

Subject: Rosemary's Recap

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**State Representative
Rosemary Brown**
189th Legislative District - Monroe & Pike Counties
E-NEWSLETTER

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The latest news from PA State Representative Rosemary Brown

Friday, May 15, 2020 [facebook](#)

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Rosemary's Recap



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Please take a moment and watch my recap on the current status of Pennsylvania amid this crisis, what Pike and Monroe counties are doing to address the prospects of reopening, legislative updates and more.

Brown Submits ‘How We Can Do Business Safely’ Documents to Wolf Administration from Local Businesses

Working in coordination with local businesses and township officials, I sent Gov. Tom Wolf, Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine and Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Dennis Davin a letter which includes documents and “real world” examples from many business owners in the

district illustrating how they plan to open safely to protect their customers and employees.

I have businesses that have one customer and one employee during interactions, and they can social distance in a highly controlled environment and they still can't function. It's not common sense and it's unnecessarily destroying financial health. We must be concerned, careful and smart about COVID-19 but it is absolutely close-minded for the Governor to continue straight shutdowns without putting common sense into the equation.

There are constant questions surrounding how area small businesses can prepare to safely serve our communities again. It's because of those questions, and the lack of faith being extended to our small business owners and the governor's unwillingness to listen, that I contacted our township officials and area small businesses. I asked them directly to provide bullet-pointed, safety operation plans on how they would handle opening their doors again during this health crisis. I want the governor to see firsthand what type of businesses he is turning his back on without consideration. Big box stores are continuing to gain revenue while small businesses, which can offer the similar services, are shuttered and so close to never opening their doors again. I have a flooring company that can't sell tile, but Home Depot and Lowes can? Our small businesses and their employees need a government that works smart and they continue to have my support.

Thank you to Delaware Water Gap Borough, Barrett, Hamilton and especially Middle Smithfield townships for their quick response to my time-sensitive request for this information within a short period.

House Continues Work Toward Safe Reopening

Bills on the governor's desk

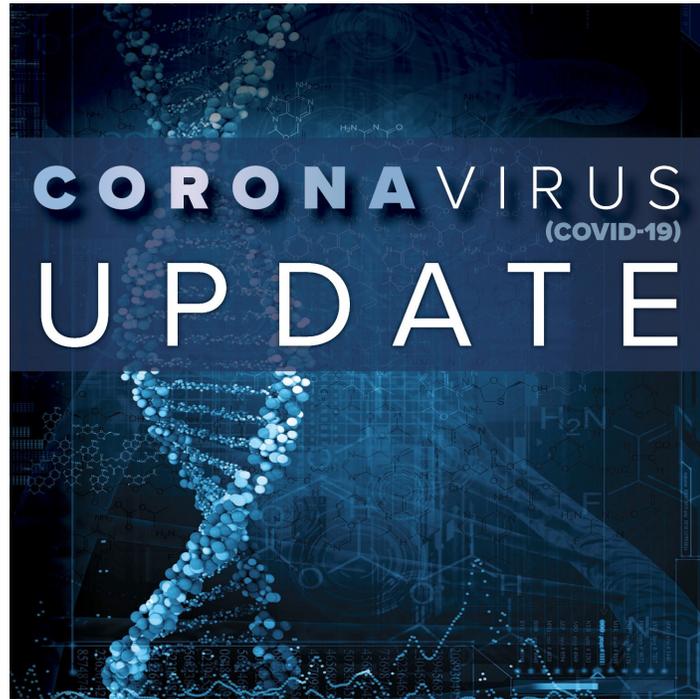
We returned to session on yesterday to continue work on legislation that would help safely reopen the Commonwealth and our economy. We also remain focused on planning a path forward as we will have to continue dealing with the presence of coronavirus for the foreseeable future.

To that end, [Senate Bill 327](#) would create the COVID-19 Cost and Recovery Task Force.

Encompassing all three branches of government, the task force would be charged with identifying immediate and urgent issues, providing a structure to catalog the Commonwealth's response to the disaster

emergency and creating a recovery plan to help return our communities to pre-disaster conditions.

County officials would also be authorized to develop an emergency mitigation plan for business, in consultation with health and emergency management officials. The plan would have to be published on the county's public website and would empower our local governments to reopen their economies when it can be done so safely.



Recognizing the impact of the virus and subsequent shutdown on our state's economy, the bill would establish a debt reduction review process directing all state agencies responsible for any level of borrowing to examine existing debt and determine if refinancing with current interest rates would help the state save taxpayer money.

Finally, the bill would require proper and timely notification of any suspensions or modifications of a state statute or regulation related to a disaster emergency, and it would delay implementation of any new regulations until 90 days after termination of an emergency declaration.

Giving Our Business Owners a Choice

Small business owners and the people they employ continue to struggle under the weight of the governor's business closure orders and failures of the unemployment compensation system. While we continue to fight for openness and transparency from the governor's office regarding his decisions about which businesses are life-sustaining or qualify for waivers, we are continuing our work on bills that would require the administration to allow specific businesses and industries the option to reopen if they can do so safely.

[House Bill 2388](#) would require the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to issue a waiver to the business closure order for the following types of businesses, as long as those businesses comply with health and safety guidelines outlined by the state Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: vehicle dealerships, lawn and garden centers, cosmetology salon and barber shops for hair services, messenger services, animal grooming services, and manufacturing operations.

[House Bill 2412](#) would require a similar waiver to all providers of legal services, and residential and commercial real estate services, including settlement services. Each of the bills will now go to the governor's desk.

Bill to Help Safeguard At-Risk Seniors from COVID-19

Responding to published reports and finally released data regarding COVID-19 deaths occurring among Pennsylvanians living in the state's nursing home facilities, personal care homes and assisted living residences, the Senior Protection Act was introduced this week.



The bipartisan effort seeks to establish a coordinated, collaborative public-private-partnership approach of regional health system collaboratives. These health collaboratives would administer/manage personnel, protocols, testing and expenditures to protect the seniors in these facilities. The legislation was developed with the help of medical experts at UPMC with the goal of saving lives and giving families whose loved ones reside in these facilities peace of mind.

As of mid-week, according to the Department of Health, there are more than 12,500 resident cases of COVID-19 and nearly 2,000 cases among employees, for a total of more than 14,000 at more than 540 distinct nursing and personal care facilities. Of the state's total COVID fatalities, nearly 70% were citizens who lived in a nursing home or personal care home.

According to the Pennsylvania Health Care Association, there are approximately 123,000 individuals living in 697 nursing facilities, 1,143 personal care homes and 58 assisted living residences throughout Pennsylvania. These facilities employ 143,000 people.

[Read more about the Senior Protection Act here.](#)

Additional bills being introduced to aid this vulnerable population would require the Pennsylvania Department of Health to conduct testing of all employees and residents in long-term care facilities and prohibit the department from requiring nursing homes and other long-term care facilities to admit COVID-19 patients without first confirming a negative test for the patient. Previous orders by Secretary of Health Rachel Levine required nursing homes to readmit COVID-positive patients despite the risk to other residents and staff. Levine announced this week the department will start testing all residents and staff and require a patient to be free of COVID-19 before being readmitted.

Committee Advances Bills to Address COVID-19 Impacts

The House State Government Committee advanced three bills designed to address impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigation efforts.

To help restaurants and food establishments, which are often small, family-owned businesses, the committee passed bills to allow outdoor and indoor seating to resume in areas of the state in the yellow or green phases of mitigation. Specifically, House Bill 2606 would allow establishments with existing decks, patios and courtyards to open those outdoor areas and would allow up to 50% of the outdoor maximum seating capacity in order to properly institute the federal and state mitigation guidelines. For those establishments with parking lots but no existing outdoor seating space, the bill would allow those establishments to design limited seating in a designated part of the parking lot. These temporary seating areas would have to follow the same rules as decks, patios, and courtyards, and have a "roped" off single entry point. [House Bill 2513](#) would allow establishments to use 50% of their indoor seating capacity under the same rules outlined in House Bill 2506.

[House Resolution 867](#) directs the speaker of the House to establish a special committee to examine various aspects of the state's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and make recommendations regarding issues of importance and long-term recovery. The committee will be composed of four House members appointed by the speaker and three House members appointed by the minority leader.

The special committee would be empowered to hold hearings, take testimony, make investigations and issue subpoenas commanding any person to appear before the committee to answer questions and produce documents and other records the committee deems necessary. The committee would also be directed to develop a recovery plan that describes how the state and its political subdivisions may expeditiously resume mission-critical functions, including the restoration of housing, transportation, education and other public services and economic activity to levels equal to or better than their pre-disaster states. A final report of the committee's activities, findings and recommendations would be due by Nov. 19.

Finally, [House Bill 2505](#) would require the administration to retain records related to COVID-19 for 14 years after the end of the emergency order. It would apply to an executive agency, contractor, employee of a contractor or owner of a contractor. The extended retention period is designed to ensure ample time to assess what worked and what didn't in the state's response.

Primary Election June 2

The primary election is now just over two weeks away. Regardless of the status of your

county of residence (red or yellow), voters may choose to either vote by mail or in person. Even if your county is still under a stay-at-home order, you can vote in person if that is your preference.

Details and deadlines are below.

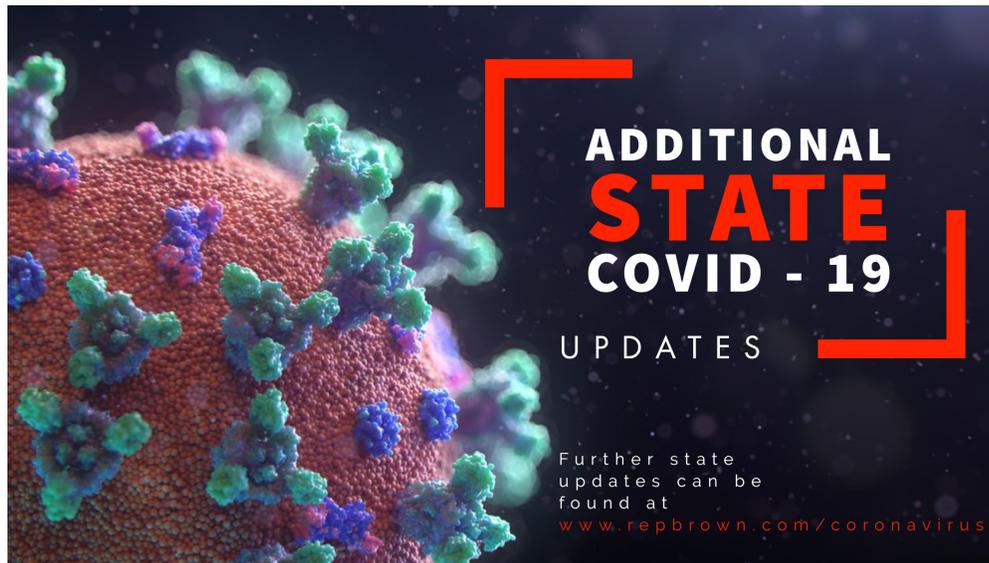


PREPARE TO VOTE in the
PRIMARY ELECTION JUNE 2

-  **Check Your Voter Status**
votespa.com/status
-  **Register to Vote**
votespa.com/register
Deadline **May 18**
-  **Sign Up to Vote by Mail**
votespa.com/applymailballot
Deadline **5pm on May 26**
-  **Track Your Mailed Ballot**
votespa.com/mailballotstatus

Vote in Person at Your Polling Place **June 2**

What's New?



The Department of Health this week distributed the investigational antiviral medication, remdesivir, to treat patients in the hospital with COVID-19. The federal government distributed the first shipment of 1,200 doses to the department on Tuesday and those doses are being shipped to 51 of the state's hospitals. The receiving hospitals were chosen based on the number of COVID-19 patients at the hospital over a recent seven-day period, and the severity of the illness of those patients, based on whether they are on a ventilator. Remdesivir is given to a patient through an IV once per day for up to 10 days, depending on how critically ill the patient is. According to the FDA, remdesivir may help decrease the amount of coronavirus in the body, helping the patient recover faster.

To help reduce the number of people coming into driver and photo license centers, PennDOT announced it will use existing photos on file for customers who renew their driver's license and identification card. All customers who renew online or through the mail will receive a new product using the most recent photo that exists in PennDOT's system. No camera cards will be issued to these customers, and they will receive their new product by mail within 15 days. The renewal process is complete when the final product is received. PLEASE NOTE: People who renewed BEFORE May 10 will receive a camera card in the mail and must visit a photo license center to obtain an updated photo. Additionally, non-U.S. citizens must also visit a driver's license center in person to complete a transaction. For a list of reopened locations, visit dmv.pa.gov. Expiration dates on driver's licenses, photo ID cards, learner's permits and camera cards scheduled to expire from March 16 through May 31 have been extended until June 30. For more information and an update on REAL ID products, [click here](#).

PennDOT also announced an extension of expiration dates for vehicle registrations and safety and emission inspections. Items scheduled to expire between March 16 and May 31 are now extended through June 30. Persons with Disabilities parking placards scheduled to expire from March 16 through May 31 are also extended through June 30.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the U.S. Census Bureau recently announced it will begin a phased restart of some of its field operations to help ensure an accurate count. All returning staff will receive safety training to observe social distancing protocols in the COVID-19 environment. For their safety and the safety of the public, the Census Bureau has ordered Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all field staff, including those who work in a field office. These materials will be secured and provided to staff prior to restarting operations. For more information, visit [2020census.gov](https://www.census.gov/2020census.gov).



PennDOT To Use Existing Photos for Driver License and Identification Card Renewals

Just a reminder: If you are encountering an issue with state government, please feel free to contact my district office. We are here to help you with the following services:

- Driver's license and vehicle registration applications and renewals.
- Assistance with PennDOT paperwork (lost cards, changes, corrections, special registration plates, vanity plates, and temporary placards for disabled persons).
- PACE and PACENET applications for seniors.
- State Motor Vehicle and Driver Licensing Work.
- Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications.
- State tax forms.
- Student aid applications.
- Free state maps, state park information, and PA Vacation Guides.
- Copies of legislation and tours of the State Capitol.
- Referrals to agencies to resolve state-related matters.

Let's Get Connected



Our District



Web Site



Office Locations

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