



# Capitol Correspondence

from

State Senator

# Daylin Leach



Serving Delaware and Montgomery Counties

March 2014

*Dear Friend,*

In February, Gov. Corbett released a 2014-2015 budget plan filled with empty platitudes and election year pandering, a plan that paints a dismal picture of Pennsylvania's economic future. The \$29.4 billion spending plan would, shockingly, restore some of \$1 billion cuts made to education in years past, but his proposed restorations simply won't do enough to provide for the schools that are struggling to make ends meet in low-income neighborhoods, and they certainly won't do enough to restore our faith in a governor who has demonstrated, time and time again, how little regard he has for our public education system, our most vulnerable citizens and our environment.

Across our nation state revenues are up 3.8% but in Pennsylvania we have a billion dollar deficit. Since Gov. Corbett has been at the helm, our economy has become a slowly sinking ship. We've fallen to 48th in the nation for job creation and 42nd in a rating of states' fiscal health. Social and environmental programs have been left by the wayside as previous budgets have slashed their funding to alarmingly low levels. Some, like the Epilepsy Support Services program, have been so deeply cut that they're teetering on the brink of extinction. What's worse, nothing in Gov. Corbett's 2014-2015 budget plan aims to fix these problems.

This plan makes no mention of the changes we need to make to put Pennsylvania back on track. Minimum wage earners are left out to dry, as the budget does not provide for a minimum wage increase. Corporations will continue to run roughshod over the residents of the Commonwealth as loopholes remain open. They will continue to receive tax breaks without any responsibility to add more jobs or pay their workers fair wages. There are no job-creating proposals and no solutions to reduce our 180,000 job deficit relative to the national economy. Vulnerable Pennsylvanians will struggle to obtain the care they need as there are no plans to expand Medicaid.

At a time when our governor proposes to balance the budget by expanding drilling in our state forests, it is disappointing to note that the budget for DCNR has decreased by \$2.9 million and much of the operating budget at DCNR comes from the oil and gas lease fund. In other words, the parks and forest, a precious and finite common resource that benefits all Pennsylvanians through tourism and recreational use, is being exploited to enhance the oil and gas industry's bottom line and to ensure that our governor can keep his short-sighted and irresponsible no tax pledge.

Simply put, Gov. Corbett's budget proposal will accomplish nothing positive for the average Pennsylvanian, and instead, will create a world of possibilities for corporations and millionaire donors backing the governor's bid for reelection. The interests of regular Pennsylvanians will not be protected and our state's economy will not be bettered, or even preserved, under this budget plan. Pennsylvania deserves better, and I am hopeful that through this spring's budget discussions, we will be able to improve upon a plan that sets out to do so little.

As always, I will keep you posted on our progress during this year's budget negotiations through emails, social media, and my Senate Website. I am confident that by making our voices heard about the injustices proposed by this budget, we can make real progress and find a solution that works for everyone.

*Follow Me @*

[www.senatorleach.com](http://www.senatorleach.com)



State Sen. Daylin Leach



# Legislative



## ◆ Protecting and Honoring Our Veterans

In the near future I will be introducing two important pieces of legislation to help Pennsylvania's veterans. The first is an expansion of a wonderful program that reduces the property tax burden on veterans who have a disability rating as a result of their service. Currently, a veteran who is 100 percent disabled is eligible for complete relief from their property taxes under the Disabled Veterans' Real Estate Tax Exemption Program. I would like to expand that program by giving veterans a discount on their property taxes equal to their disability rating. For example, veterans with a 30 percent disability rating would receive a 30 percent reduction in their total property tax bill. It is unfair that veterans with a 90 percent disability rating received while in service for our country are currently ineligible for any property tax relief and my legislation would change that.

The second piece of legislation addresses the many veterans of the Vietnam era who have been convicted of crimes since leaving the military. Some of these veterans were convicted prior to our current knowledge of the effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its effects and implications. Most were convicted in trials that did not take into account the trauma, mental injury and stress associated with combat and the subsequent return to society. My legislation would allow one-time resentencing hearings for some eligible veterans so that their PTSD can be taken into account. It will be a small window in which veterans can file for a rehearing – and not all veterans will be eligible – but for those who are, it can be a chance at a fair hearing that our lack of knowledge denied them the first time around.

## At Your Service

### Offices to Serve You

#### KING OF PRUSSIA OFFICE

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King of Prussia, PA 19406  
(610) 768-4200 • Fax: (610) 768-4204

#### HARRISBURG OFFICE

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#### E-MAIL

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#### FACEBOOK

State Sen. Daylin Leach

#### WEBSITE

www.senatorleach.com

## May I Help?

#### STATE APPLICATIONS

Driver's License • Notary Public  
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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

## Constituent Service Update

### ◆ Don't Forget to File Your Taxes!

Tax season is upon us, and my office is here to help! We have stocked a number of tax forms that you may use to file your 2013 taxes and my highly trained constituent service staff can help you complete them if you require assistance. You may also visit the Department of Revenue Website – [www.revenue.state.pa.us](http://www.revenue.state.pa.us) – to obtain the paperwork you need. And don't forget to submit your forms by April 15th!



### ◆ Healthcare Open Enrollment Closes March 31st

Open enrollment for the Affordable Care Act's Healthcare Marketplace ends March 31, 2014! You may qualify for coverage outside of the open enrollment period if you've experienced an important life event such as marriage, divorce or job loss, and Medicaid and CHIP applications are accepted year round. For those who do not qualify for a special enrollment exception and will need to obtain coverage for 2014, you must visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) and register now. If you need assistance with the enrollment process, you may contact my King of Prussia office at (610) 768-4200 or visit us at 601 S. Henderson Dr., Suite 208 in King of Prussia.

# e Update



## ◆ Medical Cannabis

I was recently joined by Sen. Mike Folmer (R-Lebanon) in introducing the first bipartisan legislation to legalize medical cannabis in Pennsylvania. S.B. 1182 would allow patients dealing with a variety of life-threatening and debilitating diseases to consume medical cannabis with a recommendation by their doctor.

Already there has been a heartening level of interest in the legislation in the Capitol. The Senate Law and Justice Committee held a hearing on the legislation and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are recognizing that this is medicine no different than the narcotics and pharmaceuticals that Pennsylvanians are already being prescribed – except for one important distinction. The difference is that medical cannabis has almost no adverse side effects.

Prior to the hearing, Sen. Folmer and I launched a social media campaign to introduce Pennsylvanians to the people this bill would help, and we began by highlighting the struggles of our youngest citizens. **#MeetThePAKids** and **[www.senatorleach.com/sb1182](http://www.senatorleach.com/sb1182)** introduces us all to Pennsylvania's kids

with intractable epilepsy, Dravet Syndrome and other seizure disorders who would be immediately helped by medical cannabis. These children can suffer over 200 seizures a day, making the formation of a memory difficult, much less a normal childhood.

Mothers of these children, doctors and researchers testified at the hearing that children in Colorado with similar diagnosis have seen 90 to 99 percent reductions in their seizures by taking an oil derived from cannabis. Not only are we denying these children the medicine they need, but we are forcing their doctors to treat them using cocktails of powerful narcotics, the balance of which has to be tweaked constantly as their bodies reject and adapt to the pharmaceuticals. Some kids are on as many as seven highly-addictive, dangerous drugs, the side effects of which can be deadly. We make these families struggle with the effects of these drug cocktails for one incomprehensible reason: because Pennsylvania will not allow them to have a medication that is derived from the cannabis plant. This is an ineffective and harmful mentality to have, and it's one that needs to be changed.

## ◆ Act 13 Update

In February 2012, Act 13, an update to the Oil and Gas Act of 1984, was passed in the General Assembly. One of several troubling aspects of the bill was the provision (Sec.3222.1(b)(10) that requires doctors and other health care officials to sign a confidentiality agreement before they would have access to the proprietary ingredients in the fracking chemicals that their patients may have been exposed to in order to make a diagnosis. In response, I introduced SB544, The Physician Access to and Disclosure of Chemicals in Marcellus Shale Hydro-Fracking Act, to remove the confidentiality requirement so doctors would not be forced to delay their diagnosis and would be free to share the information with others to better serve the interests of the public health.

At the same time, Dr. Alfonso Rodriguez filed a motion in a lawsuit saying that this provision compromised his medical ethics and prevented him from his obligation to protect the public health. In October 2013, a U.S. District Judge ruled that Dr. Rodriguez lacked standing. This, of course, was a big disappointment. However, in December 2013, in a remarkable Supreme Court decision on Act 13, the Supreme Court ruled that Dr. Rodriguez does indeed have standing and that the lower court must reconsider his motion. It is my hope that this ruling will set a precedent and will allow for a fully-litigated decision on whether companies can put corporate secrets ahead of public health.

I also want to applaud the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on its Act 13 ruling which upheld the rights of local municipalities to determine their own zoning ordinances to protect the health, safety and welfare of their residents. It was an enormous and substantial victory for the citizens of our Commonwealth as it enshrines Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution and validates our right to clean air and pure water. The ruling strengthens our ability as citizens to conserve and maintain our common resources not just for ourselves, but for generations to come.

## Featured Nonprofit Organization

### ◆ Womanspace Ardmore

Womanspace Ardmore, a residential treatment program for chemically dependent women, focuses on recovery and therapy in a home-based atmosphere aimed at rehabilitation and a return to the community. This wonderful nonprofit is currently in search of much-needed donations including linens for twin beds, towels and washcloths, toiletries, food, underclothes, hampers and hangers, as well as board games and arts and crafts. For more information, visit Womanspace at 120 Ardmore Avenue or email [womanspace-ardmore@rhd.org](mailto:womanspace-ardmore@rhd.org).

## ◆ Voter ID Update

The 2014 Pennsylvania primary election will be held on May 20, 2014. As the Voter ID Law was recently ruled unconstitutional, you will NOT

need to present identification to cast your vote at the polls this year. To learn more about this year's election or to find out where your polling place is located, you can visit the VotesPA Website at **[www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com)**.





# STATE SENATOR DAYLIN LEACH

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# Around the District

## ◆ Now Accepting Librarians of the Year Nominations



Do you know an outstanding librarian at a public library or school in the 17th District? If so, please consider nominating them for my 2014 Librarians of the Year Award.

You can download a nomination form by visiting my Website, [www.senatorleach.com](http://www.senatorleach.com). Nominations are due by Friday, April 11th.

Awards will be given to one public librarian and one school librarian at a special ceremony on April 17th at the American Reading Company in King of Prussia.

**For more information,**  
please contact my King of Prussia office at (610) 768-4200.



Join  
**SENATOR DAYLIN LEACH**

for a free screening of



**Saturday • June 21**

**10:45 a.m. Registration Opens • 11 a.m. Screening**

**12 p.m. Panel Discussion**

**Bryn Mawr Film Institute • 824 West Lancaster Avenue • Bryn Mawr**

Panel discussion to be held immediately following the film  
with filmmaker, Scott Elliott!

### Senator Leach's Senate Bill # 1080

The bill imposes a fee on the use of plastic bags in retail stores. These bags are lightweight and inexpensive but have the disadvantage of lasting until the end of time.

**SPACE IS LIMITED**

Please RSVP to Sarah Charles at [scharles@pasenate.com](mailto:scharles@pasenate.com) or call 610-768-4200.

## COME TO THE FAIR! COME TO THE ZOO!

Free Spin Art

Face Painters

Free Food

State, Federal & Local Agencies

Free Admission

Team Mascots

Free Fingerprinting

**STATE SENATOR DAYLIN LEACH**  
With Co-Host  
Mercy Suburban Hospital

**Kids' Fair**

**An Expo at the Zoo**

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

**August 7, 2014 • 5:30 - 7:30 PM**  
Elmwood Park Zoo  
1661 Harding Blvd. • Norristown, PA

RSVP by July 25: 610-768-4200 or E-mail: [kidsfair2014@pasenate.com](mailto:kidsfair2014@pasenate.com)

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