Dear Residents of SD-44:

In this newsletter you will find information on the montco strong small business grant application window, eviction and foreclosure extension granted by the Governor, ending the prohibition on cannabis, and our story on the veterans home in Chester County that made national news as a front-page article in the Washington Post last week.

My district office is now open Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm by appointment only. Masks are required and hand sanitizer will be made available upon entry. If you cannot make it during normal operating hours and need to meet with us in person, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your schedule.

My staff and I are always available by phone at 610-792-2137 and by email at senatormuth@pasenate.com to help answer your questions and provide you with the resources that you need. We will also continue to share new information through E-blasts, social media and on website as we receive it to ensure you, your family, schools, and small businesses have the most up-to-date information.

Sincerely,

Senator Katie Muth

National News: Standing up for veterans

Over the past four months, I have been contacted by dozens of family members, loved ones, and staff regarding the use of hydroxychloroquine on the residents of the Southeastern Veterans Center located in East Vincent Township, one of six state-run veteran retirement facilities. Residents and their family members had no idea how many people were dying at this four-story veterans’ home near the Schuylkill River until the Philadelphia Inquirer broke a story on April 25. The news was stunning: 26 residents had died in what had clearly become one of the deadliest coronavirus outbreaks in the state.

In late May, the Governor’s Office of General Counsel engaged outside counsel to conduct an independent investigation of the outbreak at the center and the way the home and the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs addressed the crisis. No details have been released. I blame a state system that is “Internally regulated with no guarantee of transparency,” from the doctors and the director at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to the inspectors and the secretary at the Department of the Health.

What occurred at the SEVC is both heartbreaking and unacceptable. Thank you to the Washington Post for all of their hard work to make sure this story was not swept under the rug by featuring the story on the front page early last week.

Thank you to the brave staff and families who contacted me- it is because of them that the truth cannot be questioned or ignored. #JusticeForOurVets

NOW LIVE: Montco Strong Small Business Grants

Do you have a for-profit business with a physical location in Montgomery County that was in operation on or before March 23rd, 2020, and has experienced disruption due to the COVID-19 global pandemic meeting the following criteria?

The Montgomery County Board of Commissioners is making available $10,000,000 in economic development funds to provide grants to eligible small businesses for Round 3 of the MontcoStrong Small Business Grant Program. Applications will be accepted beginning approximately at 10 am on Thursday, July 16th, 2020 and the application window will close at approximately Noon on Friday, July 17th, 2020.
Letter to my Colleagues: End the Prohibition on Cannabis

I joined 14 of my colleagues to urge the state legislature to end the prohibition on cannabis in Pennsylvania as legalization is supported by the majority of Pennsylvanians and should no longer be ignored.

It is undeniable that cannabis-related charges have plagued the criminal justice system by disproportionately targeting Black and Brown Pennsylvanians.

It is also undeniable that legalization will give Pennsylvania the opportunity to remedy COVID-related revenue shortfalls and boost the economy without having to make cuts to important programs.

This is why my colleagues and I are calling for action. It's time to bring an end to the prohibition; it's time to move Pennsylvania forward!

No Consent in Custody

Last week, the House overwhelmingly passed HB 256, which was amended by my colleague Senator Larry Farnese to include language from the ‘No Consent in Custody’ bill introduced by me in the Senate and in the House by Rep. Chris Rabb. Currently in Pennsylvania, if a police officer sexually assaults someone in custody, they can claim in court that it was consensual.

Under the legislation, any sexual contact between law enforcement and someone in custody would be a third-degree felony and closes the loophole that allows members of law enforcement to abuse their power with individuals within their custody.

Evictions and Foreclosures Suspended

Until August 31, 2020
GOOD NEWS! Governor Wolf has extended the Executive Order preventing eviction & foreclosure until August 31, 2020 - a measure that the Democratic Caucus has been consistently fighting for. Many families are dealing with the financial brunt from COVID-19 and no one should fear losing their home or apartment because of it!

Applications can be submitted now for tenants, landlords, mortgage companies and homeowners for the COVID Relief – Rental and Mortgage Assistance Grant Program, which provides assistance with delinquent mortgage and rent caused by unemployment or a 30% reduction in an individual’s household income as a result of COVID-19. If you would like more information about the program or would like to apply for a grant head over to www.phfa.org. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office via senatormuth@pasisenate.com if you need additional assistance. We are happy to help you in any way that we can.

Apply for Your Mail-in Ballot
PA voters can now apply online to vote by mail-in ballot for the November election. Apply online at votesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot. If you already asked to be on the annual mail-in ballot request list, you do not need to apply again.

Events
Join us on July 15 and 16 for our blood drive in coordination with the American Red Cross! Due to the pandemic, blood donations have significantly decreased, but the need has increased. Blood drives are safe and all employees adhere to CDC guidelines. Help a neighbor and give blood.

How to Stay Informed
Below is an extensive list of information, statistics, and resources to ensure you stay up-to-date with any changes happening due to COVID-19. Check out my website for a comprehensive list of resources or one of the helpful site below.

Pennsylvania Department of Health
- The PA DoH Daily COVID-19 report. Updated regularly throughout the day.
Follow the PA Health Department on Twitter.
Follow them on Facebook.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Track confirmed cases in the US. (This site is updated weekdays at noon and shows numbers that were current as of 4 p.m. the previous day.)
- CDC provided information regarding "What you should know about COVID-19"
- Follow the CDC on Twitter.
- Follow the CDC on Facebook.
- Learn how best to prevent "community transition" with specific details on what to do before, during, and after outbreaks.

World Health Organization

- Learn what's happening worldwide with the WHO's Daily report. The most recent report is located at the top of the page. It includes confirmed case and death tallies.
- Additional COVID-19 information is provided on their website.
- Stay informed on Twitter.
- Follow their Facebook page.

Be sure to check out the complete list of information, data, and resources available to those in:

Berks County
Chester County
Montgomery County