

LOU'S NEWS

STATE REP. LOU SCHMITT



79th Legislative District | Vol. VIII | Summer 2024

Funding for the District

One aspect of my job as your state representative is to advocate for funding for projects in our area. Throughout the year, I have helped secure grants for various projects in the district. Here's a look:

- Blair County will see improved high-speed internet thanks to a grant of more than \$1.8 million. In addition, companies that supply the internet to the region, including Blair County, received a combined \$11.8 million to improve service.
- \$7.5 million was awarded to replace 15,000 feet of cast iron waterline along Logan Boulevard. The pipeline is prone to breaking and leaking, resulting in service outages and water losses. The Altoona Water Authority's average unaccounted-for water loss was 35% in the 2019 reporting year.
- \$655,800 to assist with bringing the Strawberry Hills Soccer Complex in Logan Township to near completion. The funding will be used to build pedestrian walkways, a pavilion, soccer fields, an access drive, parking area and stormwater management measures and install play equipment with required safety surfacing, fencing, park sign and utilities. It will also be used for ADA access, landscaping, project sign and other improvements.

Bringing Parity to the Milk Bidding Process

I recently heard from Blair County officials about an issue the county had with its contract to buy milk for the county prison. Because of outdated language in the county code, county officials were forced to rebid the milk contract, costing taxpayers several thousand dollars more than it typically would.

To prevent this problem from happening again, I introduced **House Bill 2389** to amend the county code so that no county in Pennsylvania would have to request bids for milk but would instead pick the best seller that fits its needs. Some counties can do this already. The current law exempts Second Class A counties from the bidding process. I believe it only makes sense to extend the exemption to all counties.

This legislation is simple but will save our counties thousands of dollars annually. It is also a great example of Blair County having a positive impact on the rest of Pennsylvania.

Bill Would Protect Seniors, Hold Shepherds of Taxpayer Dollars Accountable

Tens of thousands of older Pennsylvanians rely on local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) found across the state. AAAs are the boots on the ground when it comes to providing services to older residents, including investigating allegations of elder abuse. Unfortunately, six of the 52 AAAs are out of compliance with state regulations. What's equally frightening is information about which of the AAAs are not compliant and why they are not meeting regulations is hidden from the public eye.

That is why I introduced **House Bill 2319** to mandate the Department of Aging to display a non-compliant AAA list and corrective action plans on its website. Currently, the information is released once a year by the department in a report that is rarely, if ever, seen by the public.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I shed light on the issue during a budget hearing in February, during which I quizzed the Department of Aging secretary about the non-public information.

The fact that this information is essentially hidden from the public is unacceptable, especially when these entities continue to receive state



taxpayer dollars. The people deserve to know if the AAA in their area is protecting senior citizens.

House Bill 2319 has been referred to the House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee for initial consideration. My legislation is part of the "Back to Basics" government reform bills. The legislative package is based on observations and feedback from state agencies during the 2024 budget hearings.

If you suspect someone is the victim of elder abuse, please call the statewide reporting hotline at **1-800-490-8505**. Common signs and symptoms of elder abuse may include:

- Isolation.
- Weight loss.
- Bruises or broken bones.
- Increased confusion.
- Unusual withdrawals from any account.
- Signing over one's home to another.

Got a Damaged License Plate?

Drivers with a damaged or illegible license plate can get it replaced at my event in Logan Township.

**The damaged license plate replacement event will be held
Thursday, Aug. 15, from 4-6 p.m.
at the Newburg Fire Association, 2805 Washington Ave. in Logan Township.**

Officers from the Logan Township Police Department will check the plates to determine the need for replacement.

Drivers must bring along their unexpired Pennsylvania driver's license and current vehicle registration card. Attendees will be in and out in just a few minutes with the plates arriving at a later date. A registration plate is deemed illegible when one or more numbers or letters cannot be recognized from 50 feet or if the registration plate shows any blistering, peeling, discoloration or loss of reflectivity.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
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79TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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*For the latest updates follow
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District Office Services

My district office is here to assist you.

Services my staff and I provide include:

- **Assistance with PennDOT paperwork** (lost cards, changes, corrections, special registration plates, vanity plates and temporary placards for persons with disabilities).
- **Property Tax and Rent Rebate applications.**
- **Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications.**
- **State tax forms.**

If you need help with any of the above or with any other state-related matter, please do not hesitate to call my district office.

Let's Stay in Touch!

There are numerous ways for us to stay connected about all the news coming out of Harrisburg.

I send email updates about important legislation, events in the district and other information you will find helpful. It's simple to receive these updates by signing up at **RepLouSchmitt.com**.

I also post updates to social media platforms. To stay updated, follow my Facebook and Instagram accounts. Find me at **facebook.com/RepSchmitt** on Facebook and at **instagram.com/RepSchmitt** on Instagram.

Honoring Workers Who Lost Their Lives



As part of National Work Zone Awareness Week this past spring, I joined fellow members of the House Transportation Committee, Secretary of Transportation Mike Carroll and others for a ceremony to honor those who lost their lives in work zone accidents.

Safe driving is everyone's responsibility. When you encounter work zones, PennDOT offers the following tips:

- **Drive the posted work zone speed limit.**
- **Stay alert and pay attention to signs and flaggers.**
- **Maintain a safe distance around vehicles.**
- **Use flashers if traveling slowly.**
- **Avoid distractions.**
- **Be patient.**