



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

MIKE VEREB

Serving the People of the 150th Legislative District

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Spring 2011 Newsletter

Dear Friend,

It is the start of a new legislative session, and the House has hit the ground running. We have already passed a number of government reform bills aimed at improving transparency and restoring the public's trust. You can read about these initiatives in this newsletter.

As a lifelong resident of Montgomery County, I am honored to serve the people of the 150th Legislative District for another term in the state House. I promise to continue to be a strong voice for our local communities.

My staff and I are here to serve you. We offer a variety of services, including help with PennDOT issues, information about student financial aid and senior citizen programs, and copies of state maps and other publications. Feel free to contact us with any state-related questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Vereb

Gaming Reform Bill Passes the House

Legislation transfers Gaming Control Board's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement to the Attorney General's office

In February, my legislation reforming Pennsylvania's gaming law to provide for more thorough background checks of license applicants was passed by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The legislation transfers the Bureau of Investigations and Enforcement (BIE) from the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB) to a new gaming unit under the Office of Attorney General.

Under the current law, it is impossible to complete a thorough background check on license applicants due to the fact that BIE officials are not recognized as law enforcement officers. As a former police officer, I found it very disconcerting that an agency without law enforcement powers was given the task of conducting background checks.

As a result, several licenses were given to applicants with criminal histories and financial problems. My legislation fixes this problematic flaw in the original law, ensuring comprehensive background checks are completed and improving the integrity of the gaming industry.

The BIE currently falls under the purview and authority of

the PGCB and does not have full law enforcement powers. Over the past four years, the House Republican Policy Committee heard testimony regarding instructions directed to BIE by top officials to change its reports to ensure certain applicants were eligible to receive a casino license. As a result, several licenses were awarded to applicants with criminal background issues.

I have been fighting to make the BIE independent from the Gaming Board since taking office in 2007.



I am pictured on the House floor during the debate on House Bill 262, my legislation to transfer the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement to the Attorney General's office.

Vereb Sworn in for Third Term

Legislator selected to serve as House Republican Caucus secretary for new session

In November, I was re-elected to serve as your state representative for a third term. I was also chosen by my House Republican colleagues to serve as caucus secretary for the 2011-12 legislative session. The responsibilities of caucus secretary include recording all official legislative activities in the House of Representatives. As caucus secretary, I also instituted a mentoring program for new members of the House of Representatives. This program includes informative sessions on how the Legislature operates.

It is an honor to represent the 150th District for another term in the House. As a lifelong resident of Montgomery County, I am humbled that the residents in my district have chosen me to fight for the issues that affect them. I do not take my role as an elected official or the trust that my constituents have placed in me lightly. I will continue to work hard to tackle the many challenges facing our Commonwealth.

Since first elected in 2006, I have consistently called for government reform and transparency. I have worked to eliminate duplicative government programs and rein in government spending. I have also advocated higher ethics in the House, increased transparency and reforms of the state's procurement policies.

The new House leadership team also consists of Speaker Sam Smith (R-Jefferson/Armstrong/Indiana), Majority Leader Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny), Appropriations Chairman Bill Adolph (R-Delaware), Caucus Administrator Dick Stevenson (R-Mercer/Butler), Caucus Chairman Sandra Major (R-Susquehanna/Wayne/Wyoming), Caucus Policy Chairman Dave Reed (R-Indiana), and Caucus Whip Stan Saylor (R-York).



I am pictured taking the oath of office for my third term representing the 150th District in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. For the 2011-12 session, I hold the leadership position of House Republican Caucus Secretary.

Legislative Reform Update

House Passes First Phase of Government Reform Package

At the start of the 2011-12 legislative session, the House of Representatives voted on the strongest state government reform package in more than 25 years. As one of the leading voices calling for government reform, I was proud to vote in favor of these significant pieces of legislation.

These legislative reforms are part of a package of bills first introduced in 2009 known as the Pennsylvania Agenda for Trust in Harrisburg, or PATH. Over the past decade the business-as-usual attitude in Harrisburg had gotten out of control. Pennsylvanians lost faith in their state government and in their elected officials. The reform bills passed by the House are the first step in getting state government back on the right "path." The bills make state government more effective, efficient and accountable.

The PATH bills passed by the House include:

- ◆ Creating a searchable database for all state spending, called PennWATCH. Under this legislation, all state departmental and agency budget expenditures would be available online through one website.
- ◆ Increasing penalties for lobbyists engaging in prohibited activities.
- ◆ Extending whistleblower protection to employees of nonprofits and private sector companies who report waste of public money obtained by their employer for services or work. The legislation also provides similar protections to legislative employees.
- ◆ Amending the Procurement Code provisions relating to competitively sealed proposals. No individual who has been employed by an offeror within the last two years may participate in the evaluation of the proposals.
- ◆ Making the Right-To-Know law applicable to public procurement contracts and providing for public inspection of non-competitively awarded contracts prior to execution of the agreement.
- ◆ Amending the Legislative Code of Ethics to essentially include the provisions of House Rule 47, which prohibits members of the General Assembly from creating or maintaining nonprofits that receive public funds.

US 422 Projects

Sen. John Rafferty (R-Berks/Chester/Montgomery) and I have been working together to secure \$100 million in funding for upgrades for the US 422 River Crossing Project. These improvements will help to relieve traffic congestion. The project includes:

PA 363/US 422 Interchange Remedies: A new on ramp from PA Route 363 (Trooper Road) to U.S. Route 422 westbound and an off ramp from U.S. Route 422 eastbound to PA Route 363 (Trooper Road) will improve access and help relieve serious congestion in this area. Currently, there is no 422 westbound on ramp or 422 eastbound off ramp at Trooper Road. Also included with this project is a westbound off ramp from U.S. Route 422 to Adams Avenue in the Valley Forge Corporate Center. The project is in the final design stage and is anticipated to be under construction in 2012.

U.S. Route 422 Widening and Schuylkill River Bridge Replacement: The widening of U.S. Route 422 from above U.S. Route 202 and through Trooper Road will improve traffic flow and ease congestion. Two new lanes will be constructed in the median area of U.S. Route 422. This project also includes the eventual replacement of the Schuylkill River Bridge and widening to include four lanes of travel in each direction. An anticipated construction date is unavailable at this time and will be set once funding is determined.

PA 23 and US 422 Interchange Remedies: This phase of the project will involve constructing a new off ramp from U.S. Route 422 eastbound to PA Route 23. Along with the new off ramp, North Gulph Road will be relocated and widened. A landscaped buffer zone alongside the relocation will reduce the noise and visual impacts of traffic into Valley Forge National Historic Park. The "gateway" to the park will be enhanced with this project. An anticipated construction date is unavailable at this time and will be set once funding is determined.

Sinkhole Repair

From February through May, permanent repair work will be performed on the sinkhole near the PA Turnpike. During the construction project, two lanes will be open in both directions during commuting times. However, there will be some overnight lane closures during this time.

Please remember to visit 511pa.com or call 511 from any phone prior to traveling for area traffic information.

UPCOMING DISTRICT EVENTS

Please mark your calendar for the following district events. Check my website, RepVereb.com, for more information.

Energy Deregulation Seminar - Thursday, March 31

As a result of electric deregulation, consumers now have the opportunity to select the electricity generator of their choice. In an effort to inform residents of the electric options available to them, I am hosting an "Electric Switch" seminar. Representatives from PECO and the PUC will be on hand to answer questions and discuss the effect of electric deregulation on residents.

The event will start at 7 p.m. and will take place at the Lower Providence Township Building, 100 Park Lane Drive in Eagleville.

Shredder Event - Saturday, April 2

My annual shredder event is a wonderful opportunity for local residents to guard themselves against identity theft. Documents that contain sensitive information, such as Social Security numbers, medical information or bank account numbers, should be thoroughly shredded before disposal. I encourage all residents of the 150th Legislative District to bring any unwanted papers to be shredded and recycled.

The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the West Norriton Township Building (1630 West Marshall Street in Jeffersonville).

Family Fun Day Event - June (More details forthcoming.)

My Family Fun Day is a great community event for families living in the 150th District. There will be entertainment and activities for all age groups, as well as informational presentations on programs available to residents. I look forward to spending a fun-filled summer evening with my constituents.

Senior Expo - September (More details forthcoming.)

My annual senior expo is a great opportunity for local seniors to obtain a wealth of information on programs and resources that are available to them. I look forward to meeting with seniors from the 150th District.



Residents gather information on local, state and federal programs that are available to them at my 2010 Senior Expo.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Forms Now Available in Vereb's Office

Forms for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate program for 2010 are now available.

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 for homeowners 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)

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate program is one of many initiatives supported by the Pennsylvania Lottery, which dedicates its proceeds to support programs for older Pennsylvanians. Since the program began in 1971, more than \$4 billion has been paid to qualified applicants.

Residents are reminded to provide all the necessary income, property tax or rental information required to process claims quickly and accurately. Applications are due by June 30.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim forms are available by contacting my district office at 610-409-2615, or by visiting my website at RepVereb.com.

Going Green and Saving Money with Electronic Newsletters

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

I have been investigating alternative ways to communicate with you that are informative, environmentally conscious and cost effective. You are currently receiving my printed newsletters through the mail, and although constituents tell me they are worthwhile, they are costly to mail. Using improved technology, electronic communication is an effective tool to keep you informed. Via e-mail and the Web, I am able to communicate with you at a much lower cost.

To accomplish this goal, I am offering you the option of receiving future newsletters from my office in an online format. If you'd like to make this switch, please take a moment and log onto my website at RepVereb.com and click the "Have Your Newsletter Delivered Online" icon. A simple form will be there for you to complete.

If you'd like to continue receiving this newsletter in print, you don't have to do anything. We'll keep you on the mailing list.



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150th Legislative District

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