

WINTER 2023

State Representative

RYAN MACKENZIE

187TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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OFFICE INFORMATION

DEAR FRIENDS,

It remains an honor and a privilege to be your representative in Harrisburg and to serve you here at home.

To provide efficient and effective constituent service, I maintain two full-time district offices – in Lower Macungie Township and Northwestern Lehigh. I have a knowledgeable staff that can help you with a wide variety of state-related matters. Simply stop by or give us a call.

I hope you find this mailing to be interesting and informative. We send them every few months to keep you up to date on news from the state Capitol and here in the 187th Legislative District.

Another great way to stay connected is to register for my email updates at www.RepMackenzie.com, under the “Resources” tab.

Sincerely,

State Rep. Ryan Mackenzie

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Around — THE DISTRICT



It was a privilege to take part in the 9/11 ceremony at Good Will Fire Co. in Trexlertown that included a tribute to the more than 400 first responders who made the ultimate sacrifice on that terrible day.



My annual fall shredder event at the Lower Macungie Township Municipal Complex helped more than 600 residents combat identity theft by safely destroying their sensitive documents.



I attended the grand opening celebration for Laura Brady Gallery and presented a House certificate of congratulations.



REFORMING GOVERNMENT

Cracking Down on Child Labor Law Violations

I am the prime sponsor of legislation that would strengthen Pennsylvania's Child Labor Act to provide stronger penalties for unscrupulous employers who take advantage of the most vulnerable children. House Bill 1714 would also provide cross reporting requirements that will notify other appropriate authorities to protect the child in specific situations, including cases of unaccompanied minors.

The number of child labor violations nationwide has jumped dramatically in recent years and it's time we do something about it. Our state laws should be strengthened to better protect any at-risk child in the workplace and more harshly punish employers who take advantage of them.

Under my proposal, a violation of the act would be a second-degree misdemeanor if the violation was willful, and the employer knew or should have known the child was without proper parental supervision and took advantage of the situation.



The House Labor and Industry Committee examined House Bill 1714 at a hearing in November.

Making Daylight Saving Time Permanent in Pennsylvania

It happens twice every year in most states, including Pennsylvania. We all make the switch between Daylight Saving Time and Standard Time, adding unnecessary stress to our lives.

I believe ending the practice of changing our clocks biannually is long overdue and have reintroduced legislation in the House that would make Daylight Saving Time permanent in the Commonwealth. Congress would first have to give states the authority to do so because it is currently against federal law.

The arguments in support of making the change to the same time year-round are numerous. Experts say more daylight in the evening could improve public safety, increase social and commercial activity, and lower electricity use.

A 2019 poll by the Associated Press also found that 70% of Americans want to end twice-a-year clock changes, with permanent Daylight Saving Time being the more popular option.

In recent years, about 30 states have introduced legislation to end the twice-yearly changing of clocks.

My proposal, House Bill 272, is currently under consideration by the House State Government Committee.



During House sessions, I often rise to debate the merits of legislation under consideration.

Combating Deepfake Sexual Exploitation

I have introduced legislation to help combat deepfake porn, which is the malicious manipulation of benign photos or videos to target victims online, including children. Artificial intelligence (AI) is being used to create pornographic images of individuals without their knowledge or consent.

While the unauthorized dissemination of an intimate image is unlawful in Pennsylvania, it is far from clear whether the use of new technology to disseminate an AI-generated, deepfake intimate image of a non-consenting person is prohibited.

House Bill 1063 would make it clear that the use of deepfake technology to create pornographic images without another person's consent is against the law. It would also prohibit the use of deepfake technology to create child pornography.

Such an offense would be a first-degree misdemeanor when the individual depicted is a minor, and a second-degree misdemeanor when the victim is an adult.

WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

My district office staff and I are here to help you. Please contact me at my office or online to share your thoughts and concerns, or for assistance with any state-related matter. The most frequently used services are listed below.

- Vehicle registration, special tags, titles, and license applications.
- Point of contact for all state agency questions and issues.
- Filing Property Tax/Rent Rebate and PACE/PACENET applications.
- Birth certificate applications.
- Requests for state legislative information and regulations.
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for notable local accomplishments and family milestones.
- Complaints about state road conditions.
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups.
- Fishing and hunting information.

HELPING OUR COMMUNITY

Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program Expanded

Legislation I supported that makes more older residents and people with disabilities in Pennsylvania eligible for property tax or rent relief was signed into law by the governor in August.

Act 7 of 2023 increases income limits for the Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program for homeowners and renters to \$45,000. The new law also raises the maximum amount each homeowner or renter can receive from \$650 to \$1,000. The change will take place for those who apply for the rebate in 2024.

The measure expands the reach of property tax and rent relief to nearly 175,000 additional individuals, including about 4,500 Lehigh County residents, and helps to make the Commonwealth a more affordable place in which to live.

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvania residents age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older.

While the new law certainly helps to lessen the tax burden for many, I believe there is still much more work to do regarding the property tax issue. I have been a strong advocate for property tax reform proposals and voted in favor of those that came before me for consideration in the past. I am hopeful additional proposals will be brought before the full House for consideration.

Either of my offices can provide additional information on the rebate program or assistance with filing an application. You can also learn more at www.revenue.pa.gov.



Helping Others by Recycling Old Eyeglasses

We are now accepting eyeglasses on behalf of Lions International. Drop-off boxes are available in the lobbies of my Lower Macungie Township and Northwestern Lehigh district offices, which are open Monday-Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Since 1925, Lions International has worked to combat vision impairment and blindness. We are pleased to serve as a collection location for the club's eyeglasses recycling program.

STRENGTHENING EDUCATION

Establishing a Civics Education Graduation Requirement

I have introduced legislation that would require Pennsylvania students to receive at least a 60% on the civics test currently administered as a graduation requirement. Currently, students are not required to receive a passing grade and a 60% passing grade is the same threshold used for individuals attempting to become U.S. citizens.

The Pennsylvania Public School Code requires all school entities to administer a test of U.S. history, government, and civics at least once to students during grades 7-12. Students would be eligible to take the test as many times as necessary to attain a passing grade.

House Bill 1720 would also require the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services exam be used to satisfy the requirements under current law. Test questions, study guides, and practice tests are all free and accessible on the agency's website.

A 2023 survey conducted by the University of Pennsylvania indicates why such a graduation requirement is needed. The study found that "although two-thirds of American citizens (66%) can name all three branches of government, 10% can name two, 7% can name only one, and 17% cannot name any."



District Office Internships Available

We offer an internship program for college students interested in learning about career opportunities available in state government. The program is reserved for students currently enrolled for credit through an educational institution and is based out of my district offices.

The intern's responsibilities may include, conducting research for possible legislation; drafting correspondence and responding to constituent inquiries; planning an event that is beneficial to the intern and community; and attending events around the 187th Legislative District.

The internship hours are flexible but should be consistent. Occasionally, events are held outside of the regularly scheduled hours. Please submit resume, cover letter, and recent writing sample to RMackenzie@pahousegop.com.



CONGRATULATIONS, Eagle Scout

It was a pleasure to recognize Aiden Doyle of Wescosville for attaining the rank of Eagle Scout and present him with a House citation. To fulfill his community service requirement, Aiden designed and painted playground games and installed a flagpole at Saint Thomas More School.

I am happy to be able to honor, recognize, and celebrate the milestones of individuals, organizations, and teams in the 187th Legislative District through the awarding of a House citation. Information on submitting a citation request is available at www.RepMackenzie.com, under the "187th District" tab.

