



Capitol Correspondence

from

State Senator

Daylin Leach



Serving Delaware and Montgomery Counties Summer 2012

Dear Neighbor,

Since the state's fiscal year ends at midnight on June 30th of each year, May and June are always a busy time when everyone in Harrisburg is scrambling to put together next year's budget. We've had tough budgets for the past four years because during a recession, demand for government services goes up while revenues coming into the state coffers go down. Unlike the federal government, we are constitutionally required to balance our budget each year, so every dollar we spend must come from a revenue source.

There are really only two ways to eliminate a budget deficit: you can either cut expenditures or raise revenues. Actually, the smartest approach is to use a balanced approach that does both prudently. Unfortunately, for the past several years – due to the political realities of Harrisburg and the fact that Governor Corbett has pledged to Grover Norquist, a lobbyist who lives in Washington, D.C., that he won't increase revenues in any way – the budget has been balanced exclusively through cuts.

It is important to remember that there are many areas of the state budget that can't be cut, either due to federal or state law or contractual obligations. In some cases, if we tried to cut money from a given program, we could be sued and required by a court to spend the money with interest. In other cases, our laws force additional spending. For example, Pennsylvania's criminal code creates about 2,000 new net prisoners per year (the second highest number in the nation). This requires us to build a new prison, which costs about \$300 million to build and \$50 million per year to operate, every single year.

All of the cuts we can make must come from a relatively small sliver of the budget that is discretionary. This includes money for first responders, education, libraries, human services, health care for our citizens, transportation improvements and our safety net for the very poor. We have continued to go back to these same areas of funding when making deeper and deeper cuts each year.

As a result, we have now reached the point at which we are in real danger of abandoning basic government services and the citizens who rely on them. You may have read about how some of our poorer schools literally would have had to close their doors if the federal courts had not intervened and ordered us to provide additional funds. Tens of thousands of people have lost their access to health care, child care facilities have had to close, and libraries are either closing or drastically cutting back their hours and programs. Schools are eliminating art and music programs, guidance counselors and tutoring; and we are opening 30,000 new natural gas rigs across the state while drastically reducing the funding for environmental inspectors charged with making sure the drilling is done safely. In short, the picture is very bleak.

In this newsletter, I am going to try to give you a fuller picture of the cuts we are facing and provide you with the alternatives for which I am fighting. In my view, we could easily raise sufficient revenue to avoid most of the worst cuts without burdening a single Pennsylvania family. We must continue to provide basic services to our citizens while ensuring that Pennsylvania is a state with the educational, economic and environmental quality of life that will attract businesses and families for decades to come. I hope you find this information helpful.



At Your
Service

Offices to Serve You

KING OF PRUSSIA OFFICE

601 South Henderson Road • Suite 208
King of Prussia, PA 19406
(610) 768-4200 • Fax: (610) 768-4204

HARRISBURG OFFICE

184 Main Capitol • Senate Box 203017
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3017
(717) 787-5544 • Fax: (717) 705-7741

E-MAIL

senatorleach@pasenate.com

WEBSITE

www.senatorleach.com

May I Help?

STATE APPLICATIONS

Driver's License • Notary Public
Vehicle Registration/Renewal
Birth and Death Certificates

SENIOR CITIZEN'S APPLICATIONS

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Form
PACE/PACENET Form
Reduced Auto Registration Form

VOTER

Registration • Election Calendars
Applications for Absentee Ballots • Voter ID

Legislative Updates

◆ Protecting Patients from Fracking Chemicals

I recently introduced legislation to allow Pennsylvania doctors to acquire information about the dangerous chemicals in fracking fluid released into our environment, if they need such information to treat patients who may have been exposed to toxic poisons.

This legislation would correct what I believe to be a dangerous provision in the updated Oil and Gas Act regulations under the recently passed **Act 13**. Some components of the liquid used in the fracking process are deemed proprietary by drilling companies and are not publicly disclosed. This is a problem in itself. We should know what poisons are being poured into our ground.

Worse, language that was inserted late in the legislative process requires doctors to sign a confidentiality agreement with a natural gas company in order to receive information about the chemical contents found in fracking fluid, even if this information is necessary to treat a patient.

This information is vital to the

treatment of patients. There are disturbing reports of increased health problems near drilling sites and health professionals need all possible information to diagnose and treat their patients. By signing a "confidentiality agreement" drafted by drilling companies, doctors would be prohibited from sharing information with the patients they are treating, other health professionals working with them or on similar cases, and community health officials. This not only endangers the patient but prevents health care professionals from protecting the community.

Senate Bill 1514 would make clear that doctors in Pennsylvania have free access to the information they need to treat their patients and protect the public from harmful chemical compounds. It would make disclosure by drilling companies mandatory if they are asked to do so by a health professional and would not prevent the dissemination of that information if it would help treat patients or would protect public health.

◆ Human Trafficking

Every year, billions of dollars are generated by victimizing millions of people and forcing them into labor or sexual exploitation. In fact, an estimated 200,000 American children are at risk for trafficking each year. Because of that frightening reality, I have introduced two bills that would shine a light on this criminal practice and bring perpetrators to justice. As this newsletter goes to print, my SB 338 is scheduled for a vote in the Senate.

- **Senate Bill 338** would require posting of the Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline number in certain Pennsylvania establishments, such as those with a liquor license, massage service providers, spas, certain hotels and motels, adult entertainment clubs, and places of transit; and
- **Senate Bill 885**, known as the Vacating Convictions bill, would remove previous convictions and act as a defense for those proven to be victims of human trafficking.

The 2012-2013 Budget

As I noted at the beginning of this newsletter, I would like to stimulate an open and honest dialogue about the current budget's shortcomings. There are a number of cuts that I believe will be extremely harmful to our state. I will first enumerate some of the worst of the many troubling cuts in the budget proposed by Governor Corbett.

If I want to restore the funds for these important programs, I obviously have an obligation to identify where the necessary revenues would come from. So I will provide some suggestions along those lines as well.

TOP 5 MOST DESTRUCTIVE CUTS IN THE BUDGET PROPOSAL

1. Higher Education

Governor Corbett has proposed cutting higher education by 30 percent this year, on top of the 19 percent cut passed last year. These draconian proposals represent not cuts, but an abandonment of our commitment to make college affordable for all Pennsylvanians. These cuts would result in dramatic tuition increases in state-related universities and put college out of reach for many of our citizens.

2. Basic Education

Last year, over my "no" vote, the legislature and governor enacted a budget that cut over \$850 million from basic education. These cuts came disproportionately from poor school districts, but hurt all public schools. The governor has proposed hundreds of millions of dollars in additional cuts, including eliminating the No Child Left Behind Compliance grants and the Charter School Reimbursement grants.

3. Department of Environmental Protection

At a time when we are opening over 30,000 new fracking wells in Pennsylvania, the DEP budget is being cut, which will result in fewer inspectors and enforcement agents ensuring that this new and controversial fracking technology is being used safely and responsibly.

4. Human Services

The governor proposes to cut human service funding by 20 percent (\$168 million). These services cover needs including Mental Health, Behavioral Health, Drug & Alcohol, Intellectual Disabilities, Child Welfare, Homeless Assistance and what remains of the Human Services Development Fund. These cuts will obviously have a devastating impact on many of the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians.

5. Child Care Services

If this budget passes, we will have cut child care services and assistance by almost \$140 million over the past two years. Without these services, parents may be unable to get back on their feet, receive training, or go back to work if they have to turn down a job or opportunity because they can't afford or find child care. Also, this lack of funding could mean the elimination of "Keystone Stars", a nationally-recognized program that provides resources and professional development to the educators who prepare children for school success.

In addition, the governor has rejected the recommendations of his own hand-picked commission to raise money to fund much needed road and bridge repairs.

Let: Areas to Improve

HOW TO PAY FOR THE RESTORATION OF THESE FUNDS

1. Levying a Marcellus Shale Impact Fee

As I previously stated in the *Act 13* Update, imposing an impact fee on drillers would go a long way toward helping recoup the loss of natural resources taken from our state, as well as toward helping us balance the budget. Going further, imposing a tax on those drillers would do even more to help us. Consider that a 6% tax on producing wells would generate about \$312 million in 2012-13 and \$396 million in 2013-14. This rate is consistent with what virtually every other state in the nation charges for the extraction of natural resources from its soil.

2. Closing the Delaware Loophole

The Delaware Loophole, a way under the law for corporations to evade paying taxes, is an issue that has needed fixed for years. For some reason, this has yet to happen. If we closed the Delaware Loophole, our state would be able to bring in \$550 million in just one fiscal year.

3. Ending the Vendor Discount

Under the Vendor Discount, Pennsylvania pays private businesses millions of dollars each year just to handle sales tax receipts and remit them to the state. This program was conceived many years ago before the advent of computers, and since there's no longer a valid need for it, it's time to end it. Currently, Pennsylvania is one of only 13 states with an unlimited sales tax vendor discount. If we stopped providing this unnecessary discount, our state would save nearly \$75 million per year.

4. Taxing Smokeless Tobacco

Currently, Pennsylvania is the only state in the nation that does not tax smokeless tobacco. This would be an easy solution that would garner \$50 million per year, simply by imposing a tax of \$1.35 per unit – the same tax that is levied on cigarettes.

Find Us On The Web

www.senatorleach.com

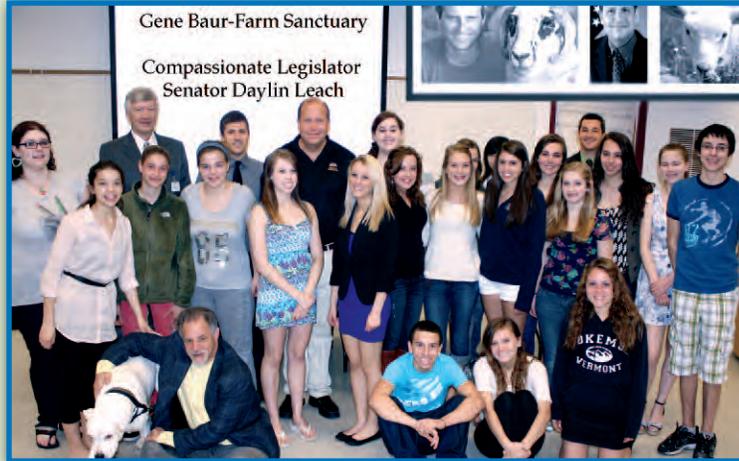
 www.facebook.com – State Sen. Daylin Leach

 www.twitter.com/daylinleach

AROUND the 17th DISTRICT

◆ Good Government 2012

In March, I held the 4th Annual Good Government Seminar at Cabrini College in Radnor. High school students from all over the 17th District participated in a mock session of the legislature, debated bills and interacted with current legislators and experts on the issues. Representative Pam DeLissio served as Speaker of the House and presided over the spirited debate between the young legislators.



Sen. Leach was honored to receive the Great Valley Animal Protection Club's Compassionate Legislator of the Year award.

◆ Dog Park Day

Please join me and Finding Shelter on Sunday, July 29th for the 4th Annual Dog Park Day! For this year's event, we have partnered with the Radnor Dog Club at the Pet Village of Wayne. The Radnor Dog Club is an indoor dog park located at 107 N. Aberdeen Avenue in Wayne.

If you and your well-socialized dog would like to attend, please RSVP by calling my King of Prussia office at 610-768-4200. Some restrictions may apply.



▶ Students from Radnor's Armenian Sisters Academy perform a dance in the Capitol Rotunda during Armenian Awareness Day.



◀ Sen. Leach speaks at a press conference with George S. Yacoubian Jr., National SOAR President; the Academy's Chairman of the Board, Asadur Minasian; and David E. Edman, former chair of AIPAC Philadelphia Leadership Council and currently Managing Partner of Risk Management Partners, LLC in Wayne.

◆ Librarians of the Year Awards

This April, I presented awards to two local librarians at the fourth annual Librarians of the Year awards celebration held at the American Reading Company in King of Prussia. Charmaine Gates from Archbishop John Carroll High School was named the 2012 School Librarian of the Year and Lorraine Gambone from Conshohocken Free Library was named the 2012 Public Librarian of the Year.

The Librarians of the Year event, part of National Library Week, honors two outstanding librarians from the 17th District each year – one who works in the local school system and one who serves the public library system. The event is sponsored by the American Reading Company.





**STATE SENATOR
DAYLIN LEACH**

Senate Box 203017
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3017



Scan this code using a QR reader on any smart phone to gain access to a special new feature on Sen. Leach's Website!

Printed on recycled paper

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

COME TO THE FAIR! COME TO THE ZOO!

STATE SENATOR DAYLIN LEACH

With Co-Hosts
**Representative Matt Bradford
and Representative Mike Vereb**



An Expo at the Zoo

Free to children and their families of the 17th Senatorial District

**August 2, 2012 • 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Elmwood Park Zoo
1661 Harding Blvd. • Norristown, PA**

RSVP by July 27: 610-768-4200 or E-mail: scharles@pasenate.com

RSVP early with your name, address and number of children and adults attending.
The Kids' Fair is limited to 1500 people.

*Free
Spin Art*

*Face
Painters*

Free Food

*State, Federal &
Local Agencies*

*Free
Admission*

*Team
Mascots*

*Free
Fingerprinting*

Go Green!

Sign up for paperless newsletters and updates by visiting www.senatorleach.com