

Work Group Discusses Property Tax Elimination Bill



[*Watch Video Here*](#)

I recently held a roundtable discussion with members of the Citizens' Property Tax Advisory Group on the merits of my legislation to eliminate school property taxes in Pennsylvania. To learn more about what [House Bill 13](#) proposes to do and how it would impact you, click on the video box above.

Budget Hearings End, Negotiations Set to Begin



The House Appropriations Committee concluded three weeks of budget hearings at the state Capitol with officials of state government departments and agencies. The committee questioned state officials about disparities between the revenue and spending projections in Gov. Tom Wolf's budget proposal and the figures offered by the agencies and the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO). Last month, the governor presented a record \$43.7 billion spending plan that would increase state spending by a historic 16.6%. Now that the hearings are over, legislative leaders can take what they have learned and begin negotiating the 2022-23 budget with an eye on the June 30 budget deadline.

Responsible Management of Pensions Critical



In this week's podcast we discuss the roles and responsibilities of those serving in

public positions of fiduciary responsibility, and the concept of loyalty and prudence when making financial decisions on behalf of a client. [Listen here.](#)

House GOP Outlines Plans to Divest from Russia, Invest in Freedom

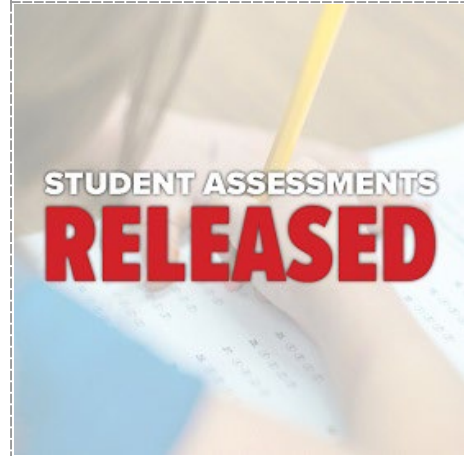


In the face of Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine, I joined other state House Republicans on Tuesday who announced legislative plans to divest from Russian financial assets and invest in freedom by empowering our energy producers to meet new oil and gas demands. Recognizing government as the main hindrance to harvesting Pennsylvania's abundant natural resources, lawmakers outlined proposals to boost energy production by opening the Delaware River Basin for natural gas development; ending the governor's moratorium on subsurface leases on state land; stopping advocacy organizations from accepting donations from foreign entities to disrupt the Commonwealth's efforts to establish energy independence; and stopping Pennsylvania's entry into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Additional proposals would follow up on actions of the state Treasury and retirement systems to require divestiture from any Russian financial assets; call on the governors of New York and New Jersey to end their pipeline bans that prevent Pennsylvania natural gas from reaching the New England states.

This week, President Joe Biden put an end to U.S. imports of Russian oil and gas. To see our news conference, [click here](#).

School Assessment Tests Confirm Pandemic Learning Loss

After a months-long delay, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) last week finally released results of student assessment tests for the 2020-21 school year. The data confirms many students are struggling as a result of learning loss that has occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, Keystone Exams and the Pennsylvania Alternative System of Assessment for a small percentage of students with disabilities, show 37.3% scored at the proficient or advanced level on math exams, 55% on the literature/language arts exams and 63.7% on the science exams. Also, participation in assessment exams dropped from the typical 97% to just 71%. To learn more about individual school district results, [click here](#).



Spring Ahead: Turn Clocks Ahead One Hour This Weekend



Daylight saving time will begin on Sunday, March 13, at 2 a.m. Be sure to turn your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night before going to bed. This is also a good time to check and/or change batteries in both smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms. The alarms should also be replaced every 10 years.

Tick-Borne Disease Threat Growing

Spring is just around the corner, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is encouraging people to plan now to protect themselves and their families against potentially serious tick-borne diseases, including Lyme disease and the rare but dangerous Deer Tick Virus (DTV), which has been found in ticks at high levels for the first time in multiple locations around the state. DTV, a type of Powassan virus, was rare in the United States, but positive cases have increased in recent years. It is spread to people primarily by bites from infected ticks. There are no vaccines to prevent or medicines to treat Powassan viruses, so prevention is the best way to reduce risk of infection and disease.



Recommended precautions for anyone venturing outdoors:

- Apply tick repellents containing permethrin to clothing, and EPA-registered insect repellents such as DEET to exposed skin before heading outdoors. Reapply as needed according to product label instructions.
- Wear light-colored outer clothing and tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks.
- Walk in the center of trails and avoid wooded and brushy areas with low-growing vegetation and tall grasses that may harbor ticks.
- After returning home, remove all clothing, take a shower and place clothing into the dryer on high heat to kill any lingering ticks. Examine gear such as backpacks for ticks.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand or full-length mirror, including hidden areas such as the scalp, ears, armpits, belly button and between the legs.
- Check over any pets exposed to likely tick habitats each time they return indoors.
- If a tick is found attached to your skin, use tweezers to remove it carefully, including the head. Monitor for symptoms and contact your doctor with any questions.

[Learn more here.](#)

DMVA to Host First Virtual Veteran Town Hall Meeting Wednesday

The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) will host the first of five virtual Veteran Town Halls on Wednesday, March 16, from 5-6:30 p.m. The topic of the first town hall will be veteran suicide prevention, with a focus on the support and resources available to veterans throughout the Commonwealth. Presenters will be Brig. Gen. Maureen Weigl, DMVA deputy adjutant general for Veterans Affairs; and Rick Hamp of DMVA, Pennsylvania's lead for the federal Veterans Administration – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the



Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and Their Families. The program will be carried [LIVE here via WebEx link](#) and participants will have the opportunity ask questions of the presenters by using the chat feature. The series will provide the Commonwealth's nearly 800,000 veterans with a convenient platform to learn and ask questions about programs and services earned through their military service. Additional meeting dates are as follows. All sessions are held from 5-6:30 p.m.

- Wednesday, May 18 – Serving Older Veterans.
- Wednesday, July 13 – Resources for Homeless Veterans.
- Wednesday, Sept. 14 – Transportation Issues Facing Veterans.
- Wednesday, Nov. 2 – Honoring Veterans for Their Service and Sacrifice.