

State Senator

LISA M. BOSCOLA



Independent, Effective, Working to Make a Difference.

Summer 2011



**Your Independent
Voice in
Harrisburg.**

Inside Stories: Creating Jobs *through* PA WORKS Plan

Easing *Our* Tax Burden • Restoring Economic Development Funding

Jobs Should be the Top Priority

Over the past several months, I have continually stressed the need to work more aggressively to bring more jobs to Pennsylvania. Even though we are struggling with a very difficult budget process this year, we must continue to focus our efforts on creating jobs.

In that effort, I have used my chairmanship of the Democratic Policy Committee to focus hearings on various aspects of helping businesses succeed, and creating jobs.

I have also co-sponsored a legislative package, called PA Works, which would help get more people to work and help the state emerge from the recession.

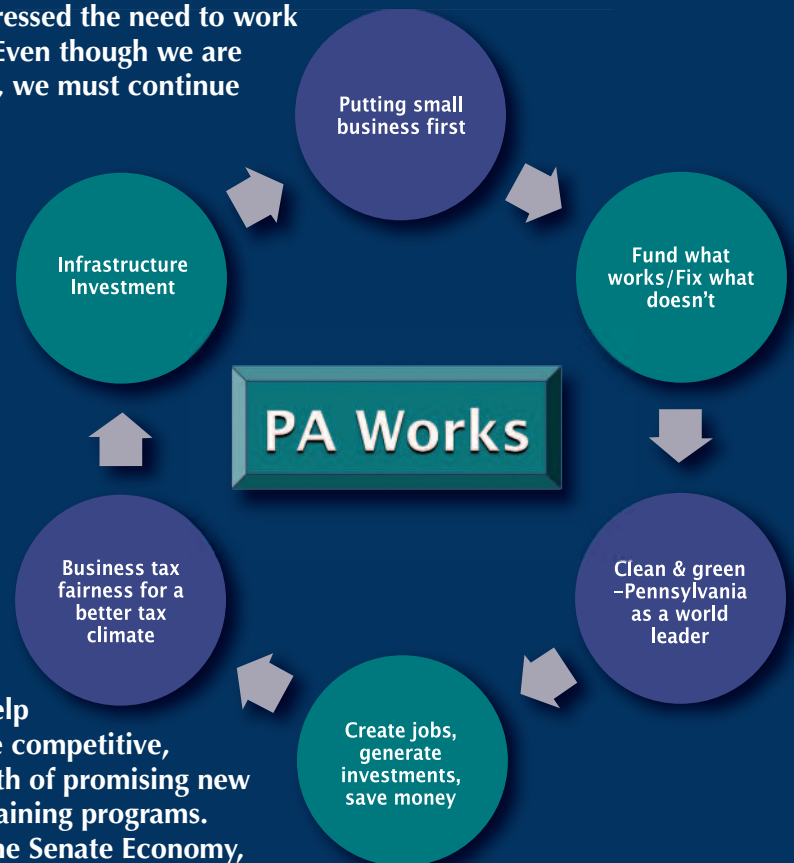


PA Works would create more than 28,000 jobs while actually saving state taxpayer dollars. This plan would also leverage \$2 billion in private investment to help put people to work, cut business taxes and help small businesses be more competitive,

rebuild the state's aging infrastructure, foster the growth of promising new clean and green energy industries and retool worker training programs.

I also hope to use my new position as co-chair of the Senate Economy, Business & Jobs Caucus to try to generate greater economic investment and job creation.

The best answer to this recession is jobs. I will continue to focus my efforts on that goal.



Boscola Asks Tough Questions About Aging Pipelines

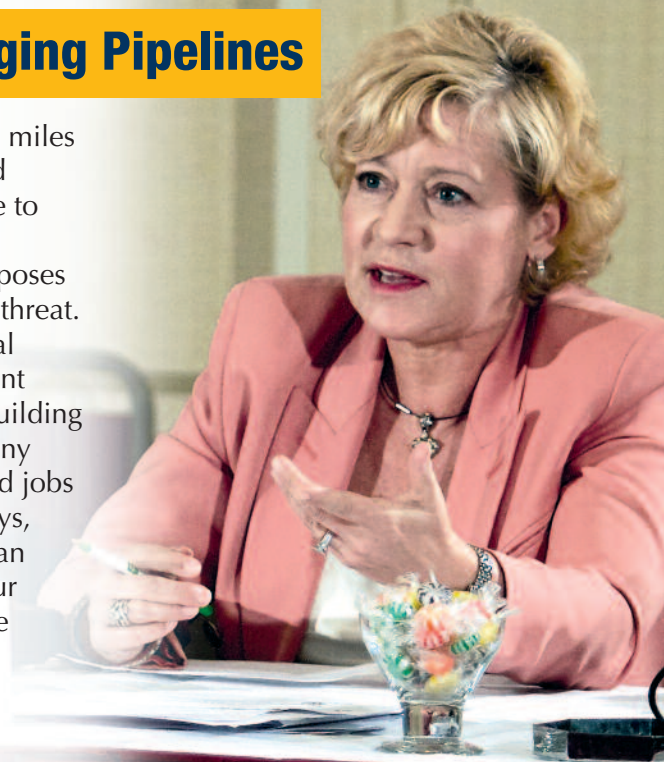
Allentown was recently the site of a heart-breaking tragedy that devastated a local row house neighborhood and killed five people.

Experts believe the explosion was caused by a leak in an 83-year-old cast-iron gas main. Because this aging underground gas main had no shut-off valves, it took utility workers – working in freezing temperatures and dangerous conditions – five hours to stem the flow of gas.

Sadly, this was no isolated fluke incident. Similar explosions have occurred in other parts of the state.

With an estimated 2.5 million miles of underground gas and liquid pipelines, we cannot continue to play Russian roulette with an antiquated infrastructure that poses such a dangerous and deadly threat.

I recently co-hosted a local hearing on how we can prevent future disasters and begin rebuilding our infrastructure. With so many local workers struggling to find jobs and make ends meet these days, this problem could represent an opportunity to both rebuild our infrastructure – and get people back to work.



Around the 18th District • Around the 18th District • Around the 18th District • Around the 18th District

Around

The 18th District

District & Beyond



▲ Senator Boscola meets with small business owners at the Greater Pocono Chamber of Commerce Expo.



▲ Senator Boscola helps students at St. Anne School set a new Guinness World Record for the longest ice cream sundae. The new record was set at 150 feet long, which beat the old record by nearly 20 feet.



▲ Eric Bellis of Portland and Kendall Ohrwassel of Nazareth recently met Senator Boscola at her Harrisburg office. Eric and Kendall were being recognized for the 2011 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

▼ Lehigh Valley Health Network, along with Senator Boscola, hosted a free flu vaccination clinic in Pen Argyl. Pictured are Senator Boscola along with members of the LVHN staff.



◀ Senator Boscola hosts a delegation of leaders from Russia visiting the United States as part of the Open World Program.



PA Budget:

Where are our Priorities? Where is the Shared Sacrifice?

As we work toward a final state spending plan, I will continue my efforts to steer dollars toward education and proven job creation programs and away from the Corrections Department.

In my review of budget proposals offered by both Gov. Tom Corbett and the House Republicans, I have to wonder where our priorities are.

In the same budget bills that would make drastic cuts to our public schools and put the dream of college out of reach for so many bright and promising children, I cannot believe these plans are calling for an 11 percent funding hike for the state's swelling prison system.

If we are truly serious about "sharing the pain" of this year's budget

cuts, then I think we need to take a tougher funding stance on programs and services that benefit those who broke our laws and victimized innocent citizens. We need to invest in our children and our future, not criminals.



Easing Our Tax Burden

◆ PA NEEDS A PERSONAL INCOME TAX CUT

In March, I introduced legislation that would cut the state's personal income tax from 3.07 to 2.97 percent.

My bill would provide some badly needed relief to families struggling to absorb rapidly escalating utility bills, gasoline costs and grocery bills. It would also help businesses, our economy and job market by putting additional money back into taxpayers' pockets.

Over 84 percent of corporations in Pennsylvania pay the personal income tax rather than corporate taxes. If we are serious about stimulating business development and job creation, then we need to impact all businesses, including the multitude of small businesses, partnerships and sole proprietorships.

To date, our state's surplus has grown to **\$540 million**. I can't think of a better way to spend our surplus than putting money back into our taxpayers' pockets. After all, it is your money.

Also, our economy is a consumer economy. By empowering consumer spending, we help our businesses and economy continue to grow.

◆ MORE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

While Pennsylvania's casino slots have already generated **\$1 billion** annually for property tax relief, I believe more should be done to limit and cut property taxes.

When the legislature legalized table games at casinos, I was disappointed to see that the new law earmarked table games revenue for the state's General Fund.

In my view, all casino proceeds should be used to lower property taxes. To this end, I have introduced Senate Bill 160, which would also

apply table games revenue for property tax relief.

Combined with additional casinos coming on line, my legislation would help make more dollars available to help limit or cut property taxes.



◆ HELPING SENIORS TO COPE WITH ESCALATING PROPERTY TAXES

As we all know, property taxes can be extremely burdensome to homeowners, particularly our senior citizens. Many seniors live on fixed incomes and have trouble paying these sometimes yearly increases in their tax bills. Many own their home, yet have to pay hundreds of dollars every month just to stay there.

Because of this, I have renewed my call and introduced legislation that would freeze property taxes for our seniors. My legislation would prohibit any increase in property taxes on seniors who are age 65 or older and have lived in their home for at least five years.

Many of our seniors have to choose between buying necessities such as food and prescriptions and paying their ever-escalating property taxes. Our seniors should be able to enjoy their golden years without fear of being forced to sell their home due to property tax bills.



Dear Friend,

As your state Senator, I want to update you on my work to ensure that we have a strong and bright future not only here in the Lehigh Valley and Pocono Mountain areas, but throughout all of Pennsylvania.

During this legislative session, I have sponsored a bill that provides more money for property tax relief by allocating table game revenues for property tax relief, as well as one that holds the line on property tax increases for our seniors. I have also recently called for a cut to our personal income tax rate. I just think the best way to get our economy moving again is to put money back into your pockets, not government's pockets.

While this budget year certainly has presented us with many challenges, I am pleased to see my colleagues are intent on cutting wasteful spending and avoiding any tax increases as a means to balancing the budget. We have to cut with precision . . . getting rid of programs that are not working and investing in those that are.

While making sure we hold the line on taxes, we also need to get people back to work. You can read about a plan I endorsed called PA WORKS, which leverages public dollars with private investment. These public-private partnerships are proven successes which maximize tax dollars while still encouraging private investment.

As always, I appreciate and value your input and am ready to serve you. Please contact one of my offices with any issues you may have with state government or if I can assist you in any way.

Sincerely,

Policy Committee Chair

In January, my colleagues unanimously elected me to chair the Senate Democratic Policy Committee.

I am thrilled with this leadership post because it will provide me the means to advance legislative issues that are important to you, the people I represent. The Policy Committee researches issues and develops the Caucus' legislative policy.

I will continue to advance bills that cut taxes, curb utility rate hikes and make government more open and accountable.

Since I became Chair, the Committee has held six hearings throughout Pennsylvania on issues ranging from job creation to gas drilling. We have heard from small business owners, labor leaders, local government officials and economic experts on how we can bring more jobs to Pennsylvania. I look forward to making this committee very active and working to make our state's economy stronger and more vibrant.



Boscola Works to Restore Economic Development Dollars

While we all know we need to cut some programs in state government in order to make ends meet, we have to be careful we do not cut those programs that give us a return on our investment. In addition to restoring some funding for basic and post-secondary education, we need to also restore funding for economic development programs that have a proven track-record of creating jobs.

In February, Governor Corbett proposed consolidating four existing economic development programs into

one new program called Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP). He then proposed cutting their funding by 23 percent.

Another cut to economic development programs presented by the Governor is his cut to the Ben Franklin Partnerships. The Governor proposed cutting this program by 15 percent.

For **every dollar spent** on programs such as the Small Business Development Centers, the **state receives six dollars back** in the form of increased tax revenues. Similarly, for **every dollar**

spent on the Ben Franklin Partnerships, the **state receives \$3.50 in return**. This is money invested in our future viability.

It is unconscionable that the proposed budget cuts this funding while at the same time increases the Corrections budget by 11 percent. I have contacted the Senate Appropriations Committee and informed them of my intent to restore funding for all of these programs when the budget bill reaches the Senate. In these economic times, we cannot afford to underfund proven, successful job creation programs.

Banning Gambling with Unemployment Dollars

I have introduced a bill to prohibit the use of unemployment benefit debit cards at Pennsylvania casinos.

Unemployment benefits are meant to provide jobless people with the necessities of life and to pay their bills while seeking a new job. These benefits should not be easily accessible at casinos.

According to the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB), while debit cards for welfare recipients will

not work in ATM machines located in the Pennsylvania casinos due to PGCB regulations, debit cards for unemployment benefits will work in those same ATMs.

In May, I attempted to amend an unemployment compensation bill in the Senate to ban this access at casinos. Unfortunately, due to the powerful gaming lobby, the amendment was voted down. But be assured I will continue my fight to limit where these important benefits can be accessed.





STATE SENATOR
LISA M. BOSCOLA

Senate Box 203018
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3018

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARRISBURG, PA
PERMIT NO. 603

MAY I HELP? **MAY I HELP?** *MAY I HELP?*

STATE APPLICATIONS

Driver's License • Vehicle Registration/Renewal • PennDOT Disability Plates & Placards • Notary Public
Birth & Death Certificates

SENIOR CITIZENS' ASSISTANCE

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Form • PACE/PACENET • Personal Records booklet • Reduced Auto Registration

HELP FOR FAMILIES

CHIP Information • PHEAA Applications • Fuel Assistance Information • Consumer Protection Information
Fish, Game & Outdoors Information

OFFICES TO SERVE YOU

BETHLEHEM OFFICE

Main Street Commons
559 Main Street
Suite 270
Bethlehem, PA 18018
(610) 868-8667
Toll-free: 1-877-535-1818
Fax: (610) 861-2184

WHITEHALL OFFICE

West Catasauqua
Professional Office Bldg.
2123 North 1st Avenue
Suite A-4
Whitehall, PA 18052
(610) 266-2117
Fax: (610) 266-2169

POCONO OFFICE

Dominick A. Lockwood
Business Center
600 Main Street
Suite 112
Stroudsburg, PA 18360
(570) 420-2938
Fax: (570) 420-2941

HARRISBURG OFFICE

The State Capitol
Senate Box 203018
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3018
(717) 787-4236
Fax: (717) 783-1257
Senate of Pennsylvania:
1-800-364-1581 (TTY)

E-MAIL: boscola@pasenate.com • **WEBSITE:** www.senatorboscola.com