



# State Senator **MARIA COLLETT**

Winter 2020

*Representing the 12th Senatorial District*



## *Inside:*

- **Harrisburg Update**
- **In the Community**
- **Update on the PFAS Crisis**

## *Dear Neighbor,*

*It has been a wonderful first year serving the 12th District as your state senator. My staff and I have had the pleasure of getting to know many of you at community days and other events across the district, at senior services visits, in our district offices, and over the phone. We take pride in assisting you with all of your state-related needs, and I am always interested in hearing your legislative concerns and ideas. It is my sincere honor to represent you in Harrisburg, and I'm looking forward to what the new year brings. My door is always open — please don't hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns.*

*Sincerely,*

**Senator Maria Collett, 12th Senatorial District**



**2019**  
BY THE NUMBERS

**72** Business  
Tours

**88**  
Senior & Mobile  
Outreach Visits

**Constituent**  
Cases Closed  
**2,455**

**2,608**  
Legislative  
Questions  
Answered

**\$23.2 Million**  
in Local Grants  
Awarded

**27**  
Bills  
Introduced

**Bills**  
Co-Sponsored  
**236**

In September, I held my first Town Hall at the Horsham Township Library. We talked about what I've been up to in Harrisburg, how my team and I are serving constituents, and the issues that are on our communities' minds. It's my honor and privilege to serve the people of the 12th District and get to know local nonprofits, businesses, schools, local leaders, and most importantly you! As we continue into the new year, take a look at what we accomplished in 2019.

## ■ Inaugural Health Fair

Our first Health & Wellness Fair was a success! When you're in the midst of a health crisis – big or small – it can be difficult to know where to turn for help. The goal of our health fair was to connect families to the local resources they need, like free flu shots, physical and mental health screenings, and healthy living tips. We can't wait for next year!



## How a Bill Becomes a Law

Ever wonder why it seems to take so long for a bill to pass through our state legislature? Take a look at how a bill becomes a law in Pennsylvania.

A bill is introduced in either the House or the Senate.

The bill is assigned to a committee by the Speaker of the House or Senate Pro Tempore. The decision whether to hear a bill in committee lies in the hands of the majority party chair of that committee.

If a bill passes through its committee of origin and has a fiscal impact, it must also be reviewed by the Appropriations Committee.

If a bill is voted out of committee, the majority party leadership decides whether and when to bring it to the floor for a full vote.

If it passes in its originating chamber, the process starts all over again in the opposite side of the legislature.

If an amendment is introduced and passed in the second chamber, the amended bill comes back to the original chamber for yet another vote.

Once a bill passes both the House and Senate, it heads to the Governor's desk to be signed into law, vetoed, or returned without a signature (which allows the bill to go into effect after 10 days).





## Harrisburg Update

*In my first year in office, I've been fighting hard to address the issues you care about most. I've introduced 27 bills and resolutions, signed onto 236 pieces of legislation, and cast more than 320 votes on the floor. Do you have an issue you want me to be aware of? Call or email me!*

### ■ **Menstrual Equity**

In November, I introduced Senate Bill 956, the "Pennsylvania Menstrual Equity Act," which will ensure that menstrual products are available in public restrooms in state facilities, particularly those that serve the young, low-income, homeless, and incarcerated. Humans need toilet paper, and public restrooms supply it. This is no different. This bill already has 20 cosponsors!



*It's time for Menstrual Equity in PA.*



### ■ **Statute of Limitations Reform**

In November, HB 962, which (a) raises the age limit for filing a civil claim arising out of child sexual abuse to age 55 from the current age of 30, (b) removes governmental and sovereign immunity, and (c) eliminates the criminal statute of limitations on child sex crimes going forward, was signed into law. Unfortunately, it was passed without proposed amendments that would have immediately opened a window for adult victims of child sex abuse to bring suit. Many of you have let me know how important this provision is to you, and I will continue to fight for justice for you and push to open this window.

### ■ **Senior REAL ID Discount**

Concerns about REAL ID are some of the most common constituent requests my office receives, and the additional processing fee can present a real barrier for seniors on fixed incomes. SB 855 would be a huge help, creating a senior discount of at least 50% on REAL ID processing fees. *\*Under law, this discount could not be retroactive.*

### ■ **Minimum Wage Progress**

In November, our State Senate passed SB 79, which provides for an incremental increase in the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9.50 per hour by January 1, 2022. Though this is still a ways off from \$15, I voted 'yes': a \$9.50 minimum wage would lift more than 300,000 people out of poverty. The bill now awaits a vote in the House.

### ■ **Criminal Justice Reform**

The Senate unanimously passed SB 637, which clarifies how licensure boards can and can't use criminal records in their decisions. It removes barriers to employment, making it easier for people with criminal records to get back on their feet and experience the dignity of work.

## Family Care Act Tour

We had a great conversation with panelists and audience members at our Bipartisan Family Care Act Listening Tour. Representative Wendi Thomas (R-Bucks) and I hosted the discussion with the Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition to hear what our constituents had to say about our paid family leave legislation (SB 580 and HB 1739). Their insights made it clear: it's time that we in the legislature ensure that employees throughout the Commonwealth have the tools they need to thrive in the workplace. Pennsylvanians deserve paid family and medical leave.



## ■ *The Latest on the PFAS Crisis*

Since taking office, one of my top priorities has been addressing the PFAS contamination crisis surrounding our local military bases. PFAS chemicals have leached into our soil and water from firefighting foams used for decades on these bases. Nicknamed “forever chemicals,” PFAS are very persistent in the environment and in the human body, where high exposure levels can lead to a range of serious health issues.

### ■ Legislative Progress

- Governor Wolf recently signed HB 1410 into law, which establishes a public authority to review applications from local communities with PFAS contamination “related to” the former Willow Grove Naval Air Station and award funding to them to assist with reimbursement of surcharges, remediation, and/or redevelopment. The funding source will be a portion of new revenue from businesses near the base. I am encouraged by this bill’s passage and hope it signals the first of many legislative actions to improve our communities’ health, environment, and economy so that our families can thrive.

### ■ Pending Legislation

- As a new member of the Senate, the very first pieces of legislation I introduced address the PFAS crisis:
  - **SB 581** sets an interim maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 PPT for PFAS in our drinking water until such a time as the Governor, EPA, or DEP establishes one.
  - **SB 582** classifies PFAS as hazardous substances under Pennsylvania’s Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act (HSCA).
- I have been hard at work to gather support from my colleagues and move these bills out of committee. Want to help move this issue forward? Reach out to friends and family across the state and encourage them to contact their state legislators in support of these bills.

### ■ Increasing Awareness with *Dark Waters* Film

- In December, Mark Ruffalo’s film *Dark Waters* hit theaters across the country. The film follows the true story of lawyer Rob Bilott as he investigates DuPont, a corporate PFAS contaminator in West Virginia. I’m excited to see growing national attention on this issue and encourage everyone to see this important movie.

### ■ Further Resources

- To learn more, visit:
  - [www.bit.ly/PFASActionTeam](http://www.bit.ly/PFASActionTeam)
  - [www.epa.gov/pfas](http://www.epa.gov/pfas)
  - [www.health.pa.gov/topics/envirohealth/Pages/PFAS.aspx](http://www.health.pa.gov/topics/envirohealth/Pages/PFAS.aspx)

## ■ *Supporting Small Businesses*

My team and I were thrilled to share a meal at Piero’s to celebrate the holidays. A few months ago, Piero’s Italian Restaurant shared their struggle on Facebook as an extended bridge construction project took a toll on their business. The construction’s done now, so if you haven’t tried it yet, you definitely should!

Piero’s isn’t the only PA small business affected by public works projects – that’s why I introduced legislation to establish the Public Works Impacted Tax Credit. Learn more about the bill at [www.bit.ly/CollettTaxCredit](http://www.bit.ly/CollettTaxCredit)



## ■ *Senior Scam Prevention*



In November, we held a Senior Scam Prevention seminar at the Ben Wilson Senior Activity Center in Warminster. The event featured representatives from the PA Attorney General’s office and BB&T Bank, who offered engaging, crucial information about protecting ourselves and our families against fraud. It was such a success, my staff and I will be holding more of these events around our district in the coming months!





# In The Community



## Veterans Day In District 12

*In honor of Veterans Day, I attended several ceremonies across the district recognizing veterans in our community. Thank you to the men and women who have courageously served our country.*



## Stone & Key Cellars and Keystone Homebrew Supply

*I had a great time learning more about beer brewing and wine making at locally-owned Stone & Key Cellars / Keystone Homebrew Supply in Montgomery Township.*



## OlympiACTS

*I had a blast at the opening ceremonies for OlympiACTS, which brings together residents from six local ACTS Retirement-Life Communities (four of which I'm lucky to represent) for some friendly competition!*



## Diwali in the Capitol

*I was excited to celebrate Diwali in the Capitol with members of the Hindu community from District 12 and across Pennsylvania.*



## Gwynedd Mercy University's Loop Road

*This fall, Gwynedd Mercy University celebrated the completion of their Loop Road project, which will serve to make the campus safer and more pedestrian-friendly. I'm proud to partner with state and local officials to support the school's progress!*



## Special Equestrians

*I had the wonderful opportunity to visit Special Equestrians in Warrington Township, a therapeutic horse riding program for individuals with disabilities, addictions and trauma.*

## Reform Event

*I was honored to participate with my predecessor, Sen. Greenleaf, on a panel hosted by the REFORM Alliance, a criminal justice organization led by Van Jones.*





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