



Capitol Correspondence

from

State Senator

Daylin Leach



Serving Delaware and Montgomery counties

Summer 2010

Dear Neighbor,

This has been a very busy year so far. There have been a number of issues relating to health care, civil rights, the budget and our criminal justice system that have been neglected for far too long. I have tried to be a strong voice for doing the hard work needed to make progress in Pennsylvania.

Since I last wrote to you, I was appointed to represent the Senate Democratic Caucus on the Senate Government Management and Cost Study Commission. At a series of hearings, the commission has discussed how government can be made more efficient, what our spending priorities should include, and what tax balance is best for obtaining the revenues we need to provide critical government services.

Through my work with that commission, I have made the point that it is important to be frugal in tough economic times, but we do a disservice to our state and its people if we fail to adequately invest in our children's education, the infrastructure (including roads and bridges) that businesses rely on, our economic development and job creation programs, protecting our environment and ensuring that we have a reasonable safety net for those most in need.

We have identified spending cuts that will save a little money now, but cost us dearly in the long run. They will make our state less attractive to new businesses and less livable for the people here now. After World War II, the Greatest Generation invested aggressively in building a better society and as a result, America became the economic engine of the world. Today, our children deserve no less for their future.

As Chair of the Judiciary Committee, I am working with my colleagues to reform our criminal justice system. Policies of constantly increasing penalties without any connection to better results have added a net 2,000 prisoners per year in Pennsylvania. If this practice continues, we will need to build a new prison every year in perpetuity at a cost of \$200 million each (plus an additional \$50 million spent in operating costs each year). We simply can't afford this, and we are working hard to enact a better sentencing structure for non-violent offenders.

As we enter the budget cycle, there are many tough decisions to be made. We — irresponsibly in my view — raided all of the one-time reserves available last year. We have not yet provided for \$2.5 billion in federal stimulus funds that will disappear next year, and we have not addressed the looming pension crisis. I will be doing all I can to ensure that we make fiscally prudent decisions without abandoning our basic responsibilities. As an eternal optimist, I am hopeful that the next newsletter will bring news of significant progress!



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May I Help?

STATE APPLICATIONS

Driver's License • Notary Public
Vehicle Registration/Renewal
Birth and Death Certificates

SENIOR CITIZENS' ASSISTANCE

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Form
PACE/PACENET Form
Reduced Auto Registration Form

VOTER

Registration • Election Calendars
Applications for absentee ballots

♦ Studying Philadelphia's Criminal Justice System

In April, Sen. Leach worked with Sen. Greenleaf (R-Montgomery/Bucks) and Sen. Stack (D-Philadelphia) to introduce a Senate Resolution commissioning a study of the problems facing Philadelphia's Criminal Justice System.

The senators offered the resolution following a public hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee held in response to the findings of a December 2009 *Philadelphia Inquirer* investigative series: "Justice: Delayed, Dismissed, Denied." The series documented a widespread fugitive problem in the city, along with rampant witness intimidation and increasing rates of violent crime, the highest among the nation's largest cities.

Witnesses at the hearing included Philadelphia District Attorney, Seth Williams; Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Justice, Seamus P. McCaffery; and various representatives of the justice and



law enforcement community. The resolution directs the Joint State Government Commission, the General Assembly's central research agency, to assemble an advisory committee of stakeholders to study Philadelphia's Criminal Justice System and make recommendations for legislative action to the Senate based on its findings.



♦ Shackling Pregnant Prisoners

This April, Sen. Leach's bill that would prevent the shackling of pregnant prisoners was unanimously approved by the House Judiciary Committee at a committee meeting held in Harrisburg.

Senate Bill 1074 would, for the first time, create a statewide policy to prohibit shackling pregnant women in custody in Pennsylvania during labor and delivery, while in transit to a medical facility for delivery or other pregnancy-related complication, and for a reasonable period of time post-delivery. That question currently is decided on the

local level.

The bill would provide an exception that allows shackling if the corrections official believes there is a risk of flight or to the health and safety of medical personnel. In the event of such a risk, the bill would require the attending corrections official to report the circumstances leading to the decision to apply restraints. If the decision was made on the county level, the report must then be given to the state Department of Corrections, who must then provide a yearly update to the governor detailing each instance of shackling made by a county or state prison.

◆ Human Trafficking Bill

Sen. Leach recently introduced Senate Bill 1227 which would create a Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline that Pennsylvanians could use to report trafficking activity. Under the bill, the hotline number must be displaced prominently in certain establishments.

Leach has worked extensively with the Polaris Project to draft the bill and ensure its passage in the state General Assembly. A representative from Polaris Project said, "Victims of labor trafficking are typically found in domestic servitude, agriculture, nail salons, and even in traveling sales crews selling candy or magazine subscriptions. They face a horrific life in which they are threatened, beaten, raped, starved, locked up, or psychologically tortured. Posting the NHTRC toll free hotline will



In April, Sen. Leach hosted a bipartisan press conference with Polaris Project to end Human Trafficking.

provide help and assistance to victims, anyone who wants to provide a tip, or who would like additional information on human

trafficking."

S.B. 1227 is currently under consideration by the Senate Labor and Industry Committee.

◆ Senate Cost-Cutting Commission

Last December, the Pennsylvania Senate unanimously approved a measure establishing a high-level bipartisan commission to identify additional cost-saving measures in state government.

Senate Resolution 161 creates a commission made up of ten appointees from the private and public sectors to help the Senate eliminate unnecessary government spending. Sen. Leach was named a member of that commission, and has been listening to input from his colleagues and Pennsylvania residents about ways our state can reduce spending. Under the resolution, the commission

must hold statewide public hearings and submit its findings and recommendations to the Senate by June 30, 2010.

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The commission has held four public hearings, during which members have heard testimony from the former Secretary of the Department of General Services (DGS), who shared history of a statewide cost reduction program

that was undertaken three decades ago in Pennsylvania; the Fiscal Affairs Analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), who described the efforts of other states who have implemented or proposed cost saving measures; Gov. Rendell's top budget officials, who provided information regarding reducing the administrative costs of state government; and the Deputy Auditor General for Audits, who will help the commission examine state vehicle expenses in the coming weeks to identify possible savings to taxpayers.

The Cost-Cutting Commission would also like to solicit ideas from Pennsylvanians.

If you have an idea that could help the state save revenues, send an email to cuttingcosts@pasen.gov.

Past & Present Events

◆ Women's Lecture Series

This February, Sen. Leach hosted the first installation of his Women's Lecture Series, with more than 50 people in attendance. Held at the Bryn Mawr Film Institute, the event focused on increasing awareness of eating disorders with a screening of the PBS documentary, "Nova: Dying to be Thin" followed by a panel discussion about Sen. Leach's proposed legislation, Senate Bill 1138.

Panelists included Wendy Cramer, M.D. and Dr. Kim Johnson, Ph.D. from the Renfrew Center, and former Renfrew Center patient, Cherisse Deaton. S.B. 1138, awaiting consideration in the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee, would provide better access to treatment for the thousands of Pennsylvanians who suffer from eating disorders. Under the bill, Pennsylvania's health insurers would cover non-hospital, in-patient treatment for eating disorders and the underlying issues that may cause them.

If you have an idea for a topic to explore at the next Women's Lecture Series, please contact Shannon Wells at 610-768-4200 or swells@pasenate.com.



◆ Librarians of the Year Awards

On Friday, April 16th, Sen. Leach presented the 2010 Librarians of the Year awards to two notable librarians in the 17th District for their contributions to the public school and public library systems. Marianne Hooper from Upper Merion Public Library was honored as the 2010 Public Librarian of the Year and Kelly McDermott from Bala Cynwyd Middle School Library as the 2010 School Librarian of the Year. The 2010 Librarians of the Year ceremony was held at the American Reading Company in King of Prussia.

The Librarians of the Year award ceremony, part of National Library Week, honors two outstanding librarians from the 17th District – one who works in the local school system and one who serves the public library system.

Nomination forms were widely distributed throughout the district. Sen. Leach was proud to extend recognition to more than 40 librarian nominees, in addition to the 2010 winners.



◆ Lemonade Days

Next month, Sen. Leach will be hosting a lemonade stand in support of Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation. All the money raised will go to the fight against childhood cancer. The stand will be outside the Haverford Township Free Library on Friday, June 11th from 1 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. Come out to enjoy some delicious lemonade while helping fight against cancer!



◆ The District Office is Now Accepting Donations for Our Community!

We are currently accepting donations of used, working cell phones which will be given to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department. The phones will be distributed to local senior citizens, who can use the phones to dial 911 in an emergency.

We are also collecting donations of blankets, towels, pet toys, pet food, food and water bowls, as well as other basic pet necessities. All of the donations will be given to the Finding Shelter, an animal shelter located in Norristown.



Sen. Daylin Leach held his Second Annual Good Government Seminar for students, teachers and local public officials at Cabrini College in March.

SENATOR DAYLIN LEACH
invites you to participate in our democracy at his

TOWN HALL MEETING

Thursday, June 17 • 7:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Norristown Public Library – Community Room
1001 Powell Street • Norristown

Share your thoughts and ideas with your legislator
*Issues for Discussion: Education, Health Care,
The Environment, and more.*

Meet Senator Daylin Leach on June 17.

◆ Nominate an Unsung Hero

Every so often we encounter ordinary people quietly doing all they can to make our world a kinder, more just, egalitarian and beautiful place to live. The 17th district is full of people who, without fanfare, take food to shut-ins, create a community garden, fight hard to ensure that billboards aren't allowed to mar our neighborhoods, collect toiletries and clothing for women who are struggling to re-enter society after prison, volunteer at senior centers, drive vets to the VA and so much more. These people give so much to the world and ask nothing in return. These people are the real heroes. They don't do these extraordinary things because they want recognition. They do them because they see a need and because they can.

Do you know someone like that? Please tell us about them. Go to our Web site www.senatorleach.com and click on the Unsung Heroes link on the left hand side of the home page to fill out the nomination form.

In a world filled with so much bad news, let's hear about some of the good stuff people are doing. We'd love to hear from you. Let us sing their praises.



Go Green!


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COME TO THE FAIR! COME TO THE ZOO!

STATE SENATOR DAYLIN LEACH

With Co-Hosts

**Representative Matt Bradford
and Representative Mike Vereb**

**Kids' Fair**

An Expo at the 

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

August 12, 2010 • 5:30 - 7:30 PM

Elmwood Park Zoo • 1661 Harding Blvd. • Norristown, PA

RSVP by August 6: 610-768-4200 or E-mail: scharles@pasenate.com

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