



Autumn 2011

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN LAWRENCE

13TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
1 Commerce Blvd., Suite 200, West Grove, PA 19390

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS! TOWN HALL MEETINGS SCHEDULED

DEAR NEIGHBOR,

As summer draws to a close, and the rush of autumn approaches, I want to take a few minutes to provide you with an update on your state government.

Policies enacted on a state level have a significant impact on a host of important issues. Oftentimes, it seems the media focuses on the political scene in Washington, D.C., leaving legislative action in Harrisburg on the back burner. As your state representative, I want to make sure you know what is going on in the state Capitol.

I encourage you to take a moment to review some of the legislation passed into law during the spring session on page 2. I also included a discussion of issues likely to be addressed in the autumn legislative session and a calendar of upcoming district events.

On page 2 of the newsletter, please take a moment to complete the survey and return it to my office. As your voice in Harrisburg, I am very interested in your opinions. Of course, if there is something on your mind that is not addressed in this survey, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at JLawrenc@pahousegop.com, or call the Jennersville office at 610-869-1602.

Just a note about the format of this newsletter – you may notice that there are not a lot of glossy color pictures or flashy graphics. This is by design. My goal is not to impress you with a lot of expensive special effects; my goal is to connect with you on some of the important issues in Harrisburg in the most efficient manner possible. In fact, if you are interested in receiving future newsletters via email, thus saving the cost of postage and printing, please sign up at my website, RepLawrence.com. More information on this service is available on page 4.

It is both a great honor and very humbling to serve you in the state House of Representatives. Thank you for the opportunity to do so.

Respectfully Yours,

John Lawrence
State Representative

I am hosting several town hall meetings this fall in an effort to learn more about the ideas and concerns of those I represent. I will present a brief update on what is happening in Harrisburg and the district and then open it up to questions. Please mark your calendar to attend one of the following meetings.

THURSDAY, OCT. 20

10 a.m. – West Grove Borough Hall
17 Rosehill Ave., West Grove

7 p.m. – Elk Township Municipal Building
952 Chesterville Road, Lewisville

FRIDAY, OCT. 21

10 a.m. – Highland Township Municipal Building
100 Five Points Road, Coatesville

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 9

10 a.m. – Modena Borough Hall
5 Woodland Ave., Modena

7 p.m. – West Sadsbury Township Building
6400 North Moscow Road,
Parkesburg

THURSDAY, NOV. 10

10 a.m. – Franklin Township
Municipal Building
20 Municipal Lane,
Kemblesville

7 p.m. – Lower Oxford
Township Municipal Building
220 Township Road,
Oxford

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13TH DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE SURVEY

I am seeking your input on legislative issues currently before the General Assembly. Please take the time to fill out the survey and mail it to my district office at 1 Commerce Blvd., Suite 200, West Grove, PA 19390. You can also fill out the survey online through my website at RepLawrence.com. Thank you.

1. Do you support the privatization of Pennsylvania's state-owned liquor stores?
 YES NO NO OPINION
2. Currently it is illegal to hunt most game animals on Sundays in Pennsylvania. Do you support including Sundays as part of regular hunting seasons in Pennsylvania?
 I SUPPORT SUNDAY HUNTING
 I DO NOT SUPPORT SUNDAY HUNTING
 NO OPINION
3. Do you support a state-funded tuition voucher/scholarship program allowing public school students to attend a private or parochial school?
 YES NO NO OPINION
4. Do you support placing a severance tax or impact fee on gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale region of Pennsylvania?
 YES NO NO OPINION
5. Do you support using state funds to provide a cash reward to tipsters providing leads on individuals suspected of committing welfare fraud?
 YES NO NO OPINION
6. Pennsylvania has more structurally deficient bridges than any state in the nation. Which of the following, if any, would you support to raise funds for road and bridge repair?
 INCREASE THE GAS TAX BY 5 CENTS PER GALLON
 INCREASE COST OF ANNUAL VEHICLE REGISTRATION
 PLACE TOLLS ON INTERSTATES / MAJOR ROADWAYS
 NONE OF THE ABOVE
7. Currently, revenue generated by table games in casinos goes to the state's general fund. Would you support all revenue generated from table games going towards property tax relief?
 YES NO NO OPINION

Please include your name and address for our office records. This information is kept private and is not shared or sold to any outside companies.

LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

Since the beginning of January, the House has passed 136 substantive bills of which 89 have been signed into law by Gov. Tom Corbett. Many of these bills will translate into necessary reforms and regulations that will enhance our freedoms and protect the citizens of our Commonwealth. Below is a brief summary of some of these new laws:

Welfare Reform (Act 22) – Pennsylvania's Auditor General, Jack Wagner, has repeatedly stated that Pennsylvania suffers from \$1 billion in welfare fraud annually. While much work remains to be done in this arena, several key initiatives were enacted into law earlier this year. Under the new law, the Department of Public Welfare must:

- Use an electronic cross-reference system to provide a 19-point check on an applicant's eligibility.
- Subject individuals with a prior drug conviction to a random drug test to ensure welfare benefits are not being used to subsidize drug abuse.
- Ensure individuals only apply for benefits in their own county of residence, eliminating "venue shopping" where individuals "shop around" for the county with the highest level of benefits.

PennWATCH Searchable Government Database (Act 18) – Under this newly enacted law, all state government contracts will be placed online in a searchable Internet database. For too long, our state has been rife with no-bid contracts and sweetheart deals. By putting information online in an easy-to-use searchable system, the press and the public will be able to see how taxpayer money is being spent, read the details of government contracts, and pull information on state officials' salaries.

Residential Sprinkler Mandate (Act 1) – Under the old law, any new single-family home constructed in Pennsylvania would have been required to install a sprinkler system as of this year. Such a system would add between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to the cost of a new house, plus the continuing cost of maintenance for the system. Only California had a similar requirement. Under the new law, the choice to install a sprinkler system is left up to the homebuyer, relieving him or her from a significant unfunded government mandate.

The Fair Share Act (Act 17) – Pennsylvania has a national reputation for lawsuit abuse. Under this new law, a person found liable in a lawsuit will only be responsible for paying his or her fair share of the damages. Under the prior law, a person found even 10 percent responsible could be forced to pay 100 percent of the amount awarded in a lawsuit.

The Castle Doctrine (Act 10) – Under this newly enacted law, the law now assumes that an attacker or intruder on your property intends to cause great bodily harm. As such, deadly force may be used to protect yourself and your family in the face of such an attack.

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The following are several commonsense bills and resolutions before the General Assembly that I support or have written. I am hopeful these measures will make their way through the committee process and be voted upon in the House in the near future:

Abolish the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (House Bill 76) – Pennsylvania is one of the few states to have multiple agencies administering construction and maintenance of roads. This legislation would fold the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission into PennDOT to create one agency responsible for all state road and bridges. The associated reduction in administration would be a savings to the people of Pennsylvania.

Allow School Districts to “Opt-out” of Prevailing Wage Requirements (House Bill 709) – Currently, all new school buildings must be built using the “prevailing wage,” a union-based salary structure. School districts in our area must use the Philadelphia prevailing wage for all major construction projects, which drives up costs to the taxpayers. This legislation would give school districts the option to “opt out” of this requirement, which would result in substantial savings and lower property taxes.

Part-Time Legislature (House Bill 1064) – Our form of democracy is best served by a citizen legislature that is closely involved with the community. This legislation would follow the lead of a number of other states and return Pennsylvania to a part-time legislature. It would also move our state into a two-year budget process, which would allow for better long-term fiscal planning and greater financial responsibility.

Public Integrity Commission (House Bill 1200) – Poll after poll shows people have less trust and respect for their public officials than ever before. The Public Integrity Commission Act would appoint independent certified law enforcement personnel with the responsibility of investigating allegations of unlawful activity by elected officials.

Antique License Plates (House Bill 1203) – I sponsored this legislation, which allows the display of vintage license plates on antique automobiles for a \$75 fee. This fee would go toward the reconstruction of state roads and bridges. It recently passed the state House unanimously, and is slated for consideration in the state Senate.

Revenue from Table Games to Property Tax Relief Fund (House Bill 1386) – Many people believe that all tax revenue from gambling goes toward property tax relief. Unfortunately, this is not the case – in fact, all revenue from table games goes to Harrisburg for inclusion in the state budget. This legislation would mandate all revenue from table games go toward property tax relief.

Combine State Capitol Security Forces (House Resolution 359) – Upon election, I was surprised to learn that the Pennsylvania Capitol building in Harrisburg has three police forces under one roof – the Capitol Police, the House Security Force, and the Senate Security Force. To me, this is a textbook example of government redundancy and inefficiency. I drafted and introduced this legislation which calls for the forces to be combined at a savings to the taxpayers.

Relief from Federal Sign Mandates (House Resolution 369) – The Federal Highway Administration recently unveiled a series of road sign mandates that will force municipalities across Pennsylvania to replace millions of perfectly usable road signs. This is a classic example of the federal government overreaching its authority and forcing a costly mandate on local government. I introduced this resolution calling on the federal government to back off and leave decisions of this nature to state and local governments.

OUT AND ABOUT IN THE 13TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT...



Rep. Lawrence recently spoke at the rededication of the Pennsylvania State Police barracks in Avondale.



Rep. Lawrence and Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture George Greig listen to comments from the audience during a breakfast forum with local farmers at the Russellville Grange. Lawrence hosted Greig on July 28 for a tour of southern Chester County's agricultural community.



Rep. Lawrence discusses education funding with students from Lincoln University in the Capitol Rotunda.



Rep. Lawrence recently hosted a legislative tour of the Sikorsky Helicopter facility outside Coatesville. Sikorsky's entire production of civilian helicopters is completed at its facility in Chester County.

CONCERNED ABOUT ISSUES WITHIN OUR GOVERNMENT? WANT YOUR VOICE HEARD? JOIN MY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD.

Would you like to advise me on issues of importance to our community and our Commonwealth? Are you interested in having your voice heard in government? Do you feel like no one is listening? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, then you may be interested in serving on my Citizens Advisory Board.

The board will meet quarterly to discuss current legislation in front of the General Assembly and how it may affect Chester County. As a member of the board, involved citizens can share their expertise and wisdom on topics such as agriculture, education, veterans' issues, taxes and business. I will provide a legislative update to the board during these meetings, but the purpose of the sessions is really for me to listen and learn from you. I welcome your proposals for new legislation, or for outdated laws that perhaps could be repealed.

Candidates interested in applying for the Citizens Advisory Board should submit their name, contact information, and a one- or two-paragraph summary about their interest in government directly to me via regular mail or email at JLawrenc@pahousegop.com. All residents of the 13th Legislative District are eligible to apply for a seat on the board.



PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE DEADLINE EXTENDED

The deadline to file for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate program has been extended from June 30 to Dec. 31, 2011. Property Tax/Rent Rebate forms are available by contacting my district office or by visiting my website at RepLawrence.com.



*Mark
Your
Calendars!*

PROPERTY TAX FORUM SLATED FOR OCT. 11

I will be hosting a **Property Tax Forum** on **Tuesday, Oct. 11, at 7 p.m.** at **Parkesburg Borough Hall, 315 West First Ave., Building 1, Parkesburg**. Joining me at the event will be my colleagues, Reps. Seth Grove (R-York) and Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster), to discuss efforts in Harrisburg to reform the state's property tax system. We will also take questions from the crowd. I hope to see you there!

WANT TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY INSTEAD?

In an effort to cut costs, I am offering the opportunity for people to sign up to receive my newsletter electronically instead of by mail. Simply go to RepLawrence.com and click on the "e-newsletter" icon on the upper right corner of the page to sign up.

Even if you already receive regular email updates, you must complete this form and include your full mailing address so you can be removed from the newsletter mailing list. You will be notified via email when a new edition of the e-newsletter is available.

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