



# SENATOR LISA BOSCOLA

SERVING LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

SUMMER 2019



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# Inside News





## From the Desk of the Policy Committee Chair

This past year has been a busy one for the Senate Democratic Policy Committee. I gaveled in nine hearings across the Commonwealth studying a wide variety of issues. In August, we partnered with our colleagues in the House of Representatives to hold a joint hearing on reforming the state's justice and prison systems at SCI Dallas.

In the fall and winter there were five hearings, two in Philadelphia, two in Pittsburgh and one in Harrisburg. In Philadelphia, we discussed eliminating the need for natural hair braiders to hold a license to practice their craft and the other focused on preventing gun violence in communities across the Commonwealth. The Pittsburgh hearings focused on needed policies to mitigate the effects of climate change by focusing on ways to reduce carbon emissions and improving air quality. In March we teamed up with our House colleagues for a hearing aimed at legislation that would make college more affordable for students in Pennsylvania.

In April we met three times. We held a hearing in Philadelphia on improving pedestrian safety. We heard from advocates on ways to reduce harmful methane emissions in Pennsylvania. Finally, we held a joint meeting with the Senate and House Democrats on the pros and cons of legalizing adult use cannabis.

The goal of these hearings is to study issues in more depth and generate some potential legislative solutions to issues that are important to my colleagues. It is an honor and a privilege to Chair the Democratic Policy Committee. ■

## FedEx Ground is Open for Business

FedEx Ground is a Pennsylvania company that was looking at several states to construct a new major hub before deciding to stay in Pennsylvania and locate right here in the Lehigh Valley.

The first phase of this project exceeded **\$227 million** and will create 282 new, full-time positions over the next 3 years, along with 398 permanent part-time positions. The project is anticipated to expand into a second phase that will create nearly 3,000 new jobs for our community once at full operation. At final build out, it will be the largest FedEx facility in the country.

At the outset of the project, I was instrumental in working with my colleagues and Governor Wolf to get a critical road transfer bill enacted so they could move forward. While road transfer bills happen routinely, few will have the regional economic impact this legislation will have for the Lehigh Valley and the Commonwealth.

Equally important, the land which FedEx purchased for the Hub was owned by the Lehigh Valley Airport Authority. This transaction helped place the Airport on sound financial footing which is important for our local economy and for the growth of our region. ■



Senator at ribbon cutting ceremony.

## Clean Energy Rally





Senator Lisa Boscola, Governor Tom Wolf and Senator Pat Stefano

## Cover Story

# My “Common Sense” Restitution Bill Becomes Law

At the end of the last session, the bill that I authored and championed with my colleague, Pat Stefano (R-Fayette), was signed into law. **Senate Bill 897** corrected a ‘quirk’ in the restitution law that made it impossible for government entities and non-profits to collect restitution if they were victims of crimes.

This issue was important to me to resolve as one of the municipalities in the 18th Senatorial District was a victim of theft. Robert Kerns was convicted of stealing **\$832,000** from the taxpayers of Bethlehem Township. The state Superior Court ruled that Kerns did not have to repay the monies because a municipality, like Bethlehem Township, did not qualify as a ‘victim’ for the purpose of collecting restitution.

The scenario was so absurd that I decided I needed to do something, which is what led me to introduce **Senate Bill 897** to correct the loophole. It is just simple common sense – crime should never pay, but that was exactly what was occurring.

I was proud to work in a bi-partisan manner in the Senate and with the District Attorney’s Association and the Office of Victim Advocate to craft the legislation that has become law. ■



## Redistricting Reform

Last June, my legislation, which sought to implement a Citizens Commission to draw our Congressional and State Legislative Districts, passed the Senate. Unfortunately the House did not act on the bill.

Being committed to the philosophy that “voters should choose their elected officials, not elected officials choosing their voters” like our current system provides, I have reintroduced **Senate Bill 22** and it has already been approved in the State Government Committee.

This version of **Senate Bill 22** mirrors the version that came out of the State Government Committee with a unanimous vote last spring and maintains the goal of an independent citizens commission. It may not be a perfect bill, but in order to get something done to amend our State Constitution in time for the next round of redistricting, it is the best hope for meaningful reform.

Specifically, the legislation creates an 11 member independent commission comprised of 4 Democrats, 4 Republicans and 3 independents. All members require a 2/3 confirmation vote, which means the commission nominees will require bi-partisan support. A vote to approve new districts will require a minimum of 7 votes in which 2 Democrats, 2 Republicans and 2 Independents will be required to vote for final approval.

**Senate Bill 22** also states that no lobbyists or legislative staff can be appointed to the independent commission, all appointees must be properly registered to vote prior to Commission service and any maps considered for approval must limit the number of splits of counties, municipalities, and wards.

The bill was voted out of the Senate State Government Committee again on April 9, 2019. My hope is to continue working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get this bill out of the Senate and over to the House earlier than last session.

We still have time to get this much needed reform in place before the next redistricting effort begins. It is a narrow window but the change is needed and the opportunity remains to get something meaningful done. ■

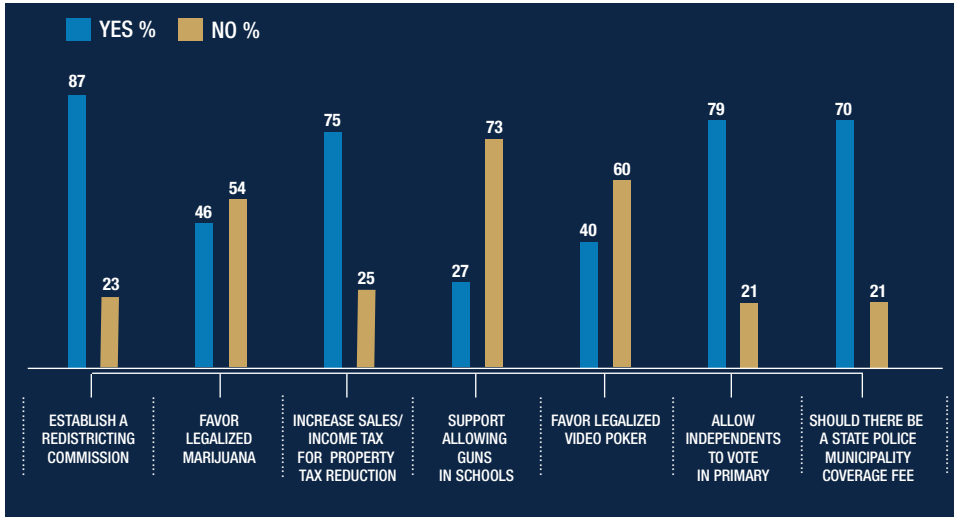




## 2018 SURVEY RESULTS



*Many of my recent newsletters have included surveys about important issues the General Assembly is debating. It is a way for me to get some feedback from the people I represent and take it with me to Harrisburg. Over 1100 people took the time to respond either online or by mailing the card back to my office from my last survey and I wanted to thank you for taking the time to respond and share the results with you.*



The issue that garnered the most support was forming an Independent Commission to draw district lines for Congress and the General Assembly. Since my newsletter last year much has transpired. The PA Supreme Court threw out the map for the Congressional Districts and created new maps for the most recent election. The Senate passed a modified independent commission bill that died in the House. Still 87% of respondents agree that an independent commission is the way to go.

There remains broad support for increasing Sales/Income Tax for the purposes of property tax relief. This is a long stated goal of mine and the issue of property taxes in many areas continues to be the number one issue of concern. The property tax issue in the Lehigh Valley is made worse by the funding inequity of state education dollars. Correcting both of these issues remains at the forefront of my agenda.

Several issues that have been in the newspapers lately provided interesting results. The issue of legalizing marijuana is not supported by 54% of the respondents. Lt. Governor John Fetterman was just in Bethlehem as part of a listening tour to hear from people about the issue. At that meeting, the support for legalizing marijuana was overwhelming. In June 2017 the Senate voted to allow school districts to arm teachers if they wanted – I voted against this bill. The House of Representatives never took up the bill for consideration. Here, 73% of respondents did not believe arming teachers was good policy. The last two issues are ones that may come before the General Assembly this session. Allowing Independents to vote in the primary is something I have been advocating for several sessions now. There seems to be bipartisan support in the Senate to move this forward. 79% of respondents support the idea of allowing Independents to vote in primaries.

Lastly, charging a fee for state police coverage. This came up in the Governor's budget last year and again remains a topic of conversation in Harrisburg. 79% of you who responded believe that there should be such a fee. ■

*Thanks again for taking the time to respond.*

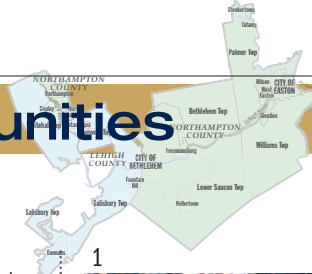
## Domestic **VIOLENCE** and Gun Reform Law Enacted

On April 10, 2019 an important domestic violence and gun reform law, which I voted for and passed with bipartisan support, took effect across Pennsylvania. The new law requires those with a domestic violence ruling or action, such as a protection from abuse order- against them to relinquish all firearms, weapons, ammunition and licenses to law enforcement, a licensed firearms' dealer, a commercial armory or the defendant's attorney. Requiring guns to be removed sooner and kept out of the situation longer serves to protect children, victims and even our police officers. Statistics show that in volatile situations the possession of a firearm increases the chances of a homicide for anyone involved. In fact, the presence of guns in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%. Its landmark passage was only achievable through almost two years of work and compromise. Only with support of victims' advocacy groups, such as CeaseFirePA, and the input from the National Rifle Association, working hand-in-hand with lawmakers wanting reform and those concerned with maintaining the importance of protecting Second Amendment rights, was a consensus achieved. It has been over a decade since any such bill has passed in Pennsylvania, and at its base objective this was a common sense measure to better protect victims of domestic abuse, which was why I was proud support it.

# Investing in Communities

## Around the 18th District

SERVING LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES



**1 Notre Dame Mini Thon** Notre Dame High School held their annual mini-thon helping to raise money to fight pediatric cancer. I attended with my foreign exchange student, Andy. What a great time we had raising awareness and money for such an important cause!

**2 Salisbury School Safety** Honoring the Salisbury Township Police Department as one of nine police departments in the country to receive the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) School Safety Award. The Department was recognized for maintaining the highest standards of excellence with regard to its school resource officer program at Salisbury High School.

**3 Saucon Valley Manor** Proud to have been a part of the ribbon cutting for the Grand Opening of Saucon Valley Manor III – as the number of Seniors continues to rise in the Lehigh Valley and across Pennsylvania, the demand for independent living facilities continues to grow. A huge ‘thank you’ to the Atiyeh family for all the hard work and dedication in helping meet these needs.

**4 Senior Fair** My Annual Spring Senior Fair was a rousing success again this year! I co-host this fair with Representative Jeanne McNeill at the Whitehall Mall. This year we had over 50 vendors and a tremendous turnout!

**5 ShopRite Bag for Hunger** I love to participate in the ShopRite Bag for Hunger event whenever my schedule permits. Greeting and interacting with the customers is so enjoyable! Since its inception in 1999, ShopRite Partners in Caring has donated more than \$40 million to local food banks – supporting 2,000 charities that feed the hungry in communities served by ShopRite stores.

**6 Proclamation of Distinguished Service** What an honor it was to be awarded the Proclamation of Distinguished Service from the PA Veterinary Medical Association & the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine for being a dedicated advocate for the ONLY veterinary school in PA and a strong advocate for animal care – protecting our animals from cruelty, neglect and abuse.

**7 BaconFest** Located in historic Easton, the PA BaconFest has grown into one of the region’s most popular events. With 150+ vendors, 12+ musical acts and several stages, the two-day festival attracts more than 80,000 attendees. Here I am with State Representative Robert Freeman and Easton Mayor Sal Panto Jr.

**8 Bethlehem Catholic’s Girls Basketball Team is ‘Golden’ again!** The Golden Hawks defeated North Catholic 60-49 in the PIAA Class 4A championship in March at the Giant Center in Hershey. I was so pleased and honored to welcome them to the Capitol and recognize them on the Senate floor.

**9 St. Anne School** It was my pleasure to welcome the 4th grade class from St. Anne School of Bethlehem into the Capitol!

**10 Air Quality LaSalle** Having been raised in the shadow of the Bethlehem Steel plant, I am well aware of the seriousness of air quality issues and how communities such as Clairton must balance an economic reliance on good industrial jobs against health and environmental issues – a Policy Committee Hearing was held in Clairton, PA to look for ways to improve air quality.







STATE SENATOR

**LISA BOSCOLA**

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## New Community Outreach Offices:



*Beginning this year, I made some changes in my district office locations in an effort to better serve you and save taxpayers' dollars. I decided to close one of my permanent satellite offices and replace it with four rotating office days throughout the district. The goal was pretty simple – make it easier and more convenient for you to receive the services you need. The new community office schedule is listed for your reference. I plan to continue to monitor these office locations – please let me know if you have a suggestion or another location that will better serve the residents of the 18th District.*

### MONDAYS

Emmaus Public Library

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

11 East Main Street • Emmaus, PA

### TUESDAYS

Catasauqua Borough Hall

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

90 Bridge Street • Catasauqua, PA

### WEDNESDAYS

Northampton Community College

Fowler Family Southside Center

9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

511 East Third Street • Bethlehem, PA

### THURSDAYS

Whitehall Township Municipal Building

Public Meeting Room

9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

3219 MacArthur Road • Whitehall, PA

## Where you can Find us:

### BETHLEHEM OFFICE

One East Broad Street • Suite 120

Bethlehem, PA 18018

610.868.8667 • Fax: 610.861.2184

Toll free: 1.877.535.1818

Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

### CONTACT NUMBER

Please contact my Bethlehem office if you have any questions, or need assistance with any state-related matter.

**610-868-8667**

### EASTON OFFICE

1701 Washington Boulevard

Easton, PA 18042

610.250.5627 • Fax: 610.250.1889

Monday, Wednesday, Friday:

9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

### HARRISBURG OFFICE

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