

State Senator
JOHN RAFFERTY

Reports to You



44TH DISTRICT • WINTER 2005

Dear Friend:

As we begin a new two-year legislative session in Harrisburg, I remain committed to serving my district and ensuring that our area is strongly represented in the General Assembly.

Many important issues face us, including the need to reduce property taxes, promote economic development and invest in environmental programs to preserve our natural resources.

Last year, I supported the Homeowner Tax Relief Act. This measure is designed to bring school tax increases under control by reducing our reliance on the property tax and giving taxpayers the power to say "no" to tax increases that are too high. The measure is only a first step to keep skyrocketing property tax increases under control.

In the coming months, the General Assembly will also begin the process of developing a state budget. As a new member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will work hard to hold the line on spending and keep taxes down for families and businesses.

Economic development is also a top priority to attract companies and help them grow if we want to improve the quality of life in this area and encourage our young people to remain here after they graduate. *For more on important economic development initiatives that we are working on, see page 3.*

Additionally, I will continue to work to protect our environment with the introduction of legislation to keep our air clean and punish landfill operators who continue to violate the law.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need assistance or just want to offer your opinion on an issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John C. Rafferty".

Rafferty to Chair Senate Law and Justice Committee

I was recently selected by Senate leadership to serve as chairman of the Senate Law and Justice Committee.

The Law and Justice Committee oversees all issues dealing with state liquor laws and the Pennsylvania State Police.

The Committee will consider a number of important issues, including legislation that increases the complement of the State Police, the opening of state liquor stores and beer distributors on Sundays, out-of-state wine purchases and sales, and expanding on the customer friendliness philosophy of the state stores.

I will also remain on the Judiciary Committee which oversees appointment of state judges and all criminal and civil judicial matters. My other committee assignments include Senate Appropriations, which oversees all budget and financial expenditures of the state; Aging and Youth; and Communications and Technology.



Senator Rafferty helps Amity Fire Company with a state grant.

Rafferty Law Keeps Health Care Dollars in PA

A new law I sponsored last year will close a loophole that could have jeopardized payments into Pennsylvania's Tobacco Settlement Fund.

The law will ensure that Pennsylvania is receiving its fair share of dollars from all cigarette manufacturers and will bring more money to the state for vital health-care programs and services that are paid for with Tobacco Settlement Fund proceeds.

The Tobacco Settlement Agreement Act of 2000 requires cigarette manufacturers not participating in the settlement (NPMs) to contribute to the Tobacco Settlement Fund escrow account to cover any future judgments against them.

However, the law allows NPMs that concentrate their sales in a single state or a few states to obtain releases of the great majority of their escrow deposits. My legislation amended the Tobacco Settlement Agreement Act to close the loophole. Similar legislation has been adopted by 32 other states.

Our Tobacco Fund pays for a wide range of health-related services, from in-home care for seniors to prescription drug assistance and health insurance for low-income Pennsylvanians. So, it is important that we receive every dollar we are entitled to.



Senator Rafferty takes part in a State Capitol rally against Domestic Violence.

Holding the Line on Property Taxes

If we are going to succeed in reducing property taxes, school districts must work hard to control spending and keep tax rates down. That's why I am once again pushing for legislation that would require a "super majority" vote for school boards to raise taxes.

My bill would amend the Public

School Code to require all millage tax increases to be approved by a two-thirds majority vote by the members elected to the board of school directors.

Taxpayers are rightfully concerned that property taxes continue to increase due to school spending. Many tax increases are being passed

by a single vote. I believe there should be a compelling need and strong support by the board before property taxes go up.

My bill will provide an added protection against tax increases because it will raise the bar when it comes to voting for an increase.



Senator Rafferty on the Senate floor with a visit from BVM Catholic School students.

TAP Into College Savings

Paying for college can be difficult, but a new state-sponsored program is making that dream more affordable. Pennsylvania's Tuition Account Program (TAP 529) allows parents to purchase college credits for the future at today's prices, saving parents significant amounts of money.

For detailed information concerning TAP 592, visit www.patap.org.

To request an enrollment package, call TAP 529's customer service line at 800-440-4000.

Rafferty Secures Funding for Major Economic Development Improvements

When I was elected to the Senate, I made economic development a top priority and focused on obtaining grants and loans to help companies expand their operation or relocate to our area. These projects are crucial to creating jobs, improving the quality of life and keeping families and young people in our area of the state. New businesses also help to revitalize our communities and increase the tax base. Working with state and local officials, we have had some major success stories that I'd like to share with you.

Pottstown, Montgomery County – A \$2.6 million grant to redevelop the former Mrs. Smith's Pie Company and the former First Fidelity Bank Building in the heart of downtown Pottstown. The buildings will be used for retail, office space and townhouses. Additionally, we secured \$325,000 in state money to assist with the expansion of the Montgomery County Community College branch campus in the downtown area.

Senator Rafferty and Governor Rendell present a state grant to Jerry Nugent of the Montgomery Redevelopment Authority and Pottstown Mayor Anne Jones.



Collegetown, Montgomery County – \$5 million for the Performing Arts Center at Ursinus College. The grant, which I joined Governor Rendell in presenting to the college, will also help to benefit the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of the Arts. The 55,000-square-foot Center will not only be used by dance and theater students, but will serve as home to many regional cultural events and special performers.

Coatesville, Chester County – \$7 million for economic development projects, including the construction of a four-story, 90,000-square-foot office building at the northwest corner of the U.S. Route 30 bypass and PA Route 82. The site is in a floodplain and partial wetland, which will be preserved and integrated into the site. An adjacent project will include the construction of a five-story hotel, restaurant and meeting area at the southwest corner of the U.S. Route 30 bypass and PA Route 82.



SENATOR FOR A DAY

Each spring, Senator Rafferty hosts a one-day student government seminar for area high school students. The "Senator for a Day" event is designed to give students a closer look at the legislative process by giving them the opportunity to write and amend bills and vote on legislation in a Senate session. It is a great opportunity to see how government works and to learn more about issues that affect all Pennsylvanians.



State Senator John Rafferty

**44TH DISTRICT
LEGISLATIVE OFFICES**

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Rafferty Unveils New, Improved Website

As part of my ongoing effort to make state services and programs more accessible to my constituents, I have launched a new and improved website on the Internet. The address is www.senatorrafferty.com.

The website includes information about pending legislation, state laws, agencies and programs, special sections of interest to senior citizens, veterans and kids, as well as

links to other government and civic organizations.

There is a wide variety of information available on my website, so I encourage you to visit it.

The Internet is a great way to keep constituents informed about what is going on in state government and what programs are available. You can also access a wide variety of state programs and services at www.pasenategop.com.



Expanded Office Hours

To provide constituents with greater access to a wide range of services, I continue to offer extended office hours at several locations.

On SATURDAYS, my **Montgomery County** office is open from **9 a.m. to 12 Noon**.★

On WEDNESDAYS, the **Chester County** office is open from **9 a.m. to 7 p.m.**

All **other office hours** are **9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** – the locations are listed on this page.

★ Except holidays

In addition to the regular office hours in my Montgomery County and Chester County offices, I also provide “satellite office” hours for constituents to meet with members of my staff. Please feel free to stop by at the following locations:

Berks County

Amity Township Building
2004 Weavertown Road

*Every 2nd Friday of the month
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

Chester County

West Caln Township Building
721 W. Kings Highway

*Every 3rd Friday of the month
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.*



**SENATOR
JOHN RAFFERTY**
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Or Current Resident

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