



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
MELISSA CERRATO
 151ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that I am already halfway through my second year in office serving as your State Representative. So much has occurred since my last mailer to you in December. My team and I have served another 4,015 constituents (12,938 since January of 2023) and hosted 11 events throughout the district to provide residents with state services and information. I have truly enjoyed meeting with so many of you to assist with your state needs as well as talk about issues that we can try to address legislatively.

My third bill (H.B. 1903) passed the House in April, and I had my first bill (H.B. 1564) signed into law by Gov. Josh Shapiro in March. I was joined by family, staff, and some legislators in support of the bill for this momentous occasion.

To put it in perspective, as of May 20, 2024, the PA House passed 308 bills and the state Senate has passed 58 bills. Of those 366 bills, only 53 House bills and 41 Senate bills have made it to the governor's desk for his signature. I am therefore incredibly proud, especially as a first-term member, to have had a bill that I believe will truly help people in the Commonwealth be among those few.

My bill, H.B. 1564, created an Associate License for Marriage and Family Therapists and Social Workers. Pennsylvania is not unique in the fact that it is dealing with a mental health crisis among its residents, and it is clear we need to create measures to educate and encourage Pennsylvanians to care for their mental health while meeting the ongoing demand for mental health care providers. I truly believe that it is imperative in facing this crisis head on.

This Associate License credential enhances access to mental health services by increasing employment opportunities for new marriage and family therapists and social workers with Master's and/or Doctorate training that have yet to meet the 3000 hours of



clinical supervision required for full licensure as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT).

We are now one of 27 states to have established this credential to permit LMFTs to work with individuals, children, couples, and families under the direct supervision of a licensed clinical marriage and family therapist supervisor. Holding this credential assures patients and health care employers that the LMFT is properly trained and pursuing full licensure while allowing them to engage with patients.

Qualifying more mental health care providers to meet the growing need will assist in helping Pennsylvanians access the care they need.

I look forward to continuing my efforts to come up with creative solutions to address issues our Commonwealth faces and thank you for your support in the process.



State Representative

Melissa Cerrato

★ 151st Legislative District ★

UPCOMING BUDGET

As of writing this newsletter, I am preparing to head back to Harrisburg for “budget month” which is one of the most important months of the year for us as legislators. In June each year, the House and Senate convene to create the Commonwealth’s budget for the next 12 months. I truly believe our budget is a moral contract showing where our priorities lie as a state. As you can imagine, those priorities are often extremely varied based on the geographical and socioeconomic makeup of a legislator’s district. Therefore, there is much debate and negotiation that needs to occur in order to pass a final budget. I compare the process of getting a completed budget to that of a court ruling. In most cases neither party receives 100% of what they were seeking and while they may leave slightly disappointed, it is normally a fair balance that is found. I will update you on this process in my emails so if you have not yet signed up, I recommend you do so as it’s the best way to stay informed and engaged.

In the meantime, I wanted to let you know about some of the accomplishments we have made for Pennsylvanians in the past year to address infrastructure, job training,

public safety, schools, children and families, and seniors.

- Made significant new investments in the state’s crumbling infrastructure, already fixing over 1,100 miles of roads and repairing hundreds of bridges across the state, including the I-95 bridge collapse in just 12 days.
- Helped prepare high school graduates for the job market whether they are heading to college or right into the workforce by strengthening community colleges, career and technical schools, and job training apprenticeships.
- Invested tens of millions of dollars to help local fire companies and EMS, along with tens of millions of dollars more to hire 400 new state troopers, and to make sure local police have the equipment they need to keep us safe.
- Made sure public schools recruit and retain the best, most experienced teachers in the classroom by expanding teacher retention programs.
- Increased funding to provide universal free breakfast to every public school student in the state, so every child has an opportunity to start the day with a nutritious meal

and be better prepared to learn and succeed.

- Increased basic education funding for public schools by over half a billion dollars to the highest level in Pennsylvania history and ensured more resources for underfunded schools in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- Helped tens of thousands of senior citizens remain in their homes by increasing funding for senior nutrition programs and making improvements that decrease the waitlist for in-home support.
- Expanded the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for seniors and people with disabilities to cover nearly 175,000 new individuals; in addition, many of the 400,000 seniors who already qualify will see their rebates nearly double.
- Helped hard-working families struggling to keep up with the rising cost-of-living by expanding early childhood education and increasing funding for affordable childcare services for 75,000 families across the Commonwealth.

I look forward to continuing to work towards legislating for and investing in the people of this great Commonwealth.



STAY UP TO DATE BY JOINING MY EMAIL LIST!

I write weekly emails that typically go out on Friday afternoons, and signing up is the best way to know about upcoming events, legislation that has passed the House during Session, and the happenings throughout the district. Stay informed and sign up at: <https://www.pahouse.com/Cerrato/emailsignup>.

AROUND THE DISTRICT...



Our Second Annual IEP Panel Discussion



Our 2024 Spring Senior Expo



Touring the new One House at a Time (Beds for Kids) Warehouse



Blair Mill Elementary's One School One Book Kick Off



Introducing constituent and "shadow for the day" Sam to Governor Shapiro



Honoring the Blue Star Mothers



Our 2024 Spring Shred Event



Our Annual Dog Licensing Event



Veterans Donation Collection with Recorder of Deeds Jeanne Sorg



Demonstration of the MQ-9 Simulator and Promotion Ceremony for Col. Silver



Our Annual Mobile Mammogram Event



Our 2024 Spring Electronics Recycling Event



HB1564 Passes the House on Concurrence



Joining Senator Collett's Senior Fair



My Third Bill, HB1903, Passes the House



Touring Mitzvah Circle's New Building in Montgomery Township and Presenting Grant Checks



Celebrating the Groundbreaking for the Miracle Field of Horsham



Enjoying the International Spring Festival at North Penn



Our Veteran's ID Event with the Recorder of Deeds Office

SEPTA KEY CARD FOR SENIORS

Our office is proud to continue our partnership with SEPTA in helping our constituents access SEPTA Key Cards in the most convenient way! This card is provided to residents aged 65 or older and offers free rides on all SEPTA transit routes including buses, trolleys, subway, and regional rail. Additionally, seniors who wish to take SEPTA to Delaware or New Jersey will receive a 50% discount on fare when they tap their Senior Key Card.

We can assist in your application for an initial SEPTA Key Senior Photo Card as well as renewals. You are required to bring a government issued ID that lists your birthdate, like a driver's license or photo ID. The current time for SEPTA to process your application and send your Key Card is approximately six weeks. If you would prefer not to wait, you may have your pass renewed at SEPTA Headquarters, located at 1234 Market St., Philadelphia, PA, 19107. You may schedule an appointment with SEPTA at 215-580-7145.

Unfortunately, the site will not allow us to create a duplicate Key Card. In order to receive a replacement for a lost/stolen card you can send a \$5 check or money order made payable to SEPTA to: SEPTA P.O. Box 824833 Philadelphia, PA 19182.



UNCLAIMED FUNDS

Did you know that you may have unclaimed funds with the Pennsylvania Treasury's Bureau of Unclaimed Property? The PA Treasury Department is seeking the owners of more than \$4 billion in unclaimed property. The PA Treasury receives hundreds of millions of dollars in unclaimed property every year. These items and funds go missing, often for reasons as simple as a misspelled name or an out-of-date address.

Unclaimed property may include:

- Closed bank accounts.
- Uncashed checks, including paychecks.
- Lost stocks and bonds.
- Contents of safe deposit boxes.
- Proceeds from the demutualization of insurance companies.
- Expired gift cards/gift certificates.

My office will continue contacting constituents to inform them of funds we have found in their name. To find out if you have unclaimed property contact my office or search your name in the Unclaimed Property database at www.patreasury.gov/Unclaimed/Search.html. There is **NO CHARGE** to claim your unclaimed property.



PROPERTY TAX RENT REBATE PROGRAMS – PA-1000

If you have not yet filed, you still have time to file for your 2023 Property Tax Rent Rebate (PTRR) and we are here to help if you need us. The PTRR Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians aged 65 or older; widows and widowers aged 50 or older; and people with disabilities age 18 or older. The income limit is \$45,000 a year for homeowners and for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded. The maximum rebate is \$1,000. Spouses, personal representatives, or estates may also file rebate claims on behalf of claimants who lived at least one day in 2023 and meet all other eligibility criteria. If you think you qualify and that this program may benefit you, we recommend applying!

All of the school districts in the 151st Legislative District offer their own additional property tax/rent rebate programs that you may also qualify for. To qualify for the school district rebates, you must have first qualified and applied for the state rebate program from the previous year and provide a copy of last year's PA-1000 application filed with the PA Department of Revenue as well as a copy of the rebate check received or statement of direct deposit. If you have any additional questions about this process, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office!





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MELISSA CERRATO

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Upcoming Events

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★ 151st Legislative District ★
2024

6 SEP 11am - 1pm
Second Annual Senior Fair
Horsham Twp. Community Center

5 OCT 10am - 12pm
Fall Shredding Event
Workspace at 2 Walnut Grove Dr.

7 SEP 10am - 12pm
Electronics Recycling Event
Temple Univ. Ambler Campus

13 NOV 4:30pm - 7 pm
SEPTA Senior Pass Event
Rep. Cerrato District Office

20 DEC 4:30pm - 6 pm
Winter Open House
Rep. Cerrato District Office

AREAS MY TEAM CAN ASSIST:

- Finding and Recovering Unclaimed Funds (PA Department of Treasury)
- Notary Services (Non-political)
- Unemployment Compensation assistance (PA Department of Labor and Industry)
- SEPTA Senior Key Card processing
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program applications (PA Department of Revenue)
- Acquisition of State Tax Forms (PA Department of Revenue)
- Questions regarding Medicaid, Food Stamps, LIHEAP, etc. (PA Department of Human Services)
- Birth and Death Certificate applications (PA Department of Vital Records)
- Disability Plate and Placard Applications (PA Department of Transportation)
- And any other state-related issue you may have.