

Remembering Bill Ames



On Tuesday, Route 322 from County Line Lane to Route 117 in Campbelltown was officially renamed to honor a tremendous public servant, my good friend Bill Ames, who died last December. Bill was in the midst of his third term as a Lebanon County commissioner when complications from COVID-19 claimed his life.



He will be remembered publicly for the many “hats” he wore, from industrial arts teacher to township supervisor to successful business owner to county commissioner. More importantly, Bill was a tremendous husband, father and friend...and will be greatly missed. I cherish our friendship and the memories of him which I have.

REAL ID Seminar Was a Success!



Many thanks to PennDOT's James Maurath for the outstanding job he did during Wednesday's Real ID seminar at the Lebanon Valley Exposition Center and Fairgrounds. I am so thankful to have hosted the event with Sen. Chris Gebhard and Rep. Russ Diamond and am honored to serve in the General Assembly with both of them.



Jamie Miller, Nancie Coover, Jill Weister, Dan Bost, and Alex Gamble did a wonderful job coordinating the seminar, which featured lots of great questions and a great crowd.



Demanding Action on Reverse Gender Theory Student Indoctrination

This week, I joined a group of House Republican lawmakers in calling for acting Pennsylvania Education Secretary Eric Hagarty's resignation unless he takes immediate action to reverse Gender Theory Student Indoctrination from taking hold in K-12 public schools.

For example, it was recently discovered the PA Department of Education has a ["Gender Identity" web page](#) that, among other things, defines "binary gender" as "the faulty concept that there are only two genders: male and female."



The education department's gender identity web page also includes a lesson guide for teachers to host a "gender-neutral day" in their classrooms for grades 3-12. The guide specifies that as part of the activity, students should pick two to three ways they will reject gender stereotypes for the day, and the teacher should make specific commitments to challenge gender norms in the classroom.

Another section on the education department website, titled "Creating Gender-Inclusive Schools and Classrooms," includes a tutorial on "preferred gender-neutral personal pronouns" and instructs teachers to ask before making false assumptions about someone's gender identity.

Earlier this year, the governor vetoed legislation ([House Bill 1332](#)) that would have required ALL government-run public schools in the Commonwealth to post their curriculum online where parents could easily review it, ahead of the school year. If this transparency-driven legislation had been enacted, parents could easily see if their school was adding this or other indoctrination lessons to its curriculum. Instead, parents need to contact their school to find out what process they need to go through in order to have knowledge of what their child will be taught this year.

GOP Economic Policies Moving PA in Right Direction

Pennsylvania has moved from 23rd to 17th place in CNBC's rankings for America's Top States for Business in 2022.

This is great news and reinforces the value of our pro-jobs approach to governing the Commonwealth. That includes improving our technology and infrastructure, cutting taxes, investing in our education and workforce development systems, keeping state spending in check and planning for the future.



We continue working to get government out of the way of employers as we advance regulatory reform and relief efforts. We also gave voters a voice in successfully amending our state constitution to reassure Pennsylvanians and Pennsylvania businesses they cannot be unilaterally shuttered indefinitely.

While more work needs to be done, this report is proof Pennsylvania has rallied due to policies that welcome businesses and the jobs they create.

Investing in Public Health, Safety



House Republicans have been leaders in, and remain committed to, ENSURING OUR LAWS ARE FULLY ENFORCED AND REVERSING THE TREND OF LIMITING LAW ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES.

This state budget funds:

- The hiring of 200 additional PA State Troopers
- Local law enforcement support grants
- A joint local-state task force to help combat Philadelphia's out-of-control gun violence

Ensuring the health and safety of all Pennsylvanians is a core function of government. That's why the 2022-23 state budget continues significant investments in support of that goal.

This budget will allow the Pennsylvania State Police to train two new cadet classes, which will add up to an additional 200 troopers to protect communities throughout the state. To reduce the trend of increasing crime and diminishing local law enforcement capacity, local police and law enforcement will also benefit from \$135 million in one-time federal relief funds for local law enforcement support grants.

With gun violence on the rise, we allocate \$50 million in federal relief funds for gun violence investigation and prosecution grants.

To improve access to mental health care in Pennsylvania, the budget allocates

\$100 million in one-time federal relief funds for a collaborative care mental health initiative.

To further ensure access to health care, the budget increases Medicaid reimbursement rates to emergency medical services providers to help them continue their life-saving work.

Recognizing the ongoing costs related to COVID-19 and workforce struggles, this budget allocates \$250 million in federal relief funds to help long-term care providers, including nursing homes, assisted living facilities, personal care homes, and home and community-based services, as they strive to provide compassionate care to their patients. The budget also provides a \$35/day increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates in nursing homes and increases the state supplemental grant for personal care home and domiciliary care residents by \$200 a month, the first increase since 2006.

To help recruit more health care providers, the budget allocates an additional \$35 million in federal relief funds to support the nurse loan forgiveness program and increases the primary care loan repayment program by \$1.3 million to provide 50 additional awards for physicians practicing primary care in medically underserved areas, which includes some of our rural communities.

I'll be highlighting other key initiatives contained in the budget in the coming weeks. You may also read more at PAHouseGOP.com/statebudget.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Waitlist Eliminated

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) announced this week it has terminated the waitlist for vocational rehabilitation services for significantly disabled (SD) and non-significantly disabled (NSD) individuals.

L&I's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) assists Pennsylvanians with disabilities in obtaining and retaining employment while keeping their independence. Since 2016, nearly 370,000 individuals have received services from OVR, including vocational counseling, evaluations, medical diagnostic services, medical restoration services,



employment training, placement services and career support services.

In eliminating the waitlist, OVR is lifting what is called OOS, or order of selection. When funds are limited OOS is invoked, and services are available based on levels of severity of the disability. For the last 28 years, only those individuals labeled as having a “most significant disability” were receiving services, while those labeled as having a “significant” or “non-significant” disability were placed on a waitlist.

Due to the decrease in economic activity during the pandemic, OVR has a surplus of federal funding available to remove the waitlist and use those unspent resources to serve more Pennsylvanians.

For more information on OVR services, [visit your local OVR office](#) or apply for OVR services [online via PA CareerLink](#).

Grants Available for Environmental Education Projects

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is seeking applicants for \$900,000 in state grant funding available for environmental education projects.

The grants are available to schools, colleges, nonprofit community and environmental organizations, county conservation districts, and businesses, for projects that engage teachers, youth and residents in actions that help protect Pennsylvania’s natural resources.



While all education project topics are considered, priority areas are water quality, climate change and environmental justice. Project examples include tours, demonstrations and hands-on learning experiences, and workshops on stream monitoring, rain gardens, wetlands, green infrastructure and other watershed stewardship; solar and other renewable energy, alternative transportation, energy conservation and other approaches to address climate change; and improving air quality and community and municipal partnerships to address local environmental challenges.

Projects with a local focus may receive up to \$5,000, and regional or statewide initiatives may receive up to \$30,000. Projects that engage students and teachers

at three levels, local, state and national, may be awarded up to \$85,000.

For more information, [click here](#).