

# Capitol Correspondence

from  
**State Senator**

# Daylin Leach



Serving Delaware and Montgomery counties

Winter 2009

## *Dear Friend,*

As you probably know, we are constitutionally mandated to pass a budget each year by June 30. The budget determines how much money we spend each year, what we are going to spend it on, and where the money we spend will come from. Unlike the federal government, we cannot borrow money and we cannot run a deficit. Every dime we spend has to come from somewhere and it all must be delineated in the budget.

This year, the budget was passed 101 days after the June 30 deadline. Many people and organizations that rely on state funds suffered, and Harrisburg was unable to focus on any other important issue during the three month impasse. How and why did that happen?

Well, it wasn't because the legislature forgot to pass a budget or because we didn't get around to it. There were a couple of reasons for the delay:

First, we are in a national recession. During a recession the demand for government services goes up. More people are unemployed, without health care, in danger of foreclosure and otherwise in need of help from the state. At the same time, tax revenues have declined. Fewer people are working, so less income tax is collected. People aren't buying as much, so less sales tax is collected. People aren't selling their homes, so less real estate transfer tax is collected. As a result, we faced a \$3.3 billion deficit.

Pennsylvania's budget is around \$28 billion, and much of that is not discretionary. We are required by federal law, state law and contractual obligation to spend money on certain things. Cutting \$3.3 billion out of the smaller, discretionary portion of the budget would mean dramatic reductions in core governmental services such as health care, education and crime prevention. Some people may think such cuts are the way to go, but we can't pretend that the cuts needed to make up this large of a deficit are not painful and do not affect real people.

Second, the people of Pennsylvania have elected a divided government. There is a Democratic governor and a Democratic House of Representatives, but a Republican Senate. This gives both political parties veto power over any final budget deal. There are sincere and passionately held philosophical differences between the parties on how to balance the budget, so reaching an agreement was very difficult. Eventually, after thousands of hours of tough negotiations, both sides backed off from their hardened positions and an agreement was reached. Clearly, it took too long for that to happen.

What would help prevent this in the future? In my view, the first thing we should do is start negotiations much earlier. This year, serious discussions didn't start until mid-June. I think we should start in March or April. I would also recommend that negotiators avoid holding daily press conferences talking badly about the other side. This encourages a hostile negotiating environment and does not help the process. That said, as long as we have divided government and large budget deficits, resolving our differences will be difficult.



## OFFICES TO SERVE YOU

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www.senatorleach.com



Senator Leach addresses members of the community at a local town hall meeting.

## ◆ A Look at Constituent Service

*A Message From My Staff: How We Can Help*

One of the core functions of our district office is constituent service and we are here to help you in a variety of ways. When you have questions about state agencies and functions, make us your first call! My staff has helped hundreds of constituents deal with PennDOT, Revenue and the Department of Health, just to name a few. We are equipped to help facilitate these requests as well as assist with select local and county issues. When it comes to policy, our staff can help answer your questions about legislation and Senator Leach's position on issues that are important to you.

In addition to helping you navigate state agencies and the legislature, our constituent service staff has been hard at work planning and executing a slate of fantastic events throughout our area. These events are always free of charge and open to all residents of the district. Since July, Senator Leach has held

several large-scale events for constituents, including the Kids' Fair at Elmwood Park Zoo, the Employment Symposium in Norristown and the Senior Expo at Plymouth Meeting Mall. Senator Leach has also met with constituents around the district via smaller events like our successful Town Hall in Havertown and the "Donuts with Daylin" series at all District 17 Senior Centers.

We look forward to bringing you the many exciting and engaging events planned for this season and the New Year! For full event information, please visit our Web site at [www.senatorleach.com](http://www.senatorleach.com).

*If you have questions, concerns, or need help resolving a problem, please contact the Director of Constituent Service, Hally Ammons at [hammons@pasenate.com](mailto:hammons@pasenate.com).*

You Are Invited to Senator Leach's

# TOWN HALL MEETING

*Residents of the 17th District are invited to participate in our democracy.*

**Thursday • January 28, 2010 • 7 p.m.**  
**Upper Merion Township Building in Freedom Hall**  
**175 West Valley Forge Road • King of Prussia**

Please contact our District Office at  
**610-768-4200** or email [scharles@pasenate.com](mailto:scharles@pasenate.com)  
for more information.

# Legislative Update

## ◆ Death with Dignity

Inspired by an experience within my own family, I have introduced legislation to empower terminally ill people to make end-of-life decisions. It is not an easy subject to broach, but many Pennsylvanians are forced to live out the final months of their lives in excruciating pain, with no hope of recovery. **Senate Bill 404** would, with very strict provisions and protections, allow a person who has fewer than six months to live and no hope of recovery to obtain a prescription to end their life at a time of their choosing. The bill is awaiting action in the Judiciary Committee.

## ◆ Shackling of Pregnant Inmates

I recently introduced legislation that would limit the shackling of pregnant prisoners while they are giving birth. Shackling can be dangerous for the unborn baby, as well as the mother: leg shackles can affect balance, belly restraints can injure a pregnant woman, and wrist shackles can prevent hospital staff from having the freedom of action they need during childbirth. **Senate Bill 1074** would allow the shackling only in the most extreme cases of flight risk or potential harm to the public. The Judiciary Committee is currently discussing my proposal.



Senator Leach stands with supporters and addresses the media during a press conference for his same-sex marriage bill, SB 935.

## ◆ Marriage Equality

This June, I introduced **Senate Bill 935**, which would revise the definition of marriage from “one man and one woman,” to any “two people.” I believe that the current wording in our law treats an entire group of people as second-class citizens. Until we extend basic rights, including marriage, to all Pennsylvanians, we fail to live up to the creed of our Constitution. The bill is currently in the Judiciary Committee, awaiting a hearing or a vote.

## ◆ Safe Food, Safe Families

In our effort to raise bigger, better and disease-free livestock and poultry, our farmers are bombarding animals with antibiotics. While this produces nice steaks, it means that we consume the antibiotics, reducing

their effectiveness when we use them to combat disease within our own bodies. I introduced **Senate Bill 398** – the Safe Food, Safe Families Act – to limit the use of antibiotics on healthy farm animals. The bill has been assigned to the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

**Go Green!**

Sign up for paperless newsletters and updates by visiting [www.senatorleach.com](http://www.senatorleach.com)

# Upcoming and Past Events

## ◆ Senior Expo

In October I held my first annual Senior Expo at the Plymouth Meeting Mall. Over 50 non-profit, governmental and local agencies provided information and answered questions from hundreds of senior citizens. A complimentary lunch was provided as well as donated door prizes. The event was a huge success and I look forward to seeing everyone at the Expo in October 2010!

## ◆ Employment Resource Symposium

I recently hosted my first annual Employment Resource Symposium at the George Washington Carver Center in Norristown. Constituents had the opportunity to receive education in credit counseling, resume writing, and assistance programs. A variety of agencies offered job applications and information on job placement, job training, and continuing education. If you would like more information on employment assistance, please contact Julia McGrath at [jmcgrath@pasenate.com](mailto:jmcgrath@pasenate.com) or call 610-768-4200 or visit my Web site at [www.senatorleach.com](http://www.senatorleach.com).

*Below: Senator Leach talks to constituents at his first annual Senior Expo.*



*Senator Leach and residents of the 17th District at his first annual Kids' Fair.*

## ◆ Thank You for coming to my first annual Kids' Fair!

This past August hundreds of families gathered at the Elmwood Park Zoo for my first annual Kids' Fair. Parents and children enjoyed fun activities and engaged with over 50 vendors to learn about environmental protection and conservation. Children participated in a live animal show and enjoyed free pizza, hot dogs and water ice. The event was a huge success and I look forward to seeing everyone at the Zoo next August!

Please Join Senator Leach

for his first event in his

# WOMEN'S LECTURE SERIES

*Eating Disorders: A Panel Discussion on Awareness & Health Reform*

Saturday • February 20, 2010 • 11 a.m.

Bryn Mawr Film Institute

824 West Lancaster Avenue • Bryn Mawr

Screening of the PBS documentary

**"Nova: Dying to Be Thin" to be followed by a panel discussion.**

Light refreshments will be served

Please RSVP to Shannon Wells at [swells@pasenate.com](mailto:swells@pasenate.com) or visit [www.senatorleach.com](http://www.senatorleach.com) for additional details.

## ◆ Student Gallery at the District Office



Senator Daylin Leach stands with his children, Brennan and Justin, and students from Plymouth Whitemarsh High School at his district office gallery reception.

I am proud to represent area schools and students of the and I have turned the district office conference room into a Student Art Gallery, showcasing the extraordinary work of high school students from around the district. The gallery currently features work from the students of Plymouth Whitemarsh High School. All interested students from the 17th District should submit their work to the rotating gallery at the district office. For more information, please contact Hally Ammons at [hammons@pasenate.com](mailto:hammons@pasenate.com).

## ◆ Current Events Discussion Groups

As part of outreach efforts, our office facilitates current events discussions at senior centers and other venues around the district. If your organization or school is interested in holding monthly discussion groups, please contact Hally Ammons at [hammons@pasenate.com](mailto:hammons@pasenate.com) for scheduling information.

## ◆ ElderNet's Annual Holiday Baskets

This year my office donated holiday baskets to local families. Due to the hard work of ElderNet of Lower Merion & Narberth hundreds of families in our community will have a healthy and happy holiday season.

## Internships

Attention high school and college students! Senator Leach's district office is still accepting applications for 2010 Spring and Summer Internships. Please contact Hally Ammons at [hammons@pasenate.com](mailto:hammons@pasenate.com) for application information. At right: Senator Leach with the 2009 interns.



## Senator Leach's Mobile Office

It's important that we stay in touch with all of our constituents and in order to do that successfully, we bring our office to you! Our staff continues to hold monthly Mobile Office events at public libraries, senior centers and township buildings across the 17th District so you can get the information you need at a location that is convenient for you. If your organization would like to schedule Mobile Office events, please contact Hally Ammons at [hammons@pasenate.com](mailto:hammons@pasenate.com).


For a full calendar of Mobile Office events, please visit our Web site at [www.senatorleach.com](http://www.senatorleach.com)



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## How You Can Help

### Visit My District Office to Donate Toys

During this holiday season please stop by my district office to donate new toys for needy children in our community. We will be collecting toys for the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation. Contribute to our children today!

### Canned or Non-Perishable Food Items Needed

Senator Leach's district office is now collecting canned and non-perishable food items for the Ada Mutch Community Resource Center in Bryn Mawr. Please remember to bring a food item next time you visit our office!

### Donate Cosmetics and Toiletries for Women

Help female ex-offenders find their way back to productivity and prosperity by providing them with basic resources needed for a successful transition back into the community. Your donation of new socks or undergarments, and basic cosmetics and toiletries will be sent to Why Not Prosper, a local organization that offers women an array of programs and resources. For more information please contact Sarah Charles in my district office at 610-768-4200 or [scharles@pasenate.com](mailto:scharles@pasenate.com).

### ◆ Volunteers and Donations Needed at the Soup Kitchen of St. John's Church

If you would like to volunteer your time or a food donation, please consider giving back to your community by working at the soup kitchen of St. John's Church. The soup kitchen is located at 23 East Airy Street in Norristown. Co-chairs Grace and Cecil Bean opened the soup kitchen in 1982. The staff is 100% volunteer and they serve meals to more than 600 people weekly. For more information on donating or volunteering, please contact my office at 610-768-4200 or email [scharles@pasenate.com](mailto:scharles@pasenate.com).

*Right: Senator Leach stands with Grace and Cecil Bean at St. John's Episcopal Church after serving breakfast to more than 100 people.*

