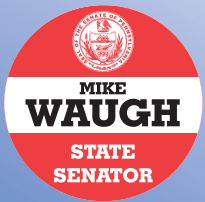


# SENATOR MIKE WAUGH



# Reports

TO YORK COUNTY

Summer 2008



## *A Message from Senator Waugh*

Hello Friends!

Summer is upon us and I hope you are all enjoying the season so far!

Prior to our summer recess, the General Assembly was at work in Harrisburg crafting a balanced budget for the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year. Included in this newsletter you will find a recap of the work we have done and some highlights from the final budget bill.

It is hard to believe that we are in the second year of this two-year legislative session. So, with a limited number of session days left, we continue to press forward on the major issues before us such as revisions to school construction funding, addressing the growing need for alternative fuels, and the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire personnel, all of which are touched upon in this newsletter.

During this session I have had the pleasure of serving as the Republican Caucus Chairman, so read on to learn more about my role in that position and to take a peek at some of the pictures of the many wonderful guests that I welcomed to the Capitol!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Waugh".

## Waugh's Role as Caucus Chairman

**A**fter serving six years as the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, I had the opportunity to step into a new position within Senate Leadership when I was elected by my colleagues to serve as the Senate Republican Caucus Chairman for the 2007-2008 legislative session.

This new position has expanded my responsibilities within the legislature and has allowed me to have a more direct role in the day-to-day legislative process. Every morning prior to session, three of us from the leadership team convene to determine what action will be taken on each bill listed on that day's Senate Calendar. This exercise enables me to assist my fellow Senators in preparing for the day's activity. At the start of my term in this new role, I made a conscious decision to expand the responsibilities of the Caucus Chairman by visiting each Senator whose legislation is scheduled to be voted on or amended in the Senate that day. This really provides me the opportunity to engage my fellow Senators on issues affecting York County, and it helps them to prepare for any discussion or debate that may occur with respect to their legislation.

In addition, my role as Caucus Chairman calls for me to lead our daily Caucus meetings, during which bills of interest are discussed, members are presented further information on issues, questions are posed to colleagues about their legislation, amendments are formulated, and as a Caucus we collectively establish positions on proposals so we can return to the Senate floor prepared for debate and vote on the matters at hand.

Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Caucus Chairman, and I look forward to continuing my role as a member of the Senate leadership team.

## 2008-2009 Budget

**O**n February 4th, Governor Rendell presented his 2008-2009 budget proposal, a \$28.35 billion spending plan. The Governor's plan was a more than 4 percent increase over last year. Since then the General Assembly has been taking the necessary steps in reducing the line-by-line details in order to cut state spending.

During the last week of February and the first week in March, the Senate Appropriations Committee conducted

budget hearings. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I participated in this portion of the budget process. The hearings provide us the opportunity to question the department secretaries and agency directors about the work being done within the programs under their leadership. This allows us to make sure they have utilized last year's funding in a proper manner and to understand how they plan to manage the coming year's requested funding.

After additional months of negotiations, on June 18th the Senate passed Senate Bill 1389, which became the vehicle for the 2008-2009 budget. On July 2nd the House of Representatives passed an amended version of SB 1389 and returned it to the Senate for consideration. A Conference Committee was formed, and on July 4th a final version of the bill was passed by the legislature and sent to the Governor for his signature.



*Father Bob Nugent from St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in New Freedom served as the guest chaplain of the Senate providing the opening prayer on June 30th.*



## Budget Highlights:

- **NO TAX INCREASES**
- **\$28.2 BILLION TOTAL SPENDING** – Nearly \$150 million less than the Governor’s proposal; 3.98% over last year’s budget; includes many across-the-board cuts of at least 1.3%.
- **NEW EDUCATION FUNDING FORMULA** – Every school district will receive a minimum 3% increase in its basic education subsidy; the Governor’s plan would only have provided a 1.5% increase to more than 100 of our 501 districts.
- **BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS** – \$350 million to fix 411 bridges across the state including 16 in York County.
- **WATER AND SEWER** – Voters will participate in a referendum to allow the investment of \$400 million in new water and sewer projects.

## Senate Approves Waugh Resolutions

- **On April 29th**, the Senate approved Senate Resolution 263, which calls for a study of the \$4.00 construction and building permit fee levied under the Uniform Construction Code. SR 263 directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study of how much money has been raised, how much is deposited into the two accounts established to provide training programs for municipal officials and contractors, and how the money in these accounts is actually being spent. Results of the study are to be reported to the General Assembly by September 30, 2008.
- **On June 27th**, the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 346, which recognizes the coordinated efforts of the Pennsylvania Association of

Community Bankers and the Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition to “Take a Swing Against Breast Cancer” during the month of July 2008. Together they have organized a series of homerun derbies to be held at minor league ballparks throughout Pennsylvania in an effort to raise money for the fight against breast cancer and to raise awareness of the disease that currently affects 103,000 Pennsylvania women.

The first homerun derby was held on July 1st at Sovereign Bank Stadium, home of the York Revolution.

- **Also adopted by the Senate on June 27th** was Senate Resolution 356. Co-sponsored by York County Senators Gib Armstrong, Jeff Piccola, Terry Punt, and Pat Vance, SR 356 congratulates the York County Economic Development Corporation (YCEDC) on a very successful 50 years of service to York County.

## Grant Seminar Scheduled

**A**ttention all fire and EMS departments, municipal officials, and non-profit organizations! Together with Representative Bev Mackereth, my office will be conducting a grant writing seminar on October 23rd from 8 a.m.–11 a.m. at the York Fairgrounds. We will be providing additional details closer to the time, but mark your calendars now!

## Waugh Bill To Benefit Volunteer Fire And EMS Personnel

**A**long with Senator Lisa Baker, Chair of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I introduced and achieved unanimous Senate passage of Senate Bill 1315, which will create the Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency Services Postsecondary Education Tuition Reimbursement Program.

The legislation calls for the reimbursement of a percentage of a student’s tuition for individuals who are qualified volunteer firefighters or emergency services personnel. The reimbursement would be paid directly by the Commonwealth to the student’s college or university at a rate of 50% of tuition for students attending a community college, a state-owned university, or a state-related university

and at a rate of 50% of the average state-institutions’ tuition for students at independent colleges and universities.

On June 9th SB 1315 was approved unanimously by the Senate, along with

two fire and emergency services related tax credit bills, SB 1314 and SB 1316, sponsored by Senator Baker. All three bills are now before House Committees awaiting consideration. However, on

July 3rd the Senate inserted a measure into HB 377 providing a tax credit to volunteer responders, and this bill is before the Governor for his signature. In order to be eligible for these programs individuals must be bona fide active volunteers serving a local fire, rescue or emergency medical service company.

It is my strong hope to see SB 1315 through to final passage before the session ends in November. Our more than 2,000 volunteer fire and EMS departments continue to struggle with recruitment and retention, and this legislation is one way to assist them in their efforts.



*Together Senator Lisa Baker and I held a press conference on June 9th to discuss our fire and EMS legislation. Chief John Senft from York City and many York County volunteers were in attendance.*

## Waugh Introduces Alternative Energy Bill

As fuel prices continue to rise, discussions surrounding alternative fuels are becoming more and more prevalent. This is one reason I have introduced legislation to encourage farmers to plant bioenergy crops for use as a source in the production of cellulosic ethanol.

Senate Bill 1317 establishes the Farms to Fuels Initiative to provide farmers with a per-acre subsidy, which would be spread across three years to allow the crop to mature. The subsidy would be \$150 per acre for the first year; for the second year, \$100 per acre; and for the third year, \$50 per acre, with a limit of \$100,000 total over the three years.

Although I have traditionally not been a proponent of subsidies, I believe these are warranted because cellulosic ethanol provides a very real opportunity for our farmers and the Commonwealth. However, planting of such crops is a long-term risk that

would involve the removal of good cash crops from production, and full development of bioenergy crops takes between 2-3 years. This can present a difficult decision for farmers that are considering replacing cash crops such as corn or soybeans with bioenergy crops.

If we intend to make Pennsylvania a leader in the production of fuel from these crops within the next few years, then this measure is critical. Currently, SB 1317 is before the Senate Appropriations Committee awaiting consideration.

## Smoking Ban Bill Signed Into Law

On June 3, 2008, the Conference Committee on Senate Bill 246 – a bill establishing the Smoke Free Pennsylvania Act and banning smoking in public places and workplaces including restaurants – reached an agreement on the legislation and presented a final version to the House and Senate for approval.



After much debate, the Committee was finally able to reach a compromise that bans smoking in not only restaurants but public places such as education facilities, mass transportation facilities, including train and subway stations; public homes that provide day-care or adult day-care, and sports and recreational facilities. Exceptions to the ban include drinking establishments whose annual food sales account for less than 20% of gross sales and up to 25% of the gaming floor in a licensed gaming facility. In order to qualify for such an exemption, signs must be conspicuously posted at every public entrance stating that smoking is permitted.

The legislature supported the Conference Committee's report, sending it to the Governor on June 11th, and on June 13th he signed the bill into law as Act 27 of 2008. The law goes into effect 90 days following the Governor's approval.



*Ann Getty DeMoise, a York County resident who was part of the top secret team responsible for creating technology to allow the Enola Gay to fly under Japanese radar during World War II, was recognized on the Senate floor where I presented her with a citation for her accomplishment and dedication to her country.*



*Chad Kelly and his family visited the Senate, where I presented him with a citation and recognized him on the Senate floor for his successful win for his age group in the national Pepsi Punt, Pass, and Kick Competition.*

## New Pre-Approved School Design Bill Introduced

In response to a study of York County schools I introduced legislation, Senate Bill 1318, mandating that all school districts use a pre-approved plan for all new school construction in order to receive state subsidies toward their construction project.

The report entitled "Examining Resource Use and Areas for Enhanced Cooperation in York County's School Districts" resulted in six "high priority" recommendations, one of which was to "address new school building construction issues" including using school building prototypes.

Every year since the 1997-1998 legislative session I have introduced other

pre-approved school design legislation. However, the most important difference with this new proposal is that it will be a requirement for schools, rather than an incentive, to use pre-approved designs.

Although the state Department of Education implemented a school design clearinghouse in 2005, there is a realization that their attempt to use the program on a liberal opt-in basis has not been successful because there is no tracking system to know when schools use one of the very few designs – six for elementary schools and one for middle schools – currently in the clearinghouse.

SB 1318 is before the Senate Education Committee awaiting consideration.

## Transportation Bill Provides Alternative Funding Methods

There has been much talk surrounding transportation funding issues. “Leasing the Turnpike,” “Tolling Interstate 81,” and “Public Private Partnerships” have all been common phrases throughout discussions on finding alternative funding mechanisms for the many transportation needs we have in Pennsylvania. The bottom line is – Pennsylvania has a very aged infrastructure, and we must act now to upgrade, maintain,

and fix our roads and bridges.

As a method to address this issue, Senator Roger Madigan, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, introduced Senate Bill 1158, of which I am a co-sponsor. This legislation, which allows Pennsylvania and regional transportation authorities to enter into agreements with the private sector to form Public Private Partnerships (P3s), garnered unanimous support from the Senate.

The P3s authorize the use of private capital on transportation projects, rather than relying solely on taxpayer dollars. The P3s would be charged with designing, constructing, managing and/or maintaining new or expanded transportation options. However, the legislation restricts the leasing of the Pennsylvania Turnpike unless authorized by a separate act of the General Assembly.

Senate Bill 1158 is currently before the House Transportation Committee awaiting consideration.



*Several senior government class students and their teacher from Red Lion Christian School ventured to the Capitol for a hands-on lesson in State Government.*

## Senate Supports Protection of Prescription Benefits

In order to ensure the continuation of benefits for Pennsylvania’s PACE and PACENET members, the Senate unanimously supported Senator James Rhoades’ Senate Bill 4, of which I was a co-sponsor, and which is similar to legislation I had introduced last fall.

SB 4 will allow an individual enrolled in PACE or PACENET to remain eligible for his or her program if they exceed the maximum income limit due

solely to a Social Security cost of living adjustment (COLA).

The exemption for PACENET would be retroactive to December 31, 2007, when a previous exemption expired, and the exemption for PACE recipients would begin on December 31, 2008. Both exemptions would be in effect until December 31, 2010.

On July 4th, the House approved SB 4 and sent it to the Governor for his approval.

### Senator Waugh’s Offices To Serve You

218 North George Street, York, PA 17401  
(717) 846-2828 • (717) 637-7311 • (717) 382-9940

Senate Box 203028, Harrisburg, PA 17120-3028  
(717) 787-3817 • TTY (800) 364-1581

mwaugh@pasen.gov • senatorwaugh.com

### Did You Know...

*The PA Senate has a Citizen Access Page on the internet?*

- Go to: [pasenategop.com](http://pasenategop.com) and click on the **Citizen Access Page** button on the right hand side to find information such as Senate votes, amendments to bills, and floor debates. You can also access any of the pieces of legislation referenced in this newsletter.

*PA has 117 County and Community Fairs for you to enjoy this summer?*

- Contact my district office at **717-846-2828** to obtain your copy of the **PA Fair Guide!**

*PA state law requires drivers to use their headlights when windshield wipers are being used due to precipitation such as rain, sleet, snow, and mist?*

- So, please remember to turn on your lights (tail lights included) when you’re driving in inclement weather so you are more visible to those around you!

*You can receive e-news updates from me?*

- Visit my website at [senatorwaugh.com](http://senatorwaugh.com) and click the **“Sign-up for Email Updates”** button on the right side of the page to submit your information.