some much-needed financial assistance so they can continue providing their life-saving services.



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WORKING FOR YOU



Celebrating Aspire Bakeries' expanded production line at its Hazleton plant.



Picking up litter with Hazleton students as part of the Great American Cleanup.



Breaking ground for the \$8 million Center for Education, Business and the Arts in Shenandoah.



Explaining the lawmaking process to second-graders at Arthur Street Elementary in Hazleton.



Meeting with members of the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce and Hazleton Mayor Jeff Cusat during their visit to the state Capitol.

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