

# State Senator **LISA M. BOSCOLA**

**Independent, Effective, Working to Make a Difference.**

## **Boscola Introduces Legislation to Protect Taxpayer Dollars**

*Between 2003 and 2009 the Bethlehem Area School District (BASD) entered into 17 derivative financial deals, also known as "swaps."*

These swaps were slated to help the BASD fund renovations of its school facilities with taxpayer dollars.

Not only do school districts use swaps to finance projects, but local municipalities do as well.

Quite simply, they were gambling with taxpayer dollars and playing roulette with the financial market.

When the market eventually took a nosedive in late 2008, taxpayer money was flushed away.

The public began receiving news

that these swap deals may have been an unsafe and irresponsible use of taxpayer dollars.

That is when I requested a full investigation by the Pennsylvania Auditor General.

These swap transactions, which were anticipated to save BASD millions of dollars, cost the school district and its taxpayers **\$57.7 million.**

In fact, 107 of 501 school districts in the Commonwealth have initiated swaps.

*Continued inside*



*Dear Friend,*

*My job in Harrisburg is to fight for Pennsylvania consumers. I have been working hard to mitigate the impact of the recent electricity price increase. Now you also can take action.*

*You need to have as much information as possible when choosing what rate will work best for you. The electricity supplier guide **INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER** will help you shop around to get the very best electricity price possible.*

*Just as you shop around for the best mortgage price, you can also shop around for the "generation" portion of your electric bill. Generation charges make up the majority of costs on our electric bills. There are many electric generation suppliers (EGS) you can choose from. Please be sure to fully understand the terms of the agreement between you and the EGS before making any choice.*

*While I will continue to hold these electric companies' feet to the fire in Harrisburg, I want to make sure you have the ability to get the best electric price possible during these uncertain economic times.*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa".



# YOUR GUIDE TO ELECTRICITY PRICE SHOPPING

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(PPL Will be the Default Provider if You Choose Not to Change)

### PPL ELECTRIC UTILITIES

1-888-668-4775 • [www.pplelectric.com/choice](http://www.pplelectric.com/choice)

## Licensed Competitive Suppliers

### CON EDISON SOLUTIONS

1-866-842-8166 • [www.conedsolutions.com](http://www.conedsolutions.com)

### DIRECT ENERGY

1-888-734-0741 • [www.directenergy.com](http://www.directenergy.com)

### DOMINION ENERGY SOLUTIONS

1-888-216-3721 • [www.dom.com/products](http://www.dom.com/products)

### GATEWAY ENERGY SERVICES CORP.

1-888-601-3141 • [www.gesc.com/PA](http://www.gesc.com/PA)

### LIBERTY POWER HOLDINGS

1-866-POWER-99 • [www.libertypowercorp.com](http://www.libertypowercorp.com)

### MX ENERGY

1-800-785-4373 • [www.mxenergy.com](http://www.mxenergy.com)

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1-888-884-9437 • [www.wges.com](http://www.wges.com)

## Renewable Energy Add-On Options

### COMMUNITY ENERGY

1-866-WIND-123 • [www.communityenergyinc.com](http://www.communityenergyinc.com)

### PPL ENERGYPLUS

610-774-7327 or 1-877-PPL-RECS (775-7327)  
[www.pplrenewables.com](http://www.pplrenewables.com)

**MAKE SURE TO ASK PROVIDERS  
FOR ANY CANCELLATION OR TERMINATION FEES!**

**Pennsylvania's Consumer Advocate  
has a listing of the most up-to-date  
pricing information**

**Web Site: [www.oca.state.pa.us](http://www.oca.state.pa.us)**

**717-783-5048 or toll free 800-684-6560 (PA only)**

**Email: [consumer@paoca.org](mailto:consumer@paoca.org)**

*Cover story continued*

## Boscola Introduces Legislation to Protect Taxpayer Dollars

Eighty-six local governments have also entered into these risky deals.

Since the Auditor General's findings, I have taken legislative action and steps to make sure this kind of financial debauchery never happens again.

I have proposed legislation to repeal the Act that allows swaps transactions to occur in Pennsylvania.

Further, the legislation also bans municipal authorities from entering into swap deals that are unsafe.

We must do all we can in Harrisburg to protect taxpayer dollars especially during these uncertain economic times.

If our citizens are required to be responsible taxpayers, school districts and municipalities must be responsible and accountable with your money!

## Ways to Conserve ENERGY



- Set your thermostat comfortably low in the winter and comfortably high in the summer.
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.
- Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater to 120°F.
- Turn off your computer and monitor when not in use.
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.



- Look for the ENERGY STAR® label on home appliances and products.



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

## The 18th District



▲ Senator Boscola explains the negative consequences of PPL rate caps expiring to 100 members of the Men of Retirement Age Club in Bethlehem.



▲ Senator Boscola and Mayor Callahan discuss the redevelopment of the Bethlehem Steel property and the positive impacts the SteelStacks project will have on the Lehigh Valley.



▲ Senator Boscola joins Jeff Parks, president of ArtsQuest; Governor Ed Rendell and other elected officials at the official 'soundbreaking' for the ArtsQuest Center for Performing Arts at SteelStacks.

▼ Senator Boscola takes part in ribbon cutting ceremony for newly opened Park and Ride as part of Marshalls Creek Bypass project in Middle Smithfield Township, Monroe County.



▼ Senator Boscola spends an afternoon reading to children in the Pre-K Counts program at Lehigh Valley Child Care.



▲ Senator Boscola listens to the concerns of college students at Legislative Forum at Penn State—Lehigh Valley.



# Protecting our Local Communities from Domestic Violent Offenders

In the State Senate I have introduced legislation entitled **Robin's Law** that will create a statewide registry for Domestic Violence Predators. My bill would require registration for domestic violence predators that individuals could access via the Internet.

Approximately 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States.

Domestic violence can happen to people of all racial, economic, educational, and religious backgrounds.

Curbing domestic violence must be a priority for our state government in the future.

In June 2005, Robin Shaffer was murdered in Quakertown by her estranged husband who had a prior conviction for

attempting to murder his first wife.

The intent of my legislation is to help save the lives of individuals like Robin who may not know that their potential partner is a domestic violence offender.

Other states such as Kansas, Montana, and Oklahoma provide Violent Offender Registries for their residents. We should do the same here in Pennsylvania. Domestic violence is reinforced when abusers are not held responsible for their actions. Creating a statewide registry of Domestic Violence Predators will allow for more accountability.

That is why I am working hard to urge my colleagues in the General Assembly to pass Robin's Law for those who suffer from domestic abuse.



*Senator Boscola congratulates Magisterial District Judge Ralph Litzenberger on his service to the community as he retired in January 2010.*

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

## ♦ CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

Pennsylvania's first-in-the-nation Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is working today to provide quality health care coverage to more than 197,000 previously uninsured Pennsylvania children — a record. Expanded in 2006 toward the goal of covering all uninsured Pennsylvania kids, the program provides "free" or reduced-cost children's coverage based on family income. New income eligibility guidelines will become effective in the spring.

**For information on eligibility, visit [www.chipcoverspakids.com](http://www.chipcoverspakids.com) or call toll-free at 1-800-986-KIDS.**

## ♦ SENIOR CITIZEN PROPERTY TAX & RENT REBATES

Pennsylvania's Property Tax and Rent Rebate (PTRR) program benefits seniors age 65 and older, widows/ widowers age 50 and older and disabled adults 18 and older. The income limit for qualifying homeowners is now \$35,000 and for renters is \$15,000 — with one-half of Social Security not counted in the income calculations. The maximum regular rebate for both homeowners and renters is \$650.

Some senior homeowners are now also qualifying for supplemental rebates up to an added \$325. PTRR applications for the 2009 tax year are now available. If you received a rebate last year, you will automatically receive a new application in the mail. Annual applications are required for the program.

**For more information, visit the "Property Tax and Rent Rebate" link on my website at [www.senatorboscola.com](http://www.senatorboscola.com)**

## ♦ LAW ENSURES ADULT CHILDREN HAVE COVERAGE

Today, students are staying in school longer and new graduates are having a tough time finding work. Thanks to a new law in Pennsylvania, they can continue to receive health coverage on their parents' insurance plan. The new law (Act 4 of 2009) allows eligible adults up to age 30 to remain covered by their parents' health insurance. The eligible adults must be Pennsylvania residents or enrolled as a full-time student at an institution of higher education, unmarried, have no dependents, and are not provided private insurance coverage or enrolled in, or eligible for, government benefits.

## MY OFFICES TO SERVE YOU

### BETHLEHEM OFFICE

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

### 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

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*Creating Jobs and Stimulating the Economy*

# Millions in Funds Headed to the Lehigh Valley and Pocono Mountains Region

*Pennsylvania ranks 6th among states on transportation and 9th on clean water projects in terms of rapid deployment of Recovery Act funds. In addition to creating construction jobs, the Recovery Act is giving related industries a shot in the arm and fortifying our bridges, roads and water systems.*



## Project Updates *in the 18th District*

- ◆ **\$3,797,563** — Bridge Repair in Stroud & Smithfield Townships and Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg Boroughs
- ◆ **\$2,149,192** — Resurfacing SR 329 in North Whitehall and Whitehall Townships
- ◆ **\$1,548,975** — Resurfacing SR 412 from I-78 through Hellertown in Northampton County (Work was completed in November by Bracalente Construction, Inc. of Northampton which employs state-of-the-art paving technologies to serve Eastern Pennsylvania)
- ◆ **\$1,450,000** — Resurfacing and curb ramps on Broad Street from Terrace Avenue to Eaton Avenue and on Pennsylvania Avenue from Broad Street to the railroad overpass in the City of Bethlehem
- ◆ **\$900,000** — Resurfacing and curb ramps on Fairmont Avenue from MacArthur Road to Fullerton Avenue in Whitehall Township
- ◆ **\$100,000** — Water system improvements in East Stroudsburg Borough
- ◆ **\$100,000** — Rehabilitation of Bangor Borough sewer main, replacement of close to 10,000 feet of lining

### Weatherization Grant Recipients

**Northampton/Lehigh County: \$6,323,855**

**Monroe County: \$2,968,753**

### County Weatherization Offices Receive Funding

With energy costs on the rise, we are all making an effort to become more energy efficient. County Weatherization offices have also received stimulus funding and have experts on hand who can help you to increase energy efficiency in your home in order to reduce energy costs and increase comfort while safeguarding your health and safety. They can help with insulation, weather-stripping, furnace efficiency, electricity and hot water usage, and more.

*Contact your local office for more information:*

- **Northampton and Lehigh County Community Action Committee—610-691-5620**
- **Monroe County Weatherization—570-421-4436**

**You must meet certain income  
requirements to qualify.**







STATE SENATOR  
**LISA M. BOSCOLA**

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## Let's Freeze Property Taxes for our Senior Citizens

*School districts have been significantly increasing property taxes on homeowners for decades.*

While Harrisburg has provided some property tax relief in recent years through gaming funds, we still have to do better to especially help our aged community.

I have met many senior citizens throughout the Lehigh Valley and Pocono region who are on a fixed income and who haven't received an increase in their Social Security.

The cost of utilities and food prices

continue to rise, and many are simply unable to meet these higher property tax rates that come year after year.

I have spoken to many of our seniors on their front porches pleading for help. They don't want to be forced to sell their homes. In response, I have introduced legislation that freezes a homeowner's tax rate when they reach the age of 65.

If we can ease the burden of higher

property taxes year after year on our seniors, we can help ensure more financial stability for them in their golden years.



United States  
**Census**  
**2010**

**IT'S IN OUR HANDS**

Census forms will  
be sent to each  
residence in March.  
Complete the short form  
and mail it back in the  
envelope provided.

For more information:  
[www.2010census.gov](http://www.2010census.gov)

**A**n accurate census is extremely important. The census helps determine how federal dollars are spent each year on roads, bridges, hospitals and so many other critical services. Please be counted this year.

### The census is important for our community:

- Each year, more than \$400 billion is allocated to states and communities based on census data.
- The planning for new hospitals, roads, schools and other services based on census data.
- An accurate count of all residents ensures that our region receives its fair share.

**BE COUNTED IN 2010!**