



REPRESENTATIVE PAUL CLYMER

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SUMMER 2011

Session Wrap-Up

Since the beginning of January, the House has passed 136 substantive bills, of which approximately 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.

The following is a brief summary of some of the important legislation to date that passed the House and was signed into law by the governor:

Building Code Relief- repeal of the sprinkler mandate removes the requirement that automatic sprinkler systems be included in new home construction.

Castle Doctrine- permits the use of force, including deadly force, as self-defense against an attacker or intruder inside your home or occupied vehicle with specific protection offered against civil lawsuits.

Fair Share Act- restores fairness when assessing penalties in liability lawsuits. Defendants would only be held responsible for his or her proportionate share of total damages awarded to compensate a plaintiff.

Welfare Reform Package- includes measures that require the Department of Public Welfare to use an electronic cross-reference system to provide a 19-point check on an applicant's eligibility, creates a standard fraud detection system and subjects drug felons applying for benefits or already receiving them to random drug testing.

PennWATCH Reform- creates a public online database of all state government expenditures to promote greater openness and transparency of state government to Pennsylvania taxpayers.

Unemployment Compensation Reform- includes measures to improve and offer cost savings to the unemployment compensation system, such as requiring those receiving benefits to actively search for work and creating a severance pay offset.

Controlled Substance Legislation- reforms Pennsylvania's Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act to include street drugs commonly referred to as "bath salts" as well as synthetic marijuana and Salvia Divinorum.

2011-12 STATE BUDGET

A responsible and sustainable spending plan

Although crafting this year's budget proved challenging, the ultimate 2011-12 state budget passed the House on June 29, and was signed into law by the governor on June 30. The budget spends \$27.15 billion, which is approximately \$1 billion less than the 2010-11 budget, has no tax increases and no new borrowing. The budget is a responsible and sustainable fiscal plan that cuts wasteful spending and eliminates non-essential and duplicative programs while still funding our core government responsibilities.

Making education a priority

Basic education represents one-third of the entire state budget, or approximately \$9.34 billion. We managed to increase funding for K-12 by \$230 million more than the governor's original budget proposal in March. The General Assembly, demonstrating its commitment to education, also dedicated \$12.5 million from each of the four caucuses to restore an overall total of \$100 million for the Accountability Block Grant program for school districts, which is flexible funding the schools can use as they see fit.

In addition, the State System of Higher Education will be funded at 82 percent of the 2010-11 funding level; state-related universities will receive 81 percent of the 2010-11 funding; and community colleges will receive 90 percent of the 2010-11 funding.

Maintains safety net for those truly in need

The 2011-12 budget increases spending for the Department of Public Welfare by 1 percent in order to make sure those who are eligible for assistance are able to receive it. In addition, public welfare reforms were also passed along with the state budget that will help reduce instances of fraud and abuse within the welfare system, thereby saving state dollars and resources for those who are truly in need.

Furthermore, funding that was proposed to be cut in the governor's budget plan was restored to areas of the budget such as hospitals, human services, burn centers, cancer screening services, trauma centers, obstetric and neonatal services, and domestic violence and rape crisis services.

For more information on the 2011-12 state budget, visit my website at PaulClymer.com.

Fall Agenda

This fall, when the Legislature returns to session, we will be discussing and voting on legislation pertaining to several key issues, including Marcellus Shale impact fees, school choice, state liquor store privatization, reduction in the size of the state Legislature and funding for roads and bridges.

Legislative Efforts Continue...

For the past several years, I have been diligently working to get two bills passed into law that will serve to bring more jobs and a greater sense of pride back to the people of Pennsylvania and that will help protect, and possibly save, victims of human trafficking.

Bill Would Require State and National Flags be Made in America

First introduced in 2005 is my bill that would require all Pennsylvania-purchased state and national flags be manufactured in the United States.

Although the Commonwealth does currently buy both Pennsylvania and U.S. flags from Valley Forge Flag Company in Wormelsdorf, PA, and Annin Flag Company in Verona, N.J., to distribute to local governments, schools, civic groups and other organizations, my bill would ensure that this practice of buying American-made flags continues.

This bill has been introduced due to the elimination of import quotas on hundreds of textile products under the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Textiles and Clothing. This has been a major concern to American textile manufacturers that are already suffering losses of licenses because of overseas competition.

House Bill 651 is currently before the House State Government Committee.

National Human Trafficking Hotline

The second largest criminal industry in the world is human trafficking, which is basically modern-day slavery through forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation.

My legislation would create a National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline within the Commonwealth.

The hotline, which would be funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and operated by a national movement known as the Polaris Project, would be a national, 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, toll-free call center that provides callers with a range of services, including victim assistance through urgent and non-urgent referrals within the anti-trafficking and related fields; tip reporting; and comprehensive resources and technical assistance for the anti-trafficking field and those who wish to get involved.



▲ The House Education Committee held a series of meetings to examine various school choice proposals in the beginning of August.

Education Committee Focuses on School Choice

As chairman of the House Education Committee, I have been conducting informational meetings over the summer to further investigate several key educational issues concerning school choice, and the level of state government involvement in these educational options.

School choice covers various topics that include homeschooling, private education, charter schools, cyber charter schools, blended schools, scholarship assistance to students through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program, vouchers, and other initiatives intended to give students and parents an option aside from the traditional brick-and-mortar public schools.

Several proposals have been introduced in the House thus far, and they include measures to offer vouchers, scholarships and financial relief to students from low-income households attending failing schools to increase their educational opportunities.

During the committee meetings I held, we examined all aspects of the school choice issue, including the cost, level of state funding, student testing and teacher assessment in private school settings, special education and students with special needs, the financial impact upon public schools, the ability to cross school district borders, as well as transparency and accountability. The committee is also looking into why parents choose to send their children to schools other than the traditional brick and mortar schools.

We must realize that each child is different and while most students will do well in the traditional educational structure, this is not true for every student. Therefore, we must put all of the options on the table to ensure that parents and students can find the best possible fit for their needs.

We have an opportunity to make a difference in the state with these programs, yet I believe that we need to go about this process carefully and review all the pertinent information before we make any permanent changes. That is why these committee meetings have been so vital.

The issues of school vouchers, as well as possibly other school choice proposals, are expected to come before the General Assembly this fall.

150th Anniversary of the Civil War Commemorated with Area Events



This year marks the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, and Pennsylvania is hosting a series of events and activities throughout the year to commemorate the role of the state in the war.

Some of the events featured include performances on the role of various groups in the Civil War, plays centered on Civil War stories and related topics, parades and reenactments.

For a complete list of commemorative events, visit my website and click on "PA Civil War 150."

FROM THE 145TH TO HARRISBURG...



◀ Rep. James Roebuck; Mike Quick, former Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver; Rep. Clymer; and Rep. Ron Waters attended a press conference on the introduction of the Safety in Youth Sports Act to better manage concussions and to increase awareness regarding their seriousness and the devastating, life-long effects concussions can cause.



▲ Upon the occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary, Rep. Clymer had the pleasure of presenting a House citation to Emil and Erma Klinger of Sellersville.



◀ Pennridge Little League (14 and Under) captured the state Little League title. Pictured are the coaches, team members and Clymer extending congratulations to the team members.



▲ Rep. Clymer (center) stood with local officials and PennDOT personnel during the official opening of the Saw Mill Bridge in Haycock Township this past November. The project, which spans Kimples Creek, was completed two weeks ahead of schedule.



▲ Rep. Clymer participated in the National Bell Ringing Ceremony on July 4 in Sellersville. Pictured left to right are Alexander Potoczny Jr., councilman; Clymer; Christopher Fickes; and Thomas Hufnagle, mayor of Sellersville.



▲ Rep. Clymer enjoyed a little "R and R" during opening day of trout fishing along the east branch of the Perkiomen Creek.



▲ Rep. Clymer took part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the East Rockhill Bridge on Branch Road. Pictured left to right are Jim Nietupski, East Rockhill Township supervisor; Charlie Martin, Bucks County commissioner; John Crossman, East Rockhill Township supervisor; Clymer; and Rob Loughery, Bucks County commissioner.



▲ Rep. Clymer addressed students and teachers from 26 schools for the opening ceremonies for Career and Technical Education Month in February in Harrisburg. The theme this year was "Live Your Dream... Get a Career and Technical Education." The program is sponsored by the Bureau of Career and Technical Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In attendance were students from Bucks County Technical High School, which had a display called Mechatronics.

2011 SURVEY QUESTIONS

As always, I am seeking your input on legislative issues currently before the General Assembly. This survey is designed for two members of your household to participate. Please take the time to fill out the survey and send it to my district office at 311 North 7th St., Perkasie, PA 18944. You can also fill out the survey online through my website at **PaulClymer.com**.

1. Do you support or oppose the privatization of Pennsylvania's state-owned liquor stores?

Support Oppose No Opinion
 Support Oppose No Opinion

2. Do you support or oppose implementing a tax and/or impact fee on Marcellus Shale drilling?

Support Oppose No Opinion
 Support Oppose No Opinion

3. Do you support or oppose expanding school choice in Pennsylvania through vouchers – a check paid to the parent allowing them to choose their child's school?

Support Oppose No Opinion
 Support Oppose No Opinion

4. Do you support or oppose a 5 cent per gallon increase in the gasoline tax that would benefit the construction of roads and bridges?

Support Oppose No Opinion
 Support Oppose No Opinion

5. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations on how Pennsylvania can promote "Made in USA" on products manufactured here in the Commonwealth?

What My Office Can Do For You

Please do not hesitate to contact the district office for assistance with any state-related matter.

General Services:

- Obtaining PA birth and death certificates.
- Providing copies of PA legislation and laws.
- Senior citizen program information and application forms.
- Information on veterans' outreach services.
- Serving as a liaison between local and state officials.
- Obtaining higher education grant/loan applications.
- Quick access to state tax forms.
- State pamphlets, brochures and publications.
- Streamlining consumer complaints to the proper agencies.
- General assistance in cutting through red tape.

Transportation Services:

- ◆ Zeroing in on "pothole" problems for repair.
- ◆ Processing permit and license applications and renewals.
- ◆ Assistance in replacing lost licenses and registrations.
- ◆ Making changes in license classifications.

District Office:
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Deadline to Apply for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program Extended

The deadline to apply for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate program is being extended to Dec. 31.

Eligible participants can receive a rebate of up to \$650 based on their rent or property taxes paid in 2010. The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians who are 65 years or older, widows and widowers 50 years or older, and those 18 years or older with disabilities.

Eligibility income limits are set at the following levels, excluding 50 percent of Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, and Railroad Retirement Tier 1 benefits:

- \$0 to \$8,000, maximum \$650 rebate (homeowners and renters)
- \$8,001 to \$15,000, maximum \$500 rebate (homeowners and renters)
- \$15,001 to \$18,000, maximum \$300 rebate (homeowners only)
- \$18,001 to \$35,000, maximum \$250 rebate (homeowners only)



Residents are reminded to provide all the necessary income, property tax or rental information required to process claims quickly and accurately.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim forms are available by contacting my district office at (215) 257-0279, or by visiting my website at **PaulClymer.com**.