

Bryan Cutler

Serving the people of the 100th Legislative District

Dear Neighbor,

A new era in Pennsylvania government commenced this January with the swearing in of the 195th General Assembly and the inauguration of a new governor. Pennsylvania's new leadership is determined to return integrity to our Commonwealth and restore trust in Harrisburg.

Along with improving how state government operates, we have been given a mandate to control state spending and improve Pennsylvania's business climate. For too long, Pennsylvania has thrown good money after bad by creating a system that picks winners and losers in the business community. This is NOT the responsibility of state government. Our goal now is to level the playing field so all enterprises have an opportunity to succeed and all Pennsylvanians have an opportunity to work.

The induction of new leadership does not mean that all of Pennsylvania's problems will simply disappear. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but I am confident that we will face these challenges with sound values and ideologies. We may not always agree about how to achieve our goals, but there is a feeling of cooperation and respect among the House, Senate and Governor's Office, which extends to an atmosphere of bipartisanship.

Personally, I am excited about my committee appointments for the 2011-12 session. I am now serving on the House Health, Judiciary, Local Government, and Game and Fisheries committees. These assignments will allow me to use my expertise in law and the health care industry to craft sensible policies for Pennsylvania. I also am looking forward to assisting our local governments and sportsmen.

As you read the rest of this newsletter, feel free to contact my office regarding any questions or concerns you might have. I also invite you to remain informed about the latest state news by following me on Facebook and Twitter. I have greatly enjoyed the conversations I have had with constituents on these sites and I look forward to continuing the dialogue about legislation and local matters.

Sincerely,



Bryan Cutler
State Representative

WelFAIR Reform is About Returning Fairness, Accountability, Integrity and Responsibility to the System

This session I have been named a team leader, along with Rep. Mauree Gingrich (R-Lebanon), of a policy team tasked with addressing weaknesses in our public welfare system.

For too long, Pennsylvania has turned a blind eye to those unscrupulous individuals who put their time and energy into exploiting and manipulating the public assistance system. The House Republican Caucus is making it a priority to ensure that benefits only go to those individuals who are genuinely eligible for them.

Welfare is an important safety net which helps to reduce crime and poverty in our Commonwealth. That safety net is important for Pennsylvania's children, elderly and disabled, but it was not meant to be a lifelong benefit program for able-bodied adults.

During budget hearings, Auditor General Jack Wagner (D-Allegheny) testified about millions of dollars in welfare funding being lost to fraud due to a lack of oversight into many programs. Wagner's testimony and suggestions were valuable in crafting the WelFAIR proposals. Legislation included in the House Majority Policy Committee WelFAIR package includes measures that would:

- ◆ Strengthen penalties for welfare fraud.
- ◆ Assist people in moving from welfare to work with job transition loans, rather than the current grant program.
- ◆ Create an Income Eligibility Verification System.
- ◆ Require photo identification on welfare benefit cards.
- ◆ Prohibit applicants from benefits shopping for higher assistance amounts in neighboring counties by basing benefit amounts on the permanent legal residence of applicants.
- ◆ Require drug testing for applicants previously convicted of drug a felony.
- ◆ Prohibit the use of the ACCESS card for purchase of tobacco products.
- ◆ Implement new guidelines and restrictions on the existing Medical Assistance Transportation Program.

It is time to make our welfare system accountable to those who fund it – the taxpayers. We must ensure that taxpayer dollars are not being abused and that there is accountability in the system.

For more information on the WelFAIR package, visit my website at RepCutler.com.



My staff and I are happy to assist you with all your state government needs. Pictured with me (from left) are Jen Williams, Reber Testerman, Jessica Keffer and Stuart Nelson.

REPRESENTATIVE BRYAN CUTLER

100th Legislative District

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Legislative Success Stories

House Approves State Government Reform Package

Package includes proposal to increase penalties for violating the Lobbying Disclosure Act

With the Republicans gaining control of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, the first item on our agenda this year has been reforming state government, which is why we put together a package of government reforms called the Pennsylvania Agenda for Trust in Harrisburg (PATH). Before we can move forward with our other legislative initiatives, which include improving Pennsylvania's job and business climate and controlling state spending, we believe it is imperative to get our own house in order.

Included in the package is my legislation to increase penalties for lobbyists who violate the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA). House Bill 103 would increase the maximum administrative penalty the Ethics Commission may impose when a lobbyist or principal has engaged in unlawful practices under the LDA from \$2,000 to \$10,000. In addition, the legislation increases the length of time the commission may prohibit an individual from lobbying from five to 10 years. Finally, the bill would address negligent failure to report, as required under the LDA, by increasing penalties from \$50 per day late to \$250 per day late.

Other legislation included in the package would:

- ◆ Strengthen whistleblower protections for all state employees and those working on state contracts.
- ◆ Bar former employees of companies that offer a competitively sealed bid from participating in the evaluation of proposals for the contract for two years.
- ◆ Make the Right-To-Know law applicable to public procurement contracts.
- ◆ Prohibit members of the Legislature from creating or maintaining non-profit organizations that receive public funds.
- ◆ Establish an online public database of all state expenditures, called PennWATCH.

All legislation in the package has passed the House and is now before the Senate for its consideration.

Proposal to Amend Wildlife Conservation Officer Powers Becomes Law

On Oct. 7, my legislation to amend the powers and duties of wildlife conservation officers, bringing them into line with current case law and the Pennsylvania and United States constitutions, was signed into law.

Act 64 of 2010 specifies that vehicles can only be stopped under reasonable suspicion or under the administrative procedures for road check points. It also will limit searches to cases where there is probable cause, consent, exigent circumstances or other exceptions to warrant requirements established by legal precedent.

Game Commission officers already are constitutionally required to act under these guidelines, but some sportsmen have correctly noted that the prior Game Code was vague when it came to stops and searches.

This new law clearly outlines the duties of Game Commission officers and the rights of sportsmen, and it is about ensuring the constitutional rights of all Pennsylvania citizens.

The proposal enjoyed wide support from the Pennsylvania Game Commission and groups as varied as the American Civil Liberties Union and hunters. It received unanimous support in both the House and Senate.



The legislative process is often slow and can be frustrating to citizens and legislators alike. I am pleased to report that two proposals I have championed were signed into law last session. The process is one that demands diligence and cooperation amongst our colleagues.

Agricultural Biosecurity Area Legislation Enacted

A proposal I advocated for several years to increase the safety of livestock and other farm products by defining agricultural biosecurity areas and the criminal penalties for trespassing into them was signed into law on Nov. 23 as Act 125 of 2010. The bill that was enacted was actually the companion Senate bill, authored by Sen. Mike Folmer, to my House Bill 511.

The new law creates a definition of "agricultural biosecurity area," and gives the Department of Agriculture specific authority to require that such an area be established if deemed necessary to control or contain disease, and to require that it is clearly and conspicuously posted.

Additionally, the legislation makes it a misdemeanor of the third degree to enter an agricultural biosecurity area without authorization, and a summary offense to enter such an area without first performing the posted biosecurity measures. If either of the two aforementioned offenses results in death of or damage to an animal or plant within the agricultural biosecurity area, the penalty is a misdemeanor of the first degree; however, the bill does provide a defense to prosecution if no method to perform the measures was available, entry is made in response to a serious threat to human or animal health, or entry is made by law enforcement in pursuit of a suspected criminal or to prevent the destruction of evidence.

Finally, trespassing into an agricultural biosecurity area will be considered ecoterrorism if there is intent to release a dangerous transmissible disease or hazardous substance into the environment.

This legislation was crafted with the input of the Farm Bureau, PennAg Industries, the Ag Coalition and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Farmers deserve this protection, and the safety of our food supply warrants this policy.

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Property Tax/Rent Rebate Forms, Assistance Available

The 2010 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Forms are now available in my district office, and my staff is able to assist you in filing for your rebate.

Eligible participants can receive a rebate of up to \$650 based on their income and 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)

Please remember to provide all the necessary income, property tax or rental information required to process claims quickly and accurately. Applications are due by Dec. 31.

For more information about the program, contact my office. Applications also are available on my website, **RepCutler.com**, through the "Programs for Senior Citizens" icon.



Would you like to help advise me on the issues most pressing to our community and our Commonwealth? Why not join my Citizens Advisory Board? Pictured above are members of the Citizens Advisory Board during a visit to the state Capitol to discuss the district's priorities for the 2011-12 legislative session. Pictured (front row, from left) with me are Tom Eilertsen, Ken Zieber, May Gaynor, Bob Gaynor; (back row) Bob Hershberger and Stuart Nelson. Contact my office to learn more about the board or to join us in our discussions.

Summer 2011 Legislative Survey

To help me better gauge the thoughts and opinions of the residents of the 100th District, I am asking you to complete a brief legislative survey. Please complete the survey and return it to my Quarryville office. If more than one member of your household wishes to participate or if you prefer an electronic method to respond, the survey is available at **RepCutler.com** or you can call my office to offer your responses. I look forward to seeing the results of this survey!

1. Do you support privatizing mass transit agencies?

YES NO NOT SURE

2. Do you support placing tolls on all interstate highways entering or exiting Pennsylvania, if permission is granted by the federal government, in order to fund road and bridge maintenance?

YES NO NOT SURE

3. Do you support including Sundays as part of regular hunting seasons in Pennsylvania?

YES NO NOT SURE

4. Do you support allowing hunting on a limited number of Sundays during certain seasons, such as allowing a Sunday hunt during bear season or during archery deer season?

YES NO NOT SURE

5. Do you support the privatization of Pennsylvania's state-owned liquor stores?

YES NO NOT SURE

6. Would you prefer to receive your newsletters from my office electronically rather than through the United States Postal Service?

- I would prefer an electronic version.
 I prefer to get my newsletter via traditional mail.

7. Which social media sites do you regularly use? Check all that apply.

Facebook Twitter YouTube

8. In an effort to stay in contact with residents of our district, I have started a Facebook and a Twitter page.

Do you follow me at [Facebook.com/RepBryanCutler](https://www.facebook.com/RepBryanCutler) and/or [Twitter.com/RepBryanCutler](https://twitter.com/RepBryanCutler)?

- Yes, I follow you on Facebook.
 Yes, I follow you on Twitter.
 Yes, I follow you on both.
 No, I do not follow you on either.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

E-mail: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____



LINKS ARE AT **RepCutler.com**

Budget Process Moves Forward

Budget expected to pass on time

In late May, the House passed a budget bill that closely reflected Gov. Tom Corbett's budget proposal, with a few exceptions.

The House budget corresponded to the governor's recommended spending number of \$27.3 billion. It diverged on the allocation of welfare and education funding, with the House version transferring some of the welfare funding to K-12 programs and higher education. I am pleased about the welfare savings we were able to achieve with the use of cost-cutting measures, anti-fraud strategies and reform proposals. Welfare reform has long been a priority of mine.

There has been much talk about an anticipated surplus from the current budget year, but I do not know how we can call this extra money a surplus when we face a multi-billion dollar deficit due to the loss of federal stimulus funds. People are calling on the General Assembly to spend this money, but I am not in favor of doing so until I am certain this is sustainable growth and not a one-time windfall.

It is also important to remember the other obligations Pennsylvania is facing, such as the \$3.7 billion debt the Commonwealth owes to the federal government for unemployment compensation; a court order to repay \$850 million taken from the MCare fund for General Fund spending; the state's underfunded multi-billion dollar pension obligation; and unresolved questions about how to provide for \$3 billion in annual transportation funding needs. At this point, our known liabilities outweigh our projected returns so I believe it is best to hold these funds in reserve until we have more solid and actionable information.

Negotiations about the budget are ongoing and the legislation is now in the Senate's hands. The version of the budget that is finally approved by the Legislature could look very different from the bill approved by the House, but I am determined to fight for a responsible and sustainable state spending plan.

If you have any questions about the budget or if you would like to voice your opinion, you can call my office at (717) 786-4551, contact me at my website, RepCutler.com, or post your thoughts on my Facebook page at [Facebook.com/RepBryanCutler](https://www.facebook.com/RepBryanCutler).



Why We Should Consider Biennial Budgeting

This year, Pennsylvania again is facing a multi-billion dollar budget deficit. It is clear that something should be done to improve our budget process, and I believe it is time to take a bold approach to improving our methods of budgeting by moving to a biennial, rather than an annual, process of budgeting. Gov. Tom Corbett, in outlining his government reform priorities, has placed biennial budgeting at the top of his reform list.

Biennial budgeting would cut down on the countless hours spent each year on budget preparation and would encourage a more restrained approach to revenue forecasting, both of which would save the state millions of dollars. Sen. Mike Brubaker and I have introduced identical biennial budget proposals in Senate Bill 267 and House Bill 241.

Annual budgeting is the largest and most involved undertaking completed by the Pennsylvania Legislature each year. Budgets are based on allocations from the previous year, testimony from the heads of state departments, and revenue forecasts compiled by the Office of the Budget under the auspices of the executive branch.

Biennial budgets have been proven to cut down on the time spent preparing budgets, thus reducing the costs of budgeting. By completing a two-year budget, we could stop the cycle of constantly budgeting and reduce the costs of preparing the plan.

Another benefit of budgeting every other year would be greater caution in revenue forecasting. While budgets could always be

reopened and adjusted, it is our hope that the entities involved in forecasting would be more realistic and restrictive when crunching the numbers. What we saw in some of our past budget cycles was overly optimistic forecasting that led to overspending. Additionally, this type of budgeting would assist the state in better long-range planning.

Not only would this type of budgeting be advantageous for the state, but our school districts also would benefit because their budgets are often based upon presumptions about state allocations that are not revealed until after school budgets are completed. Education is one of the largest and most important sectors of the state budget, and our schools deserve to know how much funding they will receive from the state earlier in the year. Moving to a biennial budget process would increase budgeting efficiency for our public schools, providing them with stability as they budget.

The biennial budget process also would make the Legislature more efficient. Presently, the General Assembly spends about half the year working on the budget. If we could spend this time working on a two-year budget instead, we could use the rest of the session to work on the state's other priorities. Issues like transportation funding, unemployment compensation reform and property tax reform have been left unresolved. Though we cannot totally blame the budget process for the lack of action on these issues, it certainly has contributed to the slow response.

Finally, the less time lawmakers spend figuring out how to spend taxpayer dollars, the better for everyone. As we have seen in the past, if given enough time, the government will come up with limitless creative programs that amount to nothing more than higher taxes on us. We all want the government to get out of our wallets.

Currently 20 states budget biennially, including Texas, Virginia, Ohio and North Carolina. You certainly cannot argue that Pennsylvania is too big for this type of budgeting, considering three of the 10 most populous states are doing it and the annual operating budget of a state like Texas is far greater than our own.

The process of moving to a biennial budget will not be easy. It will require amending the Pennsylvania Constitution, which entails passing a measure through both chambers of the General Assembly; advertising across the Commonwealth; coming back to the Legislature for a second approval in the next session; and going back to the voters for final consent. While this will be a very involved process, I believe it is worth attempting to repair our broken annual budgeting system.

If you have questions about the process, feel free to contact my office, post your questions on my Facebook page at [Facebook.com/RepBryanCutler](https://www.facebook.com/RepBryanCutler) or contact me electronically through my website, RepCutler.com.