

State Representative Ron Miller

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Dear Friends,

Following a very busy 2011, the 2012 legislative session is underway. A total of 124 bills were signed into law last year as part of a very active and ambitious legislative calendar, with many of those bills making headlines and provoking plenty of discussion.

Thank you for taking time to read my newsletter. In it, you'll find my thoughts on some of those bills, as well as information on possible changes to my district, and details of some added responsibilities I have taken on in my role as representative for the 93rd Legislative District.

I also need to thank you again for sending me to Harrisburg to serve as your voice in the General Assembly. Your support in pursuing these issues and representing you is much appreciated. Best wishes for personal success and happiness in 2011.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Miller".

Ron Miller, State Representative
93rd Legislative District



Lacey's Law Seeks to Make Highways Safer for Teens, Others

Act 81 of 2011 seeks to improve highway safety by upgrading Pennsylvania's Graduated Driver License (GDL) law for teens 16 ½ to 18 years old.

The new law, which took effect Dec. 27, directly responds to national data that teen driver and peer passenger deaths account for one-quarter of total teen deaths nationwide, and teen drivers have fatal crashes at four times the rate of adult drivers. The greatest chance of crashing occurs in the first six months after licensure and that inexperience and distractions are the two greatest risks when teen drivers are behind the wheel. Numerous studies have shown lower teen crash rates after implementing a passenger restriction for teen drivers.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, fatalities in crashes that involved a 16- or 17-year-old driver in 2010 increased from 40 in 2009 to 57 last year, a 43 percent increase.

Act 81 expands training before a teen can test for his or her license by increasing behind-the-wheel training from 50 hours to 65 hours. Ten of those hours must be at night and five of those should be during inclement weather. The new law also limits the number of teen passengers in a vehicle driven by the holder of a junior driver's license to one. Exceptions apply for family members.

States that have updated their GDL programs report as much as a 40 percent drop in the number of fatal crashes among 16-year-old drivers.

This legislation isn't intended to replace parenting; it is designed to help parents and to support them so that when they tell their teens they cannot drive around with a carload of friends, there are real consequences.



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From the Chairman's Chair

As majority chairman of the House Labor and Industry Committee, I have pushed for legislation considered by the committee to be fair to Pennsylvania taxpayers and helpful in creating jobs.

To this point, the committee has addressed changes to:

- Uniform Construction Code (House Bill 377, signed into law as Act 1 of 2011)
- Unemployment Compensation Code (Senate Bill 1030, signed into law as Act 6 of 2011)
- Workers Compensation Code (House Bill 440, signed into law as Act 20 of 2011)
- Workforce Development Code (Senate Bill 552, signed into law as Act 67 of 2011)

Five other bills were passed by the committee and the full House and currently sit with the state Senate. Hearings were also held on House Bill 1602, which would amend the Mechanics Lien Law, and prevailing wage, the first on this subject in either chamber of the General Assembly in more than eight years.

Committee hearings were held in August to consider the following:

- Additional Unemployment Compensation System legislation (House Bill 1754, which I sponsored).
- Amendment of the Child Labor Law (House Bill 927).
- Amendment of the Prevailing Wage Law (House bills 1271, 1367 and 1685).
- Legislation to implement right to work in Pennsylvania (House bills 50, 51, 52 and 53).

The purpose of these hearings is to determine the impact of the bills on Pennsylvania's business climate, as well as their ability to impact what to this point has been a "jobless recovery." I hope you agree this is an important agenda for the 93rd Legislative District and all of Pennsylvania.



It was an honor to be in attendance on Tuesday, Aug. 2 for the signing by Gov. Tom Corbett of House Bill 218, which renames Route 462 from Route 30 in West Manchester Township to Route 24 in Springettsbury Township the Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway. Also on hand was Korean War Veterans Chapter 178 from York County.

Lawsuit Abuse Reform Passed into Law

Fellow York County state Rep. Keith Gillespie (R-Hellam) and I were proud to have been on hand in June as Gov. Tom Corbett signed into law Senate Bill 1331, the Fair Share Act. A defendant will now be held responsible only for his or her proportionate share of total damages awarded to compensate a plaintiff.

This legislation addresses frivolous lawsuits in our legal system that delay justice for those who deserve it. It restores common sense and personal responsibility. This act had the support of thousands of businesses small and large, medical professionals and hospitals. Lawsuit abuse scares jobs away from Pennsylvania, and Senate Bill 1331 helps consumers by keeping costs down, preventing job losses and ensuring accessibility to health care providers.



Protecting the Integrity of Your Vote

I am a co-sponsor of House Bill 934, voter identification legislation that was passed by the House in June. This bill includes safeguards protecting the right of all voters.

While the vote in the House went predominately along party lines, this is not a partisan issue. "Elections are the heart of our democracy," said former President Jimmy Carter upon the release of the Carter/Baker Commission Report. He also believed requiring voters to show a free photo identification at the polls is just as "practical" as the many identification needs of daily life today.

Under this legislation, the state will provide free photo ID to any voter who makes a request. Voting is as important as, if not more important than, boarding an airplane, entering a federal building, and cashing a check. These three acts each require identification to be shown, so asking the same of someone preparing to vote should be no intrusion on their rights.



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The Ability to Defend One's Rights

House Bill 40, the Castle Doctrine legislation which was signed into law June 28, had my support as a co-sponsor. This is truly commonsense protection for all Pennsylvanians. Law-abiding citizens are now allowed to protect themselves and their families without fear of retribution. It also includes a civil immunity safeguard that prevents a citizen from being forced into a frivolous lawsuit due to self-defense.

House Bill 40 is based in part on a similar law enacted in the state of Florida which addresses the use of deadly force in defense of one's self and others within an individual's residence or occupied vehicle. This new law creates a presumption that an attacker or intruder intends to do great bodily harm to an individual and others inside his or her home or occupied vehicle, and force, including deadly force, may be used as a means of protection.

The people of Pennsylvania deserve the right to defend themselves and what belongs to them when challenged by those who choose to use serious bodily harm. When faced with an imminent threat, citizens now have the ability to stand their ground and "defend their castle" without the obligation to retreat. It allows the use lethal force inside of one's home, occupied vehicle or any place they have the legal right to be.



One of the highlights of the spring was the ninth-annual Model Legislature exercise I conducted with my fellow members of the York County House delegation. On April 29, we hosted 155 York County high school students at the state Capitol. The students discuss and vote pieces of legislation in committee and then caucus on the individual bills. From there, legislation is taken up on the House floor and voted. In this photo, I am advising the "House Agriculture Committee."

Current Property Tax Relief Efforts

Forms for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate program for tax year 2011 will be available in early February on my website, www.RepMiller.com, as well as in my district office. Eligible participants can receive a rebate of up to \$650 based on their rent or property taxes paid in 2011. 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)

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate program is one of many initiatives supported by the Pennsylvania Lottery, which dedicates its proceeds to support programs for older Pennsylvanians. Since the program began in 1971, more than \$4 billion has been paid to qualified applicants.

Residents are reminded to provide all the necessary income, property tax or rental information required to process claims quickly and accurately.

Additional Relief Available Through Your School District

Programs run by the Dallastown Area and Southern York County school districts also offer opportunities for property tax relief. Forms for both programs will be available on my website and in my district office in late January.

Cleaning Up the Bay

In addition to my committee responsibilities in the General Assembly, I serve as vice-chairman of the Pennsylvania delegation on the Chesapeake Bay Commission which is made up of 21 members from three states -- Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia.

The commission was created in 1980 to coordinate Bay-related policy across state lines and to develop shared solutions. While the Chesapeake Bay continues to be a great resource for the region, management of it is a daunting task. Our charge is to work together and combine our assets in order to achieve the restoration initiatives set forth by the Chesapeake 2000 report.

Southcentral Pennsylvania's "contribution" to the bay is the Susquehanna River, which provides half of the freshwater inflow for the entire Chesapeake Bay. When the river flows into the Chesapeake at Havre de Grace, Maryland, it does so at an average rate of 19 million gallons per minute. For these reasons, it is essential that those of us in this area do the best we can to effectively manage our resources and always be conscious of the environment.

I have always been a staunch supporter of conservation efforts. It is an honor to serve on the commission, and a responsibility I do not take lightly.

The New 93rd Legislative District

In mid December, the Legislative Reapportionment Commission, which is charged with redrawing Pennsylvania's legislative districts, gave bipartisan approval to final maps for the new state House and Senate districts, including the 93rd District, which I represent. Under state law, reapportionment occurs every 10 years and is based on population shifts recorded by the U.S. Census.

The final plan changed the district's boundaries, which means the 93rd gained a few municipalities and lost a few others. The commission's approval marked the start of a 30-day window for the filing of court challenges. We anticipate those challenges to be resolved, and the final plan to take effect sometime this month; however, the time line is subject to change based on the nature of those challenges.

Under the proposed map, the 93rd Legislative District is made up of these parts of the existing district: York Township (including all of Ward 5) and Springfield Township, and the Boroughs of Dallastown, Jacobus, Loganville, Seven Valleys, Shrewsbury and Yoe.

It would now also include the townships of East Hopewell, Hopewell, North Hopewell, Spring Garden (Ward 04), and the boroughs of Cross Roads, Stewartstown and Winterstown.

Jefferson Borough would move to the 196th Legislative District, currently represented by Rep. Seth Grove. The townships of Codorus, Manheim, Shrewsbury and West Manheim, along with the boroughs of Glen Rock, New Freedom, and Railroad, would be part of a newly-created 169th Legislative District.

I have enjoyed representing every community in my district since taking office. I am saddened by the possibility of losing communities that are very important to me. I have developed very personal relationships that I still value regardless of the lines on a map.

Should this proposed map become a reality, I welcome the opportunity to meet constituents in the new communities of the redrawn 93rd District.

House District 93



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