

State Senator **LISA M. BOSCOLA**

Independent, Effective, Working to Make a Difference.

Spring 2012

Rebuilding Our Utility Infrastructure

Having spent many months crafting legislation as a result of the deadly gas explosion in Allentown in 2011, I am pleased with the new law that strikes an important balance between encouraging utilities to rebuild aging pipelines, water systems and power lines while protecting ratepayers from massive charges.

Apart from preventing dangerous and deadly utility line explosions like the one that occurred in Allentown last year, this infrastructure rebuild-

ing initiative (Act 11 of 2012) will spur economic development and help get people back to work.

As Democratic Chair of the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee, I helped draft a bipartisan amendment that will help control rate hikes and make utilities more accountable for their work.

Utility companies already have



SOME OF THE CONSUMER SAFEGUARDS IN THE NEW LAW WILL:

- **Cap the Distribution System Improvement Charge (DSIC);**
- **Make DSIC funding eligible only on the regulated portion of your utility bill. This provision protects consumers from the amount a utility can charge through the DSIC;**
- **Require infrastructure improvements to be made and in service before a utility can charge a DSIC for them;**
- **Require utilities to detail and adhere to their long range infrastructure plans with the PUC mandated to review the progress and adherence to those plans;**
- **Empower the PUC to reject faulty plans and penalize utilities for not following through on their work;**
- **Mandate that utility companies repay customers — with interest — when overcharges occur.**

the ability to recover

costs for necessary system improvements. This new law removes lengthy and costly bureaucratic regulatory lag time to get construction underway sooner – saving customers money.

While we can blame utility managers who decided to put off these infrastructure improvements for decades, we all must still face the fact that our aging utility infrastructure is rapidly going from bad to dangerously worse. Rebuilding our infrastructure at an accelerated pace will stave off breakdowns, lengthy power outages, deadly explosions and widespread infrastructure failure.

Inside Stories: Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse • Eliminating Property Taxes
Fighting to Reform the Redistricting Process • Around the 18th District

Boscola Bill Would Help Protect Children from Sexual Abuse

The sexual abuse of children remains an issue that plagues our Commonwealth. Sexual abuse and sexual violence, especially against children, is often veiled in silence.

As a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I have urged the committee chairman to move legislation I have introduced for many years that would remove the statute of limitations for victims to bring charges against their abuser.

In the current legislative session, I have introduced another bill with the goal of protecting our children. Senate Bill 1378 would



limit how close registered sex offenders whose victim was a minor can live to schools, day cares, recreation centers and school bus stops.

The measure would also require school administrators to

consult the “Megan’s Law” offenders registry annually when deciding where to locate bus stops. If administrators learn that an offender already lives within 500 feet of a bus stop, they would be required to notify police and the parents whose children use that bus stop.

The safety and security of our children should be priorities for all of us. My proposal is a measured approach that will add Pennsylvania to a growing list of other states across the country that have taken similar reasonable steps to protect our kids.

May I Help?

STATE APPLICATIONS

Vehicle Registration/Renewal
Driver’s License • Notary Public
PennDOT Disability Plates & Placards
Birth & Death Certificates

SENIOR CITIZENS’ APPLICATIONS

PACE/PACENET • Personal Records Booklet
Property Tax & Rent Rebate Form
Reduced Auto Registration

HELP FOR FAMILIES

CHIP Information • PHEAA Applications
Fuel Assistance Information
Fish, Game & Outdoors Information

Boscola Persists in Battle to Eliminate Property Taxes

Determined to continue the fight to eliminate local school property taxes, I recently offered an amendment on the Senate floor that would have eliminated property taxes by December 31, 2013. By implementing a “sunset” date for the use of the property tax in Pennsylvania, my amendment to Senate Bill 10 would have forced the state legislature to enact a fairer taxing alternative to the property tax by that date.

Unfortunately, the majority in the Senate did not want to take up this important issue and used a procedural motion to avoid a vote on my amendment. I will continue my fight to do away with this onerous and unfair property tax system that hurts senior citizens and working families and discourages home ownership.

The good news is that I have joined a number of bipartisan, bicameral members of the General

Assembly in the creation of the Local and School Property Tax Relief Caucus to begin the process of bringing forth a new proposal in this legislative session to eliminate the local school property tax.

Our caucus’ goal is to introduce legislation that will eliminate once and for all the school property tax along with other local school income and nuisance taxes and replace it with a fairer funding system.

One option under consideration is to increase the Pennsylvania sales tax to fund our schools. The sales tax option could provide a fairer system than the antiquated and burdensome property tax.

There is no simple solution, but keeping the status quo is not an option. This bipartisan group of likeminded colleagues is going to continue the fight and keep this issue on the front burner in Harrisburg.



Fighting to Reform the Redistricting Process

Seeing how selfishness and partisan politics played a role in how the Lehigh Valley was split and weakened during the recent congressional redistricting process, I continue to fight for the passage of my legislation that would ban politicians from controlling the redistricting process.

This latest congressional redistricting fiasco has once again reaffirmed that politicians with clandestine ambitions and axes to grind will continue to misuse the process. My legislation (Senate Bill 650) would take the redistricting process out of the hands of politicians and allow an independent body of citizens to draw the maps in a more equitable and rational way.

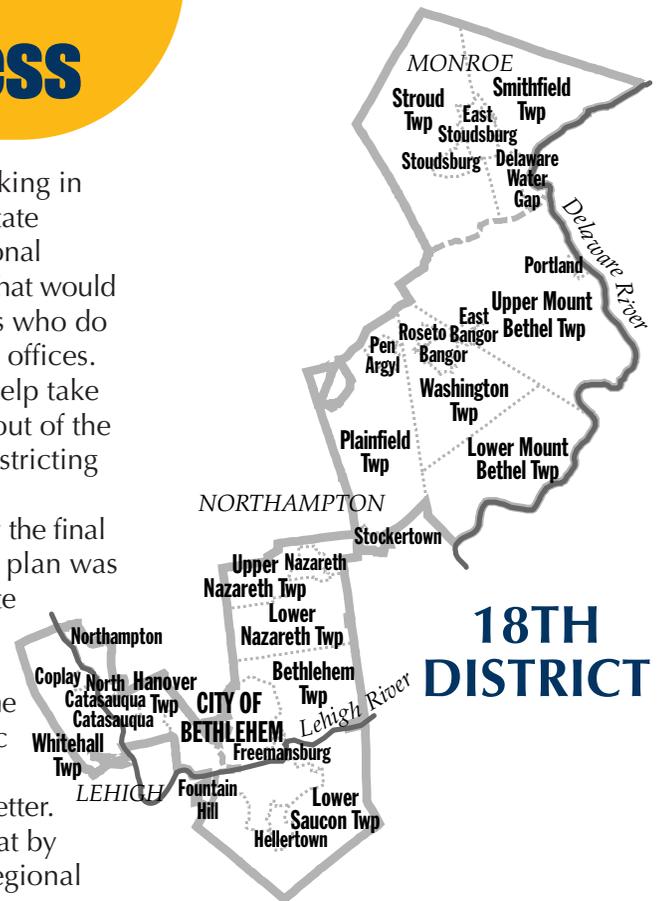
My bill, patterned off of a

proven system that is working in Iowa, would establish a state Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Bureau that would be comprised of members who do not hold political or party offices.

The proposal would help take partisanship and politics out of the reapportionment and redistricting process altogether.

I was outraged by how the final congressional redistricting plan was unveiled by majority Senate Republicans one day before the final late-night vote was taken. This scheme allowed no time for public review or input.

The people deserve better. Senate Bill 650 will do that by putting community and regional interests above political interests.



Budget Priorities

Generating greater economic activity, putting Pennsylvanians back to work, and properly funding education remain my top priorities as the legislature continues deliberating this year's final state spending plan.

Targeting investments in programs that are proven to generate economic activity and assisting entrepreneurs in creating jobs is absolutely critical. A vibrant economy sustains workers and families, which in turn fuels the funding for the kinds of programs and services Pennsylvanians rely on.

The legislature must do a better job of allocating our limited resources to areas that will improve our state. Last year, for example, Governor Corbett slashed education funding by over \$1 billion while increasing state funding for prisons. Those priorities are wrong and I will oppose further deep cuts the Governor wants to impose on our schools and colleges.

During the budget deliberations we must identify our priorities, which will hopefully include education and job creation programs. We must invest wisely for our future and see to it that everyone pays their fair share.



Senator Boscola discusses education issues at a budget hearing at the State Capitol.



Policy Committee Tackles Tough Issues

I was proud when my Senate Democratic colleagues elected me chair of our Policy Committee last year. In accepting the post, I was determined to make the committee active and focused on the state's toughest issues.

From Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and Bethlehem to Johnstown, my committee travelled across the

state to gather input on issues such as creating jobs and workforce development, improving our educational system, regulating the state's emerging gas drilling industry, veterans' issues and campaign finance reform.

We have gathered testimony from a host of experts, government officials, community leaders and working people on a variety of

issues. This input will strengthen legislative initiatives and help us solve problems in the most efficient and least costly way.

In 2011, the committee easily had its busiest and most active year ever. I will continue to use this committee as a means of focusing interest and attention on key issues that are important to the people I represent.



Senator Boscola discusses challenges facing trade/technical schools and community colleges at a recent Senate Democratic Policy Committee hearing held at Northampton Community College. Five senators met with local educators and business leaders to discuss workforce development issues. Senator Boscola, who chairs the committee, scheduled the hearing in Bethlehem to amplify local input on the issue.

Pennsylvania's New Texting Ban: 5 Things You Should Know

1. Under the law, drivers are prohibited from using their cell or smart phone for the purposes of reading, writing or sending a text message while driving a motor vehicle.
2. The new law took effect in March 2012.
3. Because texting while driving would be considered a primary offense, a police officer can pull you over if he or she sees you texting.
4. If you're reading, selecting or entering a phone number or name for the purpose of making a phone call, you won't be violating the texting ban.
5. If convicted of texting while driving, a driver faces a fine of \$50 for each infraction.





▲ Senator Boscola speaks with Dr. Art Scott, President of Northampton Community College, about the important role community colleges play with regard to economic and workforce development.

► Senator Boscola joins 76-year-old LeRoy Sutton, a regular blood donor. Every other Friday, the Bethlehem Township resident donates blood at Miller-Keystone Blood Center's donation center in Hanover Township, Northampton County. Sutton goes so often that he has set a center record of donating 100 gallons.



Around the 18th District & Beyond

▼ Senator Boscola speaks with Chad Paul, President and CEO of the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern PA, following the grand opening ceremony for their Tech Ventures expansion project, which will aid in the creation and retention of highly paid technology jobs in our region.



▲ Senator Boscola joins Diane LaBelle, executive director of the Lehigh Valley Charter School for the Performing Arts. Senator Boscola helped obtain a \$10,000 DCED grant for the school to purchase a new van to transport students.



Senator Boscola joined with colleagues to announce a package of economic development bills with a goal of breaking down barriers to work. The package included bills to improve school-to-work transitions, to provide tax credit incentives to encourage employer-supported day care alternatives, a green jobs employment and training program, a youth summer job program and incentives to grow women and minority-owned businesses. Senator Boscola is the prime sponsor of the legislation to improve school-to-work transitions so that when high school students graduate they are on a career path that matches their goals and talents and meets the needs of employers. The package is part of the caucus' 'PA Works Now' initiative.





STATE SENATOR
LISA M. BOSCOLA

Senate Box 203018
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3018

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARRISBURG, PA
PERMIT NO. 603

Need a Photo ID? I Can Help!

Pennsylvania's new voter ID law will have a direct impact on citizens who exercise their right to vote. Starting this November, every voter will be required to show a valid form of identification in order to vote. If you do not have a valid form of identification, the state can provide one to you at no cost. Do not wait until November to obtain it. Take the steps now to make sure that your vote counts in this year's General Election and all future elections.

My staff and I will gladly help ensure that you have the proper documentation to obtain a state-issued ID. Please do not hesitate to contact me for assistance.



Acceptable forms include but are not limited to a:

- *Pennsylvania Driver's License/ID Card,*
- *an ID issued by the U.S. Government that includes name, a photograph, and an expiration date that is not expired,*
- *a U.S. Military ID (active duty or retired),*
- *a valid-without-photo driver's license or valid-without-photo ID card issued*

by PennDOT for individuals who have religious objections to being photographed, and

- *other forms of photo identification that have an expiration date that is not expired such as a municipal government ID, accredited Pennsylvania public or private institution of higher learning and a Pennsylvania care facility.*

The law does require PennDOT to issue free valid IDs for those who do not have a Pennsylvania Photo ID or driver's license.

For more information on how to obtain a valid ID, please contact any of my district offices.

Offices To Serve You

BETHLEHEM OFFICE
Main Street Commons
559 Main Street
Suite 270
Bethlehem, PA 18018
(610) 868-8667
Toll-free: 1-877-535-1818
Fax: (610) 861-2184

WHITEHALL OFFICE
West Catasauga
Professional Office Bldg.
2123 North 1st Avenue
Suite A-4
Whitehall, PA 18052
(610) 266-2117
Fax: (610) 266-2169

POCONO OFFICE
Dominick A. Lockwood
Business Center
600 Main Street
Suite 112
Stroudsburg, PA 18360
(570) 420-2938
Fax: (570) 420-2941

HARRISBURG OFFICE
The State Capitol
Senate Box 203018
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3018
(717) 787-4236
Fax: (717) 783-1257
Senate of Pennsylvania:
1-800-364-1581 (TTY)

E-MAIL: boscola@pasenate.com

www.senatorboscola.com