

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

NOVEMBER 2021

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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Home Heating Assistance

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is now open and accepting applications.

LIHEAP offers cash grants to help with home heating bills and crisis grants to help with emergency situations, such as a broken furnace or an unexpected fuel shortage. Applicants need not be on public assistance to receive help through LIHEAP, nor will any lien be placed on a person's property.

This season's income limits for LIHEAP cash and crisis grants are \$19,320 (yearly) for an individual. This limit increases by \$6,810 for each additional person in the household.

These grants are available to renters and homeowners. They range from \$500 to \$1,500 based on household size, income, and fuel type. These grants will be sent directly to your utility company or fuel provider. Grants do not need to be repaid.

My office can help you complete a paper application and answer questions. Applications can also be submitted online via COMPASS at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/compass.web/Public/CMPHome>.

Medicare Counseling Available

Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight (PA MEDI), formerly known as APPRISE, offers free Medicare counseling to Pennsylvanians. PA MEDI counselors are specially trained to answer your questions and provide information about Medicare, Medicare Supplemental Insurance, Medicaid, and Long-Term Care Insurance.

PA MEDI counseling is available through your county's agency on aging. Delaware County residents may call 610-490-1300 or visit www.delcosa.org. Montgomery County residents may call 610-278-3601 or visit www.montcopa.org/148/Aging-Adult-Services.

Shop for Healthcare Insurance Online

Pennsylvania has an online health insurance marketplace called Pennie where you can shop for affordable coverage. Pennie-certified assisters can walk you through the shopping and enrollment process. Healthcare coverage can only be purchased during the Open Enrollment period which began November 1st and will continue until January 15th, 2022. Visit www.Pennie.com or call 1-884-884-8040 to compare plans, get quotes, find advice, and purchase coverage.

Help for Veterans

The PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has a website – PA VETConnect – to help connect Pennsylvania's veterans, their beneficiaries, and advocates with resources available to them.

Resource areas include benefits, employment, financial assistance, mental wellness and substance use, post-traumatic stress, and more. To learn more about PA VETConnect, visit www.dmva.pa.gov/VETConnect. You can also call your local county director of veterans affairs for more information.

Delaware County residents: call John Sheaffer at 610-891-4646.

Montgomery County residents: call Dennis Miller at 610-278-3285.

Controlling the Spotted Lanternfly

The Spotted Lanternfly is still active in the fall and winter and lays egg masses that survive the colder temperatures leading into spring. Fully-grown adult Spotted Lanternflies are between 1 and 1.5 inches long and mostly brown in color, with bright red underwings that are hidden unless in flight.

There are three keys to limiting the spread of this invasive bug: controlling it on your property; inspecting your vehicle before you leave to ensure you aren't taking Spotted Lanternflies with you; and reporting the Spotted Lanternflies when you see them.

On your property, destroy any Spotted Lanternfly and its egg masses when you see them, use circle traps on trees, and consider the careful use of pesticides. Smashing and scraping remain useful tools to controlling the Spotted Lanternfly on your property.

Before you drive, take time to inspect different hiding spots on your vehicle, including front and rear bumpers, wheel wells, and the windshield wiper recess between the hood and windshield to ensure you aren't transporting the Spotted Lanternfly with you.

Report any Spotted Lanternflies or egg masses you find around your home to 1-888-4BADFLY.

For additional information about ways to mitigate the Spotted Lanternfly, visit <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly-management-guide>.

SEPTA Senior ID Cards Expiration Extended

SEPTA Key Senior ID Cards allow seniors (65 years or older) to ride for free on all SEPTA service lines. The cards expire four years after issuance.

SEPTA is providing a one-year extension for all SEPTA Key Senior ID Cards expiring in 2021. SEPTA is also providing a second one-year extension for cards that expired in 2020. For example, cards with a November 2020 or November 2021 expiration date will continue to be valid through November 2022.

My district office can help complete first-time applications and take photos. Bring identification containing a date of birth such as a Pennsylvania driver's license or non-driver ID, U.S. passport, or birth certificate.

To replace a lost or stolen Senior ID Card, call SEPTA Key Customer Service at 855-567-3782.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Deadline Extended

The application deadline for Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been extended to December 31. The program provides rebates for qualifying Pennsylvanians on their previous year's property taxes or rent paid based on last year's income. This year's program applies to property taxes or rent paid in 2020.

To be eligible you must be 65 or older, a widow or widower 50 or older, or 18 or older with a permanent disability. A homeowner's income must be \$35,000 or less. A renter's income must be \$15,000 or less. Only half of gross Social Security benefits are taken into consideration in calculating income. Other sources must be claimed in full.

Rebates range from \$250 to \$650. Homeowners who pay a high proportion of their income in property taxes may receive a higher amount.

Applications can be submitted online at <https://mypath.pa.gov>. For assistance or to request a paper application, contact my district office.

REAL ID Enforcement Postponed

Enforcement of REAL ID has been postponed until May 3, 2023. Then you will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, identification card, or other acceptable form of identification at airport security checkpoints and certain federal facilities. REAL ID is a federally compliant driver's license or identification card with enhanced security features.

To obtain REAL ID you will need to bring all of the following to a full-service Driver's License Center or REAL ID Center:

- Proof of identity (original birth certificate with raised seal, or a valid U.S. passport)
- Social Security card
- Proof of all legal name changes (marriage license or court order from applicable county family court)
- Two proofs of current, physical PA address (unexpired PA license or ID and no more than 90-day-old bank statement or utility bill with the same name and address)

My office can assist in obtaining original birth certificates and marriage licenses.

The closest REAL ID Center is: 43 S. Gulph Road, King of Prussia. For more information about REAL ID visit: www.dmv.pa.gov/realid.

COVID-19 Booster Shots Now Available

The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 boosters are now available to eligible individuals who have been fully vaccinated.

Individuals 65 years or older who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine are eligible for a booster if it's been at least six months since their initial two doses. Individuals 18 years or older who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine are eligible if they reside in a long-term care setting, have an underlying medical condition, or work or live in a high-risk setting.

Any individual, regardless of age or condition, who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is eligible to get a booster if it's been at least two months since their initial dose.

To find a vaccine provider near you, please visit www.vaccines.gov or call 1-800-232-0233.

Emergency Rental Assistance Available

If you have suffered any income loss and/or disruption due to COVID-19 and are at risk of homelessness, you may be eligible for emergency rental assistance funds. You do not need to be receiving unemployment compensation to qualify.

Your annual income must be equal to or less than 80 percent of the area median income. For example, a household of four with an income of \$77,300 or less may be eligible for emergency rental assistance.

These funds can cover up to 12 months of housing-related expenses, including rent and utilities. They are available until September 2022 or until funds run out. The average funding amount is \$6,708.

Delaware County residents: Visit www.delco-era.com to apply. For questions, call 484-729-4200 or email info@delco-era.com.

Montgomery County residents: Visit <https://fsmontco.org/what-we-do/emergency-rent-and-utilities> to apply. For questions, call 610-630-2111 ext. 235 or email ERU@fsmontco.org.

Free Notary Service

Most official documents can be notarized for free at my district and satellite offices. Please call ahead to make sure our notary is in the office and can notarize your type of document.

Documents my office is not able to notarize include car titles, wills, deeds, powers of attorney, and the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9.

Notary work is done weekdays between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the district office and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the satellite office. The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in person and provide proof of identity such as a valid driver's license, photo ID card, or passport. Please let us know if witnesses are needed. Unfortunately, we cannot provide witnesses at our satellite office.

My district office is on the second floor. If you are unable to climb stairs, please let us know when you call. Our notary can meet you on the ground floor. Our satellite office does not have stairs and is handicapped accessible.

Search for Unclaimed Property

The Pennsylvania Treasury is holding about \$4 billion in unclaimed property and estimates that 1 in 10 Pennsylvanians has a legal claim.

Unclaimed property includes checks from employers and utility companies, dividends and interest from savings accounts and stocks, and credit balances.

You can search for unclaimed property at <https://www.patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property> or by calling the Treasury at (800)-222-2046. Claims can be filed online, providing real-time approval and faster payment.

My office can also help you search.

Follow me on Facebook

You can follow me on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/RepVitali. There you will find updates from Harrisburg, district news, and other important state-related information.

Join My Email Update List

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. To be added to that list, please email RepVitali@pahouse.net.

Resources for Heroin and Opioid Use Disorder

Help is available for Pennsylvanians battling substance use disorder. Resources include detox services, in-patient rehabilitation, methadone maintenance, recovery housing, and outpatient care.

For more information:

Delaware County residents can visit <http://www.delcohsa.org/drugalcohol.html>.

Montgomery County residents can visit <https://www.montcopa.org/2783/Health-and-Human-Services>.

For immediate confidential help, call 1-800-662-4357 to speak with a professional or visit <https://www.pa.gov/guides/opioid-epidemic/>.

District & Satellite Offices Open

My Havertown district office is open to help with your state-related matters from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday.

My satellite office at the Ardmore Library is open on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The library, located at 108 Ardmore Avenue, is ADA compliant and located in the basement.

My staff can assist with SEPTA Senior ID Card Applications, Property Tax/Rent Rebate Forms, Birth/Death Certificates, Notary Services, and more at both locations. No appointment is necessary.