



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
STEVE BARRAR

Serving the 160th Legislative District

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 **LET'S TALK ABOUT THE NEWS AT** [Facebook.com/RepBarrar](https://www.facebook.com/RepBarrar) 

Dear Neighbor:

The start of the 2011-12 session and the inauguration of a new governor have breathed fresh life into state government. The new leadership in the House of Representatives is energized and committed to improving the way Harrisburg operates.

We have already passed several reform bills and are now looking down the road at passing a balanced state budget and creating an atmosphere that will encourage job growth. Improving Pennsylvania's business climate so employers begin hiring again is vital to our state's economic recovery.

The road to recovery will not be easy. Our state is facing a multi-billion dollar budget deficit and federal stimulus dollars are no longer available to supplement state spending. Despite the difficulties we face, I am optimistic that we are emerging from the economic slump. I also know that our state government is in good hands – hands that will not be reaching into *our* pockets for more cash to fuel out-of-control spending. Those days are over.

I am excited about what lies ahead. I anticipate passing a state budget on time for the first time in eight years. I am looking forward to advancing policies that will reform our welfare system, control state spending and return prosperity to Pennsylvania.

As you read the rest of this newsletter, if you have questions, feel free to contact my office at (610) 485-7606. If you are on Facebook, you can follow me at **Facebook.com/RepBarrar**. I will do my best to keep you informed, and I always welcome your inquiries and opinions.

Sincerely,

State Representative
160th District

SIXTH ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY FAIR OFFERS FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

I am excited to host my Sixth Annual Health and Safety Fair from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 19. Every year I look forward to bringing you information about state, local and non-profit services available in our community, along with information on getting active, eating healthy and staying safe.

The Health and Safety Fair has become an annual tradition, and we are always updating our list of co-sponsors and the services we offer. This year we will feature new and exciting activities for the kids like face painting, water ice, and a moon bounce. We will also offer a free child identification service. Best of all, it is a free, family-friendly event.

Saturday, March 19

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Upper Chichester Municipal Building
8500 Furey Road / Upper Chichester



REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

For more information, contact my office at (610) 485-7606.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS SCHEDULED

Please join me at one of my town hall meetings for a spirited discussion of state government, our upcoming budget and other legislative priorities. This is your opportunity to ask questions and share your opinions with me. Pennsylvania is facing some major policy decisions this year, and I encourage you to attend one of these meetings because your participation will help me to better represent our district. Both meetings begin at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 23

Chadds Ford Township Building
10 Ring Road in Chadds Ford

Thursday, March 31

Upper Chichester Township Building
8500 Furey Road in Upper Chichester

Please register your attendance in advance by contacting my district office at (610) 485-7606. I look forward to discussing with you the issues that matter to our community and our Commonwealth.

HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE HAPPENINGS

This session, I have been appointed the majority chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, which oversees legislation dealing with veterans issues, disaster relief, fire and emergency services matters, and the capital budget for state armories and National Guard equipment. I want to take this opportunity to bring you up to speed on the issues before the committee this session. If you have any questions about the legislation in this section, feel free to contact my office.

PROTECTING VETERANS' RIGHTS TO STATE EMPLOYMENT

One of the major concerns of veterans returning home from active duty is how they will find a job and support their families, especially as they are coming home only to face one of the worst job markets in America's history.

Since 1975, Pennsylvania law has afforded preference to veterans seeking employment in state civil service. Veterans are required to pass the civil service exam associated with the position they seek, but they are afforded additional benefits in recognition of their military service.

A 2008 investigation by Auditor General Jack Wagner uncovered more than 500 cases of qualified veterans being overlooked for civil service positions across 25 state agencies.

In his report about the incidents, Wagner provided 19 recommendations to improve the State Civil Service Commission and bring its practices in line with state law. The commission adopted 13 of the suggestions, but failed to implement the rest.

The House has approved legislation, authored by Rep. Ron Marsico of Dauphin County, to codify a requirement that at least one member of the commission must be a veteran, thus ensuring that veterans are appropriately represented on the commission.

The legislation was introduced as part of a package of bills to ensure the protection of veterans' rights. Other bills in the package would:

- ◆ Establish the Office of Veteran Advocate within the Attorney General's office to represent veterans and their interests before the courts.
- ◆ Address the practice of circumventing veterans preference requirements to make a specific hire.
- ◆ Create a Civil Service Appeal Board to review the final determinations of the commission in employment complaints.
- ◆ Require the commission to advertise veterans preference on its website and in all announcements, advertisements and exam materials.

If you have questions about this legislation, feel free to contact my office or post on my Facebook page at [Facebook.com/RepBarrar](https://www.facebook.com/RepBarrar).

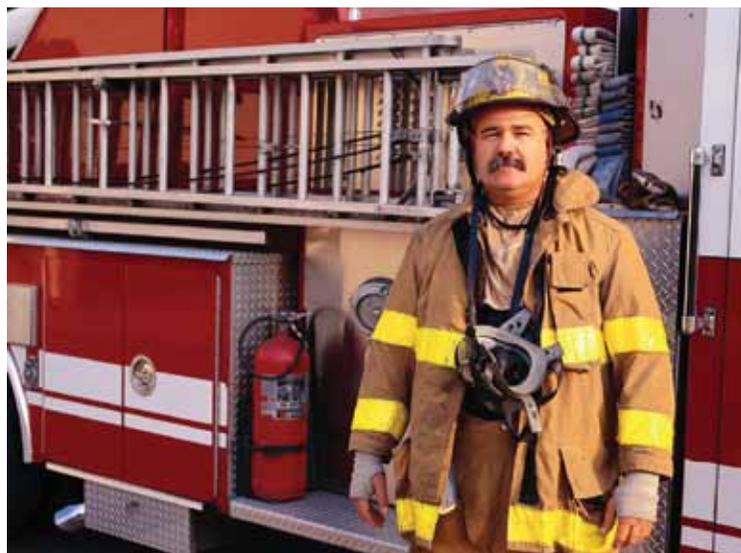


As the majority chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I review any legislation pertaining to veterans, fire and emergency services, and disaster relief before it goes to the full House for consideration. I am dedicated to working with Pennsylvania's veterans advocates and fire and EMS communities to ensure we are addressing the issues facing our state's heroes.

VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE SERVICE GRANT PROGRAM

In some ways, the Volunteer Fire Company, Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program is a victim of its own success. In the beginning of the program, organizations applying for funding were afforded near-maximum grant amounts because not every eligible entity was taking advantage of the program. As the grant program has gained in popularity, the overall pool of money available has remained the same, leading to decreasing grant award amounts.

I am working to advance legislation that would increase the overall \$25 million available for the program to allow volunteer organizations more significant grant awards. The program is set to expire on June 30, 2012, making now the perfect time to address the increase as we work to reauthorize the program. It is important to note that funds for this grant program do not come from the General Fund or from taxpayer dollars, but the grants are funded through revenue collected from Pennsylvania casinos.



CANCER PRESUMPTION FOR FIREFIGHTERS

I was outraged when former Gov. Ed Rendell vetoed legislation that would have provided workers' compensation for firefighters diagnosed with cancer because these men and women risk their lives to protect our communities, and they deserve recompense if they develop cancer as a result of their service.

Under the legislation, a firefighter with a cancer claim would have to show evidence that he or she passed a physical exam and was cancer-free prior to asserting the claim or engaging in firefighting duties. He or she also would be required to prove direct exposure to a Group 1 carcinogen while on duty.

I am hoping to advance this proposal to the Senate in the near future.

I look forward to working with the both the veteran and emergency service communities to make Pennsylvania a better place for all of us. I am always accessible online at SteveBarrar.com, [Facebook.com/RepBarrar](https://www.facebook.com/RepBarrar) and through e-mail at parep160@aol.com.

VETERANS ASSISTANCE HOURS EXPANDED

The veterans assistance hours available in my district office, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania American Legion, will be expanded beginning in March and offered twice per month.

A representative from the Pennsylvania American Legion will be available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at my district office. Appointments for these hours are required and can be made by calling (610) 485-7606.



Last fall, I hosted an event to honor the Korean War veterans residing in the 160th District. I want to thank the veterans who participated and all those who have served our nation with honor and distinction in times of war and peace. You have my gratitude!

SERVICES MY OFFICE PROVIDES

My office is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Some of the services provided include:

- ◆ Assisting with PennDOT matters.
- ◆ Aiding with consumer complaints and insurance complaints.
- ◆ Processing birth certificates and death certificates.
- ◆ Notarizing service.
- ◆ Completing Property Tax/Rent Rebate forms.
- ◆ Acting as a liaison with state departments, bureaus and agencies.
- ◆ Providing information about legislation and regulations.

State forms also are available online at SteveBarrar.com.



On Aug. 12, I visited Matthew Lawrence Adolph and his family at their Aston home. Adolph recently returned from Afghanistan where he served as an E4 Specialist with the U.S. Army First Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, Fifth Stryker Brigade.

NOTHING ON TELEVISION?

Check out my YouTube page at YouTube.com/RepBarrar to find short clips about important legislative issues. You can also view my "Straight Talk" series, in which I sound off on the issues being debated before the House. All videos are also available at SteveBarrar.com under the "Video" section of my "Latest News." I also post videos on my Facebook page – Facebook.com/RepBarrar.



THE CASE FOR SELLING OFF PENNSYLVANIA'S LIQUOR STORES

Do you know who the largest wholesale purchaser of wine in the United States is? It is the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB). Created after the end of prohibition by Gov. Gifford Pinchot to "discourage the purchase of alcoholic beverages by making it as inconvenient and expensive as possible," the PLCB's mission has changed over time to the point that it now promotes and advertises alcoholic beverages.

Pennsylvania should not be in the business of promoting, selling or marketing alcohol. A more appropriate role for the PLCB would be education, regulation and enforcement. This is exactly the idea behind the plan to amend the mission of the PLCB and to auction off and privatize Pennsylvania's liquor stores.

Not only is the plan financially appealing at a time when we are facing another multi-billion dollar deficit, but it also will lead to a more consumer-friendly environment and will remove government from a business in which it should not be involved.

The plan to auction the retail and wholesale operations is expected to generate approximately \$2 billion. The state would retain its taxing ability, but would eliminate the 18 percent Johnstown Flood Tax and replace it with a "gallonage tax," along with several other tax reforms.

The proposal calls for the PLCB to retain regulatory, licensing and alcohol education functions, and it would share in the enforcement of liquor laws with state and local law enforcement.

This would be a big step for Pennsylvania and would leave Utah as the only state in the liquor business. I would like to hear your thoughts on the plan, which you can post at Facebook.com/RepBarrar. I look forward to continuing to discuss this plan with you and will keep you informed of the details as they emerge.



I was the recipient of a Humanitarian Award from the Pennsylvania Chiropractic Association (PCA) for my support of legislation that would guarantee health insurance companies continue to provide patients with access to chiropractic care. I also authored legislation to prevent co-payments from costing more than the price of a doctor visit. Pictured from left are Dr. John McCarrin, new president of PCA; me; and Dr. Al Latronica, outgoing president of PCA.

HOUSE PASSES STATE GOVERNMENT REFORM PACKAGE

With the Republicans gaining control of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, the first item on our agenda this year has been reforming state government. Before we could move forward with our other legislative initiatives, which include improving Pennsylvania's job and business climate and controlling state spending, we felt it imperative to get our own house in order.

Legislation included in the Pennsylvania Agenda for Trust in Harrisburg (PATH) package would:

- ◆ Strengthen whistleblower protections for all state employees and those working on state contracts.
- ◆ Increase maximum penalties for lobbyists who violate the Lobbying Disclosure Act.
- ◆ Bar 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-profits that receive public funds.
- ◆ Establish an online public database of all state expenditures.

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

DISTRICT ROAD WORK UPDATE:

NAAMAN'S CREEK ROAD

The reconstruction of the Naaman's Creek Road project is moving into the road construction phase between Route 202 and Foulk Road. Utility work is continuing between Foulk Road and the Delaware state line. The \$9.8 million project will cover a distance of 5.5 miles, and will involve improvements to drainage, signage, pavement marking, driveway, sight distance, turn radius and shoulder stabilization, as well as road reconstruction and repaving.

Naaman's Creek Road, from Route 202 east to Foulk Road, was closed to commuter and pass-through traffic starting March 1. Detour signs direct commuter and pass-through traffic onto Naaman's Road in Delaware. **The road is open to local residents, local businesses and their patrons. Please do not let the construction discourage you from continuing your regular business relationships in the area.**

Residents and businesses have been provided with two auto stickers from PennDOT. Individuals requiring additional stickers can obtain them at the township office by providing proof of additional auto registrations in the household or business. **Patrons do not need stickers.**

Chester Water Authority has almost completed its work between Central Avenue and Meetinghouse Road on installation of a new main line, piping to cross streets, grading stabilization, pipe testing, flushing, disinfecting and eventually completing the tie in.

This spring, Chester Water Authority will commence the same work between Meetinghouse Road and the Delaware state line.

PECO gas line installation will begin after April in various areas between Creek Road and Mill Road, as well as Orchard Road to the Interstate 95 overpass.

Verizon line relocation will commence in the spring in areas between Larkin Road and the Delaware state line.

Updates to this and other road projects are available on my website, **SteveBarrar.com**. If you have any questions, please contact Beth Zenuk in the Upper Chichester district office at (610) 485-7606.



Last year, I presented a citation to Doris J. "DJ" Tindall of Thornbury Township. DJ has been a judge of elections for 30 years. I thank DJ for her dedicated service to America's system of free and open elections! Pictured with DJ and me is her son, Keith Tindall.

FIGHTING TO PROTECT SENIOR CITIZENS FROM PROPERTY TAX INCREASES

Pennsylvania's system of funding public education is outdated, inequitable and in need of change. As we work toward property tax reform, I have introduced legislation that would protect senior citizens from future property tax increases by freezing their property taxes at 2011 rates.

For years the people of Pennsylvania have struggled with the burden of ever-increasing property taxes. Senior citizens have an especially difficult time with property taxes because they have increased so dramatically, while seniors live on fixed incomes. Freezing property taxes for older Pennsylvanians will help keep senior citizens in their homes, and it is the right thing to do.

House Bill 661 would allow an eligible property owner to freeze the property taxes on a primary residence. The freeze would be open to any Pennsylvania resident who is at least 65 years of age, a widow or widower who is at least 50 years of age, or any person who is at least 18 years old and permanently disabled. If the residence is eventually sold or transferred, the property tax rate would become current, unless it is transferred to a surviving spouse who is at least 50 years of age.

The Legislature has talked for years about property tax reform, but it has been unable to do anything meaningful. This legislation would have a genuinely positive impact on the lives of our senior citizens, who do not deserve to be taxed out of their homes.

I know that all homeowners in the 160th District feel burdened by property taxes. Rest assured, this is only the first step toward the meaningful tax reform for which all property taxpayers have been calling. I will continue to work with my colleagues for a solution for everyone, but in the meantime, this is a move in the right direction.

REP. STEVE BARRAR

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"PROUD TO SERVE YOU IN THE 160TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT"

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