

STATE REP. CARL WALKER METZGAR



MY BILL CRIMINALIZING ILLICIT ZYLAZINE POSSESSION PASSES HOUSE

My legislation, which would criminalize illicit possession of xylazine with a veterinary use exemption, passed the House by a 169-34 vote.

Early last year, the Department of Health temporarily scheduled xylazine as a Schedule III controlled substance in Pennsylvania because it is increasingly being found in mixtures of illicit drugs. House Bill 1661 would codify this decision in part by criminalizing illicit possession in order to keep people alive and protect the safety of individuals.

One of the first cases involving recreational xylazine usage was in Somerset County. The person used it at a baby changing station at a gas station. Illicit xylazine in combination with illicit drugs is a serious public health concern, and I am pleased to see bipartisan support in advancing my legislation.

House Bill 1661 is in the Senate for consideration.



PROTECTING OUR STUDENTS

Ensuring students are protected while gaining valuable education in the classroom, I introduced legislation that would implement a security presence in all publicly funded schools.

Countless school shootings across the country have prompted this initiative, and we should not wait for the next tragedy to occur before change is enacted. It is time to take action to ensure the safety and security of all children across the Commonwealth.

As of Dec. 6, there had been 37 school shootings in 2023 that resulted in injuries or death in the United States. In 2022, there were more school shootings (46) across the nation than in any other year since 1999.

Between 1999 and 2018, more than 187,000 children had endured a school shooting. Over the course of the next five years, that number nearly doubled as 338,000 students have now experienced this at their school.

House Bill 1908 will require the presence of at least one armed, trained and vetted school security officer, which may be either a school police officer, school resource officer or school security guard. All school safety personnel would be required to undergo background investigations, maintain certification and be annually certified in position-specific training.

Our teachers should not bear the weight of ensuring the protection of our children from shooters in our classrooms. Students need to know their schools are safe because having a safe environment fosters growth in our classrooms.

EXPANDING

HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND ACCESS

As the House Republican designee to the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA), I am pleased to report that progress is being made toward improving Pennsylvania's digital landscape.

Recently, PBDA published its Digital Equity Plan that aimed to ensure all individuals and communities have the skills, technology and capacity needed to reap the full benefits associated with our technological world. Residents were given the opportunity to comment on this plan so PBDA could learn how Pennsylvanians could be best served on this issue.

This came after the authority approved its multi-year "Connecting the Commonwealth" plan to secure more than \$1 billion in federal resources through the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program.

In order to meet the needs of today, high-speed broadband must be accessible for residents living in rural Pennsylvania. Expansion is the modern-day equivalent of rural electrification, and this hearing provided further insight into the work we need to do to deploy equitable broadband across the Commonwealth.





DRUG TESTING FOR WELFARE

I have introduced legislation that would require the Department of Human Services to develop and implement a drug test and a retest program to screen applicants and recipients of public assistance at random.

In the event an applicant or recipient fails the drug test or retest, my legislation would direct the department to appoint a protective payee to receive public assistance on behalf of children of the applicant or recipient who is denied public assistance.

It is our responsibility to ensure taxpayer-funded public assistance benefits are not used to purchase illicit drugs.

MAJOR WATER PROJECT RECEIVES SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

I helped secure millions of dollars in state funding for a major water improvement project in Somerset County.

Conemaugh Township Municipal Authority received a combined \$15.1 million in a grant and a low-interest loan to replace approximately 50,000 feet of distribution line, 14,000 feet of service line, two aging pumps, and 180 meters to address water loss and non-revenue water.

As water loss approached significant levels, residents were in jeopardy of seeing substantial increases in their bills. I am grateful to have lent a helping hand to the Conemaugh Township Municipal Authority to ensure costs remained steady while seeing an improvement in water service.

LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT FUNDING

I am pleased to see the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission award \$4,000 to the Historical and Genealogical Society of Somerset County, Inc.

Preserving our history and teaching it to future generations are critical to the fabric of society. It's important to know where we started and how we progressed to where we are today.

PROTECTING SENIOR CITIZENS' ACCESS TO MEDICATIONS

We recently passed a law that will preserve their access to the state's PACE and PACENET prescription drug benefit plans.

Act 62 of 2023 prevents Social Security cost-of-living increases from making seniors ineligible for PACE and PACENET.

Current income eligibility levels for PACE are set at less than \$14,500 for a single person and less than \$17,700 for a couple. PACENET, which covers those individuals with incomes exceeding PACE maximums, is open to individuals earning between \$14,500 and \$33,500 and couples with incomes between \$17,700 and \$41,500. The minimum age to participate in the programs is 65, and they are funded from proceeds of the Pennsylvania Lottery.

Learn more about PACE and PACENET at www.aging.pa.gov.

NEW LAW WILL FOSTER SCHOOL DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS

I was pleased to support a new law that will remove a potential barrier to the programs that allow students to enroll in college-level classes while still in high school.

Act 52 of 2023 eliminates the requirement that students in dual enrollment programs are removed from their school's average daily membership. A reduction in a school's average daily membership negatively impacts the amount of state funding it receives, thus serving as a disincentive for offering dual enrollment.

Allowing high school students to take college-level courses advances their educational opportunities and ultimately reduces the cost of their college education.

MILLIONS IN GRANT FUNDING ALLOCATED TO SOMERSET COUNTY

The Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) awarded more than \$2 million in grants toward four Somerset County projects.

The first set of funding is from the COVID-19 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the H2O PA — Water Supply, Sanitary Sewer and Storm Water Projects Program. Under Act 54 of 2022, the General Assembly appropriated \$205.4 million to assist with construction of drinking water, sanitary sewer and storm water projects.

CFA dedicated \$921,173 for the Confluence Borough Municipal Authority to assist with a new water system connection.

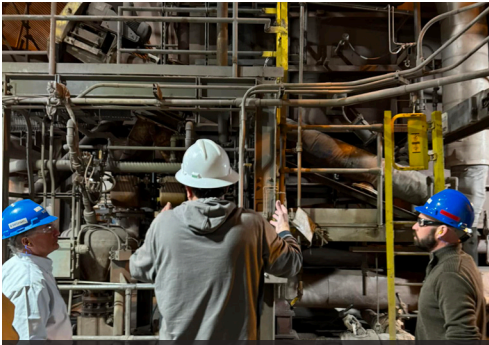
The second set of funding is from the COVID-19 ARPA funds to the Pennsylvania Small Water and Sewer Program. Under Act 54 of 2022, the General Assembly appropriated \$105.6 million to assist with construction, improvement, expansion, rehabilitation or repair of water supply system, sanitary sewer system and storm water system projects.

The following projects were awarded grants:

- Borough of Boswell: **\$428,447** to restore a storm wastewater sewer system.
- Upper Stonycreek Joint Municipal Authority: **\$420,702** for the replacement of sanitary sewer lines in Hooversville Borough and Stoystown Borough.
- Meyersdale Municipal Authority: **\$402,461** for improvements to the sanitary sewer system.

Pennsylvanians must have access to safe, clean water. This funding is crucial to uphold and exceed standards for the sanitation, protection and well-being of our communities.

IN THE DISTRICT



In November, I had the opportunity to tour the Seward Power Plant and associated Robindale Energy waste coal sites with Windber's own Bob Pavlick. Energy independence is vital to our national security, and this waste coal operation has the added benefit of cleaning up waste coal piles throughout our region that pollute our streams and watersheds.



Thank you to those who attended my and Sen. Pat Stefano's Veterans Appreciation Breakfast. We appreciate everyone who worked to make this event possible including the Berlin American Legion, Post 445 and our guest speaker, Maj. Gen. Tom "T.S." Jones, retired Marine and founder of Outdoor Odyssey in Boswell. To everyone who wore the uniform to defend our country, thank you for your service.



It was an honor to be invited to celebrate our American warriors on Veterans Day at the Rockwood Veterans Memorial Park. The Rockwood American Legion Post No. 279 worked hard on a great event! Thank you to all of America's veterans for our freedom.



I made a promise to Hooversville-area residents that I would find a way to achieve cellular coverage for them. Today, I am proud to announce that construction has started on a new cell site that will provide AT&T 5G service. This will boost public safety and grow our economy. I'm thankful for AT&T's willingness to invest in us.



Recently, I joined Senate Transportation Chairman Wayne Langerholc, Jr. to work on the beginning of a regional initiative to develop a manned and unmanned shared airspace project. This will improve capabilities of drone usage in the area and make us the technological hub for this type of work in the country, bringing in many high-paying jobs to Somerset County. Drone capabilities are not just for agricultural, military and emergency services but are nearly unlimited in our future. This will pay dividends for decades in the form of good jobs and quality of life.



It was a humbling experience to speak and lay wreaths on veterans' graves as part of the Wreaths Across America event at the Buckstown Cemetery and Shade Church. May we never forget we are descendants of the greatest men and women this world has ever seen.



I had the pleasure of presenting Dolly Glotfelty with a citation for her 90th birthday! She is thankful for the blessing of such a large and wonderful family. Happy birthday, Dolly!



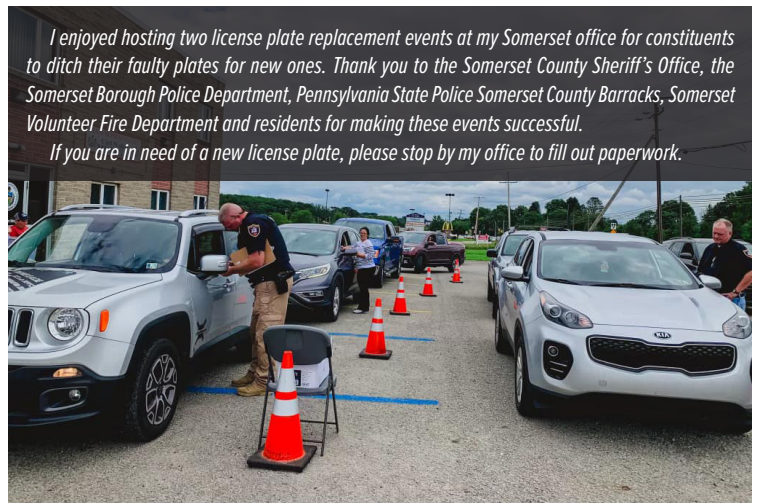
I had the honor of joining Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding and Sen. Pat Stefano at the Somerset County Rotary Farmer's appreciation luncheon. My favorite part was sharing the milk toast with Somerset County Dairy Princess Carlie Knott!



It's always a pleasure to support small businesses in the district. I recently had the opportunity to meet the Darnell sisters who operate The Corner Cup in Meyersdale. Great coffee and great people! Thank you for investing in the community!



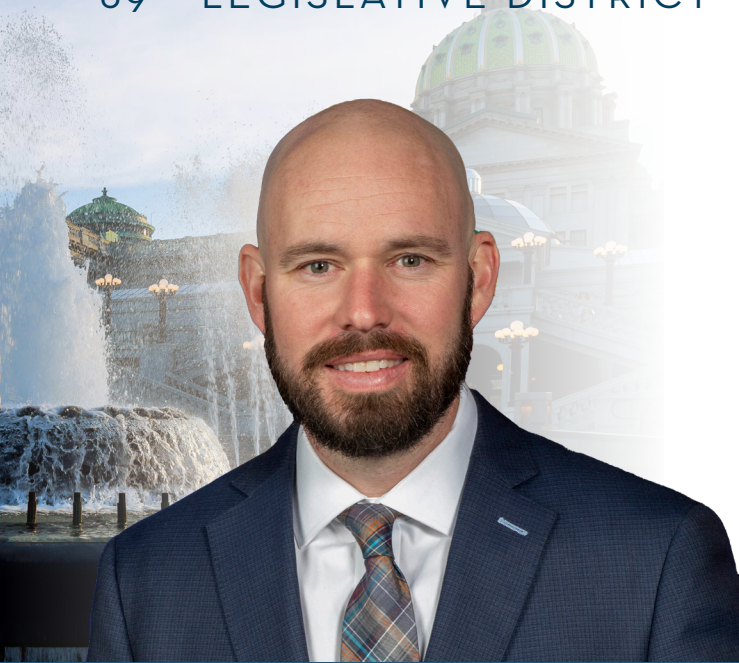
I was pleased to present a certificate to David Hay for his 60 years of service to Hillcrest Grange. David has worked tirelessly for decades to preserve and encourage our way of life in rural Pennsylvania.



I enjoyed hosting two license plate replacement events at my Somerset office for constituents to ditch their faulty plates for new ones. Thank you to the Somerset County Sheriff's Office, the Somerset Borough Police Department, Pennsylvania State Police Somerset County Barracks, Somerset Volunteer Fire Department and residents for making these events successful. If you are in need of a new license plate, please stop by my office to fill out paperwork.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
CARL WALKER METZGAR
69TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PRSRT STD U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARRISBURG, PA
PERMIT NO. 432



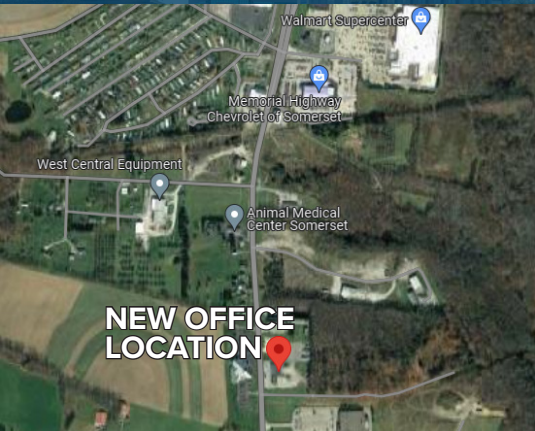
OFFICE LOCATIONS

DISTRICT OFFICE

1808 N. Center Ave., Suite 200
Somerset, PA 15501
814-443-4230

CAPITOL OFFICE

P.O. Box 202069
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2069
717-783-8756



NEW OFFICE LOCATION

In June 2023, my Somerset district office moved to 1808 N. Center Ave., Suite 200, in Somerset. It is located between Walmart and Lowe's. The images to the left show our map location and the front of our building. If you need help on any state-related issue, please stop by.

DO YOU HAVE UNCLAIMED PROPERTY?

The Pennsylvania Treasury estimates one in every 10 Pennsylvanians is owed unclaimed property by the state. Unclaimed property can include dormant bank accounts, abandoned stocks, uncashed checks and more. Property is always available for the rightful owner to claim. Tangible property may be auctioned after three years, but proceeds remain available to claim in perpetuity.

Military decorations and memorabilia – often turned over to Treasury from abandoned or forgotten safe deposit boxes – are never auctioned and remain in the vault for safekeeping until a veteran or their family is found.

You NEVER have to pay anyone to be reunited with your unclaimed property. If you find property that belongs to you, contact my office for assistance. You do not need to hire anyone to help you make your claim.

PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE PROGRAM OPEN

The state's 2023 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is now open.

This year, more Pennsylvanians who are 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 years or older, and those 18 years or older with disabilities will be eligible to receive a rebate on the property taxes and rent paid last year. With Act 7 of 2023, the General Assembly passed the first expansion in 20 years with provisions for cost-of-living adjustments each year increasing the income limits to \$45,000 and the maximum rebate to \$1,000. Applicants are encouraged to apply early. The Department of Revenue will begin processing applications in April and start sending payments July 1.

Assistance is available from my office at no cost. Please stop in with your proof of income (must be 1099s and W-2) and either your paid property tax receipts or a rent certificate signed by your landlord. If you have any other questions, please feel free to call my district office at 814-443-4230.



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