

Post Office Delays Could Impact Our Elections



In this week's podcast, we discuss the impact of delays at our local post offices and how this could have a detrimental effect on mail-in ballots for the upcoming election. [Listen here.](#)

Why Election Reforms Are Sorely Needed in Pennsylvania

You may recall that a comprehensive election reform measure I co-sponsored, which would have required voters to present ID at the polls, was vetoed last summer by Gov. Tom Wolf who later said he was open to expanded ID requirements. My House colleagues and I took the governor's cue and recently reintroduced the legislation as [House Bill 1800](#). In the meantime, other revelations that point to election interference further demonstrate the need for comprehensive election reform. [Read about it here](#).



Update on Property Tax Elimination

Work continues on my property tax elimination plan following the [Aug. 30 House Policy Committee](#) public hearing I hosted in Lebanon. I recently published an article on the goals of the plan, how it would help senior citizens and the long process to gather support for the bill. [See it here](#).



Working to Ensure Continuity of Care at PA Veterans' Homes



This week, the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, of which I am a member, held a public hearing on my legislation to reform and strengthen Pennsylvania's six veterans' homes. These facilities should offer residents the quality medical, clinical, and nursing care necessary to live a safe, active and healthy life, but the pandemic-related failings outlined in a [recent report](#) show otherwise. [House Bill 1965](#) would establish the Statewide Veterans' Home Advisory Board within the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, to provide oversight of our veterans' homes, and would improve continuity of care by realigning the local advisory committees for each of the six homes in the same manner. [I explain my bill here.](#)

Bills to Aid Missing Persons Cases Passes House

The House has adopted two bills, now under consideration in the Senate, to address missing persons cases.

- [House Bill 488](#), which I co-sponsored, would update the offense of endangering the welfare of a child to include cases in which a parent, stepparent or other guardian of a child fails to report that the child has gone missing within 24 hours. The legislation would make failure to report the disappearance of a child a third-degree felony, which carries a penalty of up to seven years in prison. The bill was inspired by the 2008 disappearance of Caylee Anthony, a 2-year-old Florida girl whose mother failed to report her missing for 31 days after she was last seen.

- [House Bill 930](#) would require the Pennsylvania State Police to turn over DNA samples of missing persons and unidentified decedents to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS), a nationwide clearinghouse that went online in 2008. NAMUS has expanded in subsequent years by linking with other national databases and collaborated with the FBI in 2012 to add a fingerprint unit to its search capability. The goal of the legislation is to help bring closure to families who have lost loved ones.



Medicare Annual Open Enrollment Period Begins

Medicare's open enrollment period is now underway and will continue through Tuesday, Dec. 7. If you or a loved one are looking for information about the plan best for you, the Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight, or PA MEDI (formerly known as APPRISE), can help. PA MEDI provides free, one-on-one counseling with Medicare beneficiaries, family members and caregivers with questions about the open enrollment period, health insurance benefits and how Medicare works. To find your PA MEDI counselor, contact your local [Area Agency on Aging](#) or the PA MEDI helpline at 1-800-783-7067.



Apply Now for Heating, Rental Assistance Grants

Eligible residents who struggle to pay their home heating bills can now apply for assistance from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is a federally funded program that helps individuals and families pay their heating bills through home heating energy assistance grants. It also provides crisis grants to help in the event of an emergency or if a resident is in danger of losing his or her heat due to broken equipment, lack of fuel or termination of utility service. The income eligibility guidelines for LIHEAP are set at 150% of the federal poverty income level. For a household of four, the income limit is \$39,750. Due to the availability of funds through the federal American Rescue Plan Act, there will be an increase in the minimum LIHEAP cash grant from \$200 to \$500 and an increase in the maximum cash grant from \$1,000 to \$1,500. The maximum LIHEAP crisis grant will increase from \$600 to \$1,200. LIHEAP is distributed directly to a household's utility company or home heating fuel provider. Residents may apply for LIHEAP online or by contacting the County Assistance Office in their county of residence. [Click here](#) for additional information. The program runs through May 6, 2022. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) is also available in each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties to help eligible tenants cover the cost of overdue or upcoming utility and rental payments. Pennsylvanians who are responsible for paying rent or utilities on a residential property, and have one or more people within the household who has experienced financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic that puts them at risk of homelessness or a utility shutoff, could be eligible for up to 18 months of ERAP assistance. More information is available at dhs.pa.gov/erap.



Roundabout on Colebrook Road (Route 241) in Lebanon County Nearly Complete



The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) announced that the roundabout at [Route 241 \(Colebrook Road\) and Rocherty Road](#) in North Cornwall Township, Lebanon County, has been placed in its final configuration. The northbound and southbound legs of the roundabout are now open to traffic, but the Rocherty Road portion of the roundabout remains closed as some minor work remains. The \$3.4 million project is expected to be completed by Oct. 29.

Help Protect PA Wildlife – Report Poachers

If you are out hunting, fishing, birdwatching or hiking and witness poaching or other suspicious or illegal activity involving wildlife, the Pennsylvania Game Commission urges you to call its toll-free hotline and report it. Operation Game Thief (OGT) can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 1-888-PGC-8001 or [fill out an online form here](#). Be sure to share as many details as possible, including the location, date and time of the occurrence; a description of the person(s) involved, their mode of travel and the species affected. Monetary rewards may be offered in some cases. More information about the program is available online at pgc.pa.gov.



Saturday is National Drug Takeback Day

This Saturday, Oct. 23, is National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, an event sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to help raise awareness and give citizens across the Commonwealth the opportunity to safely dispose of unused prescription drugs. More than 50% of people who misuse prescription pain relievers get them from friends or relatives. Prescription and over-the-counter drugs are the most commonly misused substances by those 14 years of age and older, following marijuana and alcohol. One of the best ways to fight opioid abuse is to safely dispose of unused prescription drugs. [Find a drop-off location near you](#).

