

Area Students Raise Issues in Search of Solutions



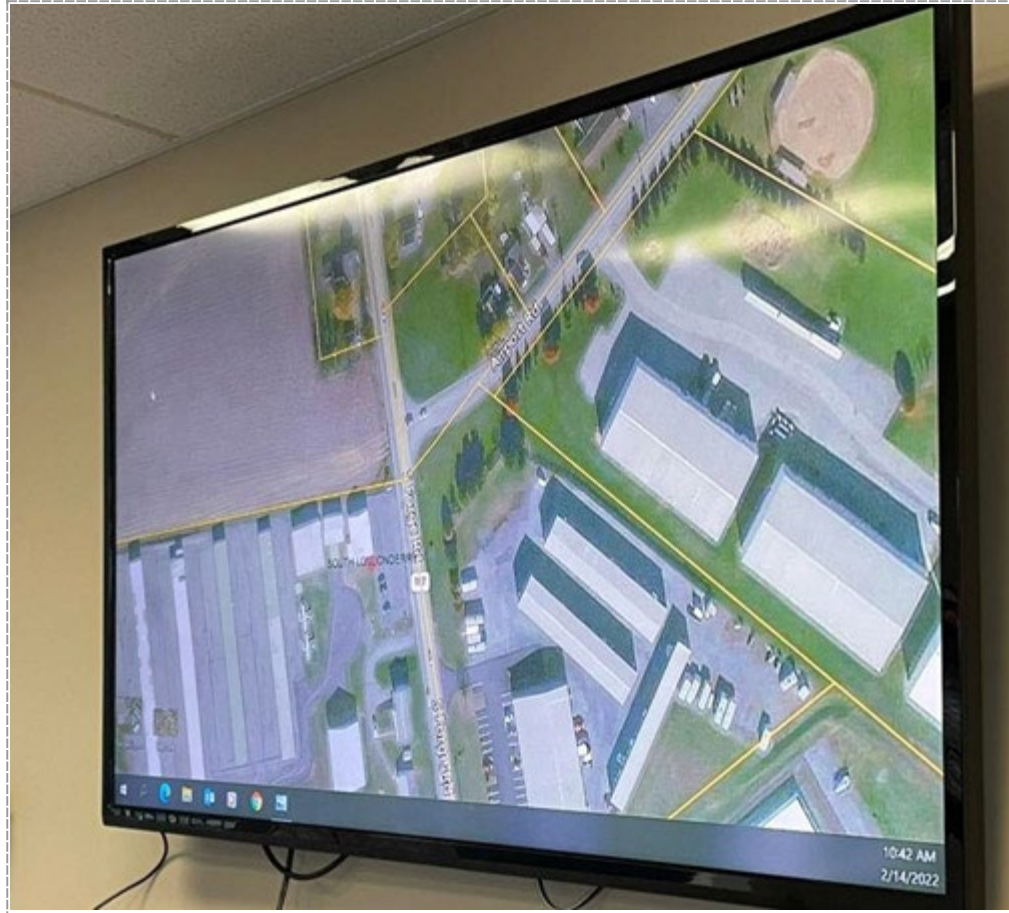
I am so grateful to the students and teachers at the Cornwall-Lebanon, Lebanon, Palmyra Area and Annville-Cleona school districts, as well as the Pennsylvania School Boards Association and Lynn Kohler for the great discussion we had this week about topics important to our students, faculty and administrators. I was impressed with the questions I received from students, who acknowledged that my term as their state legislator is coming to an end but wanted to know what I see as the issues to address going forward, such as school property taxes, gun violence in schools, bullying, and other topics of interest to them. Incredibly insightful. We have so much to be proud of with these students!

A Closer Look at Wolf's Record \$43.7 Billion Budget

The House Appropriations Committee launched its annual budget hearings this week to delve into the details of Gov. Tom Wolf's record-high spending proposal, which is based on revenue estimates that are far higher than those offered by the state's nonpartisan Independent Fiscal Office (IFO). Secretary of Revenue Daniel Hassel struggled to explain how the administration's revenue estimates are \$762 million higher than the IFO's in fiscal year 2022-23 and cumulatively \$5 billion higher than IFO's estimates over the next five years. IFO Director Matt Knittel described the governor's estimate as "optimistic" and noted that the absence of federal stimulus funds will lead to a decline in sales taxes as people have less money to spend. It is our responsibility to ensure we pass a balanced budget that meets the needs of the Commonwealth without spending beyond our means. The IFO was created specifically to ensure we have factual, unbiased numbers to work from when creating our budgets. The committee also heard from officials with the departments of Aging, Corrections, General Services, and Community and Economic Development. Budget hearings will resume the week of Monday, Feb. 28, with the departments of Environmental Protection, Transportation, State, Agriculture, Labor and Industry, Health, and Drug and Alcohol Programs, as well as the Pennsylvania State Police. For a full schedule of upcoming budget hearings and video of prior hearings, [click here](#). All hearings stream live at pahousegop.com.



Addressing Traffic Congestion on Route 117 and Airport Road



This week, I had a great meeting with county planners and officials of North Londonderry and South Londonderry townships to discuss the Route 117 and Airport Road interchange. It was a productive meeting and I appreciate the cooperative effort put forth by everyone involved. There's an interesting dynamic in the way the Commonwealth handles future development. It became apparent that our system is reacting to logistics and traffic issues rather than being proactive. If it's proactive, the community is on the hook for the payment and if it's reactive in nature the state and PennDOT, as well as the federal government, get involved. We can do better! I am very happy to report that the problem has been identified and is being worked on.

Pension System Update



In this week's Frankly Speaking with Rep. Frank Ryan, we discuss a recent report on the health of the [pension system for Pennsylvania teachers](#).

Tax Update for 2021 UC and PUA Claimants



If you claimed unemployment compensation (UC) benefits or pandemic unemployment assistance (PUA) in 2021 you should have received a 1099-G form from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. More information is [provided here](#).

DMVA Hosts Virtual Veteran Town Hall Meetings

The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) will host a series of Virtual Town Hall meetings for veterans starting next month. The series will provide the Commonwealth's nearly 800,000 veterans with a convenient platform to learn and ask questions about programs and benefits earned through their military service. The sessions will be held on Wednesdays from 5-6:30 p.m. and feature a different topic. The schedule is as follows:



- **March 16** – Veteran Suicide Prevention.
- **May 18** – Serving Older Veterans.
- **July 13** – Resources for Homeless Veterans.
- **Sept. 14** – Transportation Issues Facing Veterans.
- **Nov. 2** – Honoring Veterans for Their Service and Sacrifice.

Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters live during the WebEx chat feature. To join in the virtual town hall, veterans should [visit DMVA's website](#), [Twitter](#), or [Facebook pages](#) two weeks prior to each

town hall for the WebEx link.

\$2.5 Million in 'Schools-to-Work' Grants Available

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) is seeking applicants for its "Schools-to-Work" grant program to continue fostering partnerships between schools, employers, organizations and associations that lead to career pathways for students. Eligible applicants must be any entity that is registered with the department as a pre-apprenticeship program or is connected with a registered apprenticeship program. Other eligible applicants include entities that have an established connection with a registered apprenticeship program and are working on



pre-apprenticeship registration, and which will have the full responsibility for the administration and operation of the program. Project proposals must create learning opportunities for participating students and should focus on the coordination of people and resources to help individuals on a continuous path to family-sustaining employment and career growth. The proposal must also focus on building pre-apprenticeship programs to fill current and anticipated labor market needs in the given geographical area. The maximum award per project is \$250,000, and grants will be awarded and funded based on availability of funds. This grant is funded by reemployment funds, which may be used to fund programs and services to assist individuals to become employed or improve their employment, including, without limitation, job search and placement services, educational enhancement, job training and job readiness, and workplace skills training. Proposals are due by **Tuesday, March 15, at 4 p.m.**, with contracts starting July 1, and ending Dec. 31, 2024. [Click here for more information.](#)

Boosting Traffic Law Awareness

With 2021 preliminary data showing as much as a 10% increase in deaths on our roadways, the Pennsylvania State Police and PennDOT are marking Pennsylvania's Highway Safety Law Awareness Week, Feb. 20-26, by focusing on laws that impact crashes and fatalities each year.



Distracted Driving: Pennsylvania's texting-while-driving ban prohibits as a primary offense any driver from using an interactive wireless communication device to send, read or write a text-based communication while his or her vehicle is in motion.

Seat Belts: Pennsylvania law requires any occupant younger than age 18 to buckle up when riding in a vehicle, as well as drivers and front-seat passengers. Children under the age of 2 must be secured in a rear-facing car seat, and children under the age of 4 must be restrained in an approved child safety seat. Children must ride in a booster seat until their eighth birthday.

Impaired Driving: Pennsylvania law prohibits individuals from driving while impaired by alcohol and/or drugs. Penalties depend on the individual's level of impairment and prior offenses and can include up to \$10,000 in fines, up to five years in prison, up to 18 months license suspension, one year of ignition interlock, and more. For more information on the penalties, check out [Pennsylvania's DUI Law](#).

Speeding: Pennsylvania law requires motorists to drive at safe speeds for the current conditions and to exercise extra care when crossing intersections, railroad crossings and when special hazards exist with respect to pedestrians, other traffic, weather or highway conditions.

Pennsylvania's Young Driver Law: [Pennsylvania licenses young drivers](#) through a three-stage program that takes into account the driver's skill level, experience and decision-making ability. The law has proven effective in reducing crashes and fatalities for 16- and 17-year-olds. For more information visit, PennDOT.gov/safety.

Driver License Centers Closed for Presidents Day Holiday



PennDOT's driver license and photo centers will be closed Saturday, Feb. 19, through Monday, Feb. 21, in observance of Presidents Day. Customers may still obtain a variety of driver and vehicle products and services, including all forms, publications and driver training manuals, online through [PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website](#).