



STATE REPRESENTATIVE



GEORGE DUNBAR

56th Legislative District

Spring 2011

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Dunbar Legislation to End Pay-to-Play State Contracting Puts Pennsylvania on Pathway to Reform

Dear Friends:

Welcome to my first newsletter and thanks once again for the opportunity to serve you at home and in Harrisburg.

This is a very exciting time to represent the people of Westmoreland County. Over the course of the next several weeks, many monumental decisions impacting the future of our Commonwealth will be made.

In early February, my first piece of reform legislation (**House Bill 107**) to end the practice of **pay-to-play politics** in the **state contracting procurement process** unanimously cleared the Pennsylvania House and is now awaiting consideration in the state Senate.

This legislation is a direct answer to eight years of allegations concerning back-door, pay-to-play politics from Pennsylvania taxpayers and job creators who have legitimately questioned the integrity regarding the slew of multi-million dollar, no-bid state contracts entered into by the Rendell administration.

Strictly prohibiting any individual who has been employed by a company offering a competitively sealed bid from participating in the evaluation of such proposals, **House Bill 107** is specifically aimed at making the entire state contracting process more accountable, saving taxpayer dollars and ensuring the activities of the executive branch are absolutely transparent.

Put simply, this legislation will bring a long overdue end to this blatant, unethical conflict of interest where back-room, pay-to-play politics generates countless overpriced and uncompetitive state contracts.



State Representative George Dunbar takes the oath of office to begin his first term serving the people of the 56th District in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

In addition, I am supporting several other pieces of lead by example, reform legislation to **reduce government spending**, **shrink the Legislature** and **require all state lawmakers** to **contribute** to their **health care** and **retirement benefits**.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns relating to state government issues, please do not hesitate to stop by or contact my district offices. My staff and I are here to work for you.

Serving the 56th District,

Visit me on the Web at **REPDUNBAR.COM**



Representatives Dunbar answers questions during a recent Pennsylvania House State Government Committee hearing.

Dunbar Appointed to Four Standing House Committees

Speaker of the House Sam Smith (R-Jefferson) has appointed me to serve on the following House committees for the 2011-12 legislative session:

- **FINANCE**

This highly active committee is responsible for all state tax legislation.

As a signer of the [Americans for Tax Reform 2011-12 Taxpayer Protection Plan Pledge](#), I will not support any plan that raises taxes on individual Pennsylvania taxpayers or job creators.

- **GAMING OVERSIGHT**

I have been appointed **Secretary** of this committee that has jurisdiction over legislation regulating Pennsylvania's licensed casinos and all other matters involving expanded gaming.

- **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Local Government Committee reviews bills dealing with the municipal codes by which local governments operate. In previous sessions, the Local Government Committee has considered legislation related to local government purchases, real estate assessment policies and a statewide pension plan for municipal police officers.

- **STATE GOVERNMENT**

This committee maintains legislative jurisdiction over issues involving state constitutional amendments, land conveyances, state election code, state initiatives and referendums, sunshine law amendments, and this year's Congressional reapportionment.



Like

Legislation I Like

Following is a list of legislative proposals I have either voted for or have co-sponsored.

LAWSUIT ABUSE REFORM

House Bill 1 (Fair Share Act) reforms the state's joint and several liability law by ensuring that defendants found negligent or liable for an injury are responsible for only their share of the damages. Aimed at protecting taxpayers, job creators and the medical community from frivolous lawsuits, the **Fair Share Act** passed the House by a margin of 112 to 88.

PROTECTING TAXPAYERS

House Bill 15 establishes the **PennWatch** online database to allow state taxpayers to conveniently monitor government expenses and other statistical information to hold elected officials fiscally responsible. This legislation passed the House unanimously.

CASTLE DOCTRINE

House Bill 40 would make Pennsylvania the **24th state** to adopt the **Castle Doctrine** to fully restore the legal ability of law abiding Commonwealth residents to use **lethal force** to defend themselves outside their homes, businesses, automobiles or in state parks against violent criminals. The **Castle Doctrine** passed the House by a margin of 164 to 37.

SPRINKLER MANDATE REPEAL

House Bill 377 repeals the **Universal Construction Code** mandate requiring sprinkler systems to be installed in all newly constructed residential housing.

Individual homebuyers should have the freedom to choose, rather than being forced by the state, to invest the additional **\$5,000 to \$15,000** to install a sprinkler system. **House Bill 377** is now awaiting Governor Tom Corbett's signature.

LEGISLATIVE REDUCTION

House Bill 53 amends the **Pennsylvania Constitution** to reduce the **Pennsylvania House** from **203 to 153 members** and in the process deliver substantial **taxpayer savings** by reducing the operating costs for America's second largest legislature as well as increasing the overall level of **legislative accountability, leadership, and credibility**.

PENSION REFORM

House Bill 418 forces General Assembly members to lead by example to solve Pennsylvania's multi-billion dollar public pension funding crisis. If enacted, **House Bill 418** would convert all legislative pensions from the present defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan.

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Around the 56th District



Representative Dunbar recently visited with concerned seniors at Redstone Highlands. Discussion topics ranged from economic and environmental impacts of Marcellus Shale drilling to the effect impending budget cuts will have on seniors.



Representative Dunbar explores a deep-well natural gas operation located in Fairfield Township.

Money-Saving Senior Programs

2010 PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE

The deadline to file for the state's **Property Tax/Rent Rebate program** is **June 30, 2011**.

Funded by the Pennsylvania Lottery, the program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians who are 65 years or older, widows and widowers 50 years or older, and those 18 years or older with permanent disabilities.

Eligible participants can receive a rebate of up to **\$650** based on their rent or property taxes paid in 2010. The income limit is **\$35,000** for **homeowners** and **\$15,000** for **renters**.

Applicants can exclude one-half of Social Security income, so individuals who earn substantially more than **\$35,000** may still qualify for a rebate.

2010 Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim forms are available by contacting my district offices or visiting my website at RepDunbar.com.

PACE and PACENET

PACE and **PACENET** offer comprehensive prescription coverage to eligible older Pennsylvanians.

You qualify for **PACE** if you earn up to **\$14,500** as a single person or up to **\$17,700** as a married couple. You qualify for **PACENET** if you earn between **\$14,500** and **\$23,500** as a single person or between **\$17,700** and **\$31,500** as a married couple.

To be eligible for **PACE** and **PACENET**, you must be 65 years of age or older, a Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days prior to the date of application, and not eligible for prescription benefits under Medicaid. Financial eligibility is determined by your previous calendar year's income.

If you are interested in learning more about **PACE** or **PACENET**, please contact my district offices or visit RepDunbar.com.

FREE EYE CARE

Pennsylvania's seniors could qualify for medical eye care with no out-of-pocket expense through **Eye Care America**.

For more information, call **1-800-222-EYES** or visit EyeCareAmerica.org.

Additionally, seniors may be eligible for the following:

- ◆ **Reduced-fee car registration** at a rate of **\$10** to any Pennsylvania resident who is retired and on a fixed annual income that does not exceed **\$19,200**.
- ◆ **Discounted senior** and **lifetime hunting** and **fishing licenses**.
- ◆ **FREE fishing licenses** for **Pennsylvania veterans** with **100 percent service-connected disabilities**.
- ◆ **Reduced camping fees** at Pennsylvania state parks, Sunday through Thursday. Admission and use of most state park facilities are also **FREE**.
- ◆ **Reduced admission fees** to Pennsylvania State Historical and Museum Commission museums, sites and properties.
- ◆ **Dog licenses** at a reduced price of **\$6.45** through a Department of Agriculture program. The fee for spayed and neutered dogs is **\$4.45**.

These are just a few senior citizen benefit programs available to older Pennsylvanians. I encourage you to contact my offices for help in determining if you qualify and how to apply.

LINKS ARE AVAILABLE AT RepDunbar.com

SAVE THE DATES!

State Representative George Dunbar's

Town Hall Meetings

Thursday, May 19, at 7:00 p.m.
Jeannette Council Chambers

Thursday, Sept. 15, at 7:00 p.m.
Penn Township Municipal Building

North Huntingdon Town Hall
TBA

Representative Dunbar and his district office staff look forward to meeting you and gathering your input. These interactive forums provides a unique opportunity for you to share your suggestions, ask questions and offer solutions on how to address your most important concerns both at home and in Harrisburg.

Light refreshments will be served.

My Facebook Page Keeps You Connected 24/7

As your State Representative, I strive to keep you informed about how I am representing you and our district in Harrisburg. By using resources such as **Facebook**, I am able to share news and information virtually as it happens.

For example, I can post legislative updates from the House floor, district event photos, videos and much more.

These posts, which are timely and unfiltered, allow me to keep you informed, in many cases, as news and events are unfolding.

Signing up for **Facebook** is free and easy.

Simply log in and follow this link to get started:

[Facebook.com/RepDunbar](https://www.facebook.com/RepDunbar)



Representative Dunbar recently partnered with the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General and visited with area schools for a presentation on the dangers of Cyber Bullying.



More than 130 local residents attended Representative Dunbar's first-ever North Huntingdon and Penn Township district office open houses.

Contact Information

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Visit me on the Web at **REPDUNBAR.COM** or
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