



Capitol Correspondence

from
State Senator

Daylin Leach



Serving Delaware and Montgomery counties

Winter 2010

Dear Friend,

For this newsletter, I want to update you on one of the most important issues we've been dealing with for the past several months. This issue is how to handle the relatively new opportunity to extract natural gas out of rocks buried deep underground.

Pennsylvania is sitting on something known as the "Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Deposit." This is a huge reservoir of natural gas, considered the 2nd largest in the world, which we only recently developed the technology to mine. The new process involves pumping millions of gallons of highly pressurized water and other potentially toxic chemicals into the underground rocks, breaking them up and releasing the gas. This process is called "Hydro-Fracking".

The upside to Marcellus Shale development is that it is a huge economic opportunity for the state and a potential source of thousands of jobs. There are some very significant environmental risks which we need to deal with aggressively. But the big issue we've been wrestling with in Harrisburg is how much of an extraction tax we should impose.

Currently 31 states have a similar shale deposit. Of those, 29 impose a severance or extraction tax, which is a tax on the gas as it's brought up from underground and severed at the wellhead. Pennsylvania is one of only two states without such a tax.

The theory behind the severance tax is that we have large energy companies coming from out of state (mostly Texas and Oklahoma), taking resources out of our ground at a profit of billions of dollars, and leaving potentially very serious environmental damage behind. These companies should (and in virtually every other state do) contribute something towards both the well-being of the state whose resources they are taking, as well as help pay for the environmental clean-up this process necessitates.

It is important to note that this tax would be paid by the energy companies. Since every other state already has a tax, and since their product is sold world-wide, these companies can't pass the tax on to Pennsylvania consumers. Also, this tax will do nothing to drive these energy companies away. The natural gas is here in Pennsylvania, so it is here they must come to get it. Further, since they are already paying this tax everywhere else they are mining this gas, there is no competitive disadvantage to enacting a reasonable severance tax.

Over the summer there was an agreement between the legislative leaders and the governor to pass a severance tax by October. When we came back from summer recess, the deal fell through. The House passed an imperfect but reasonable tax bill. Still, the Senate leadership has refused to even bring a bill to the floor for a vote.

Our failure to enact a reasonable severance tax on energy companies will mean that Pennsylvania taxpayers will have to pay more in state taxes, and/or vital government services will be cut. I am hopeful, but not optimistic, that this issue can be dealt with next session. So long as we do not have a reasonable policy in this area, the people of Pennsylvania will be the losers.



OFFICES TO SERVE YOU

KING OF PRUSSIA OFFICE

601 South Henderson Road
Suite 208
King of Prussia, PA 19406
(610) 768-4200
Fax: (610) 768-4204

HARRISBURG OFFICE

184 Main Capitol
Senate Box 203017
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3017
(717) 787-5544
Fax: (717) 705-7741

E-MAIL

senatorleach@pasenate.com

WEB SITE

www.senatorleach.com



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

Real Reform

In our current political climate the word "reform" is thrown around a lot. Some of the things labeled as reform are of uncertain value in improving our government. I have introduced two important reforms that I believe will make the Pennsylvania government more representative of the people and more responsive to their needs.

Redistricting Reform:

As we begin to digest the results of the latest census numbers, it is time for the political boundaries by which we choose our representatives to be redrawn. This process is archaic but the results could mean that your vote is effectively meaningless. The legislature draws the lines with little or no regard for communities and attempts to capture the voters they need for a particular result. This process, called gerrymandering, would be made illegal under Senate Bill 403 which I have introduced each session I

have been in Harrisburg. My bill would introduce a formula, strict rules and a sunshine policy that would force the political wrangling to end and give us fair representation in our legislature and Congress. This bill is in the Senate State Government Committee.

Campaign Financing Reform:

Another pervasive problem in our politics is money. Pennsylvania has virtually no limits on the amount of money that people or groups can give to political candidates. This creates the perception that politicians execute their duties with an eye towards their biggest donors. I will be introducing a campaign finance bill that will offer a public funding option to political candidates for statewide and legislative office. When combined with campaign finance giving limits legislation currently before the Senate, this will transform the way Pennsylvania elects its officials for the better.

Infrastructure Improvements in Bridgeport

This August, Rep. Tim Briggs (D-Montgomery) and I presented Bridgeport Borough Council with a check for \$1.57 million in grant money to make much needed improvements to the borough's sewage system.

To come into compliance with United States Environmental Protection Agency policies, the borough is under an order to complete work to address the overflow issues that plague the combined sewer during some rainstorms. Bridgeport had originally obtained a \$2 million grant that expired in 2009 and

could not be extended. Knowing that if the work was not completed the borough would face fines from the EPA, we lobbied Governor Rendell to ensure the funds would be available for the borough's Front Street Interceptor Project and Long Term Control Plan.

As a result of our work, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection awarded a new \$1,577,242 grant to Bridgeport. The assistance of Congressman Joe Sestak (D-Delaware/Montgomery) aided in raising an additional \$592,000 in federal funding for the project.

Legislative Update

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is not something we generally think of as happening in America, but it does. People, both American citizens and foreign nationals, are trafficked for commercial sex and forced labor. This deplorable practice must be stopped and I am working on legislation to give law enforcement more tools against traffickers and to give victims the help they need and deserve. In the mean time I have introduced a bill to require the posting of the National Human Trafficking Hotline in rest stops, bars, restaurants, massage parlors and hotels around the state. This will help victims of trafficking and those who suspect they have encountered a victim reach authorities in an anonymous way and will help law enforcement root out the perpetrators of this horrific crime. The bill sits in the Labor and Industry Committee.

Shackling

After unanimously passing both chambers of the state General Assembly, my bill banning the practice of shackling pregnant prisoners has been signed into law by Gov. Ed Rendell. Act 45 will for

the first time create a statewide procedural policy regarding shackling while a prisoner is in transit to a medical facility for delivery or pregnancy-related complications as well as for a reasonable period of time post-delivery. The law makes Pennsylvania the tenth state to ban the shackling of inmates in childbirth, joining California, Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia.



Marriage Equality

Same-sex couples in Pennsylvania are denied many of the basic rights and services straight couples take for granted. This includes everything from Social Security Survivor Benefits to mandatory leave to care for a sick partner. Further, they and their children are forced to live under a legal framework that treats their families as somehow not legitimate. There

are literally thousands of such unjust burdens placed upon people who want nothing more than to start a family. I have introduced a bill to ensure that same sex couples have the same rights to marriage in Pennsylvania that straight couples do. It currently sits in the Judiciary Committee.

Death Penalty

Pennsylvania has a huge and expanding death row population. This has not made us any safer and does not seem to be deterring crime. We have concrete evidence that we wrongly sentence people to death which makes it impossible for us to say that we have not executed an innocent person. In addition, Pennsylvania has not carried out an execution since 1973 unless the inmate voluntarily gave up his rights to appeal. We are paying an immense amount of taxpayer dollars for an imperfect, irrevocable, ineffective and unused exercise of government power. I have introduced a bill which would remove the death penalty as a sentencing option in Pennsylvania and leave life in prison without parole as our highest punishment. The bill currently sits in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Senator Leach stands with the Jewish Federation of Philadelphia during their trip to Israel last August.

Events Around the 17th District

■ Student Gallery – Summer 2010

This summer, my district office in King of Prussia hosted the work of talented young artists from the Main Line Art Center. Artists submitted almost thirty pieces of original artwork to be displayed in the district office conference room as well as on my website at www.senatorleach.com. At the end of the summer, I was proud to host a reception celebrating the artists and their parents. If you would like to submit artwork for the student gallery, please contact Hally Ammons at hammons@pasenate.com.

■ Senior Exercise Expo

In September, I held my second annual Senior Expo at the Greater Plymouth Community Center. This year I teamed up with Ageless Exercise to educate seniors about the benefits that exercise offers to the mind and body. Numerous non-profit, governmental and local agencies were also on hand to provide information and answers to the hundreds of senior citizens who attended. A complimentary brunch was provided and door prizes donated by local businesses were raffled off. The event was a huge success and I look forward to seeing everyone at the Expo in 2011!



August 12, 2010 –

Senator Leach hosts his 2nd Annual Kids' Fair at Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown with the St. Joseph's University Hawk, his children and kids of the 17th District.

■ Kids Fair 2010

The weather did not dampen the spirits of the children running around Elmwood Park Zoo, who were occupied by the animals, clowns and face painting and a buffet of snacks at my 2010 Kids' Fair. While children enjoyed all the Zoo had to offer, parents had the time to learn about some of the state, federal and local programs available to help their families.

The parents received a lot of high-quality information throughout the day and the kids had a great time with the planned festivities and unplanned puddles, so even though we had some weather issues to deal with, the Kids' Fair was once again a roaring success.

Go Green!

Sign up for paperless newsletters and updates by visiting www.senatorleach.com

Making the District A Better Place



September 11, 2010 – Senator Leach attends Upper Merion Township Community Day and cooks veggie burgers for his constituents.



Senator Leach meets with Susan Tachau, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation and grant recipient Mitchell Landsman.

Intern in Senator Leach's Office

Are you interested in the world of Pennsylvania politics and public policy? Would you like to make a difference in your community? Are you hard-working, motivated and open to new opportunities? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, I may be looking for someone like you.

My King of Prussia office is now accepting interns for the Spring 2011 semester. If you are enrolled in school – or plan to be – please consider filling out an application. Internships are fun and rewarding, especially when you're working with people who care about the work they do each day.

For more information or to apply, call Hally Ammons at (610) 768-4200 or visit my Web site, www.senatorleach.com.

I interned for Senator Leach last summer, but since I enjoyed the experience so much, I'm interning for him again. As an intern, I have worked on important projects— researching issues, helping constituents, and organizing events. Working on these projects with a progressive leader like Senator Leach and his welcoming staff, has been the experience of a lifetime. Also, as a college student, I know that my experience in Senator Leach's office will set me apart when searching for a job. If you're interested in an internship, please contact our office! You won't regret it!
– Taj Magruder, Intern 2009-2010

Until recently I, like Taj, was also an intern in Senator Leach's district office.

I learned about the opportunity through a professor of mine during my senior year of college. I had been interested in taking on an internship during school to keep me active and involved in the local community and Senator Leach's office seemed like the perfect arena for that type of commitment. As an intern, not only did I have the chance to speak to and interact with many different people, all from different walks of life, but I felt that I had the opportunity to really do some good. I enjoyed my internship with Senator Leach's office so much that after graduation I decided to stay on staff full time and I couldn't be happier with my decision.

– Liz Hood, Legislative Aide

Senator Leach's 4th Veterans Trip

You are invited to attend Senator Leach's 4th Veterans Trip on Thursday, May 19, 2011! This year we will visit Brandywine Battlefield and have lunch at Longwood Gardens. The trip is free for veterans or the widows of veterans residing in the 17th Senatorial District and one guest.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP to (610) 768-4200.

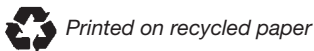
Space is limited, so please call soon!



STATE SENATOR
DAYLIN LEACH

Senate Box 203017
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3017

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www.senatorleach.com

Visit My District Office to Donate Toys

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

Donate Your Old Cell Phones!

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.

Canned or Non-Perishable Food Items Needed

My District Office is now collecting canned and non-perishable food items. The collected food items will be donated to the Ada Mutch Community Resource Center located 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 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.