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Dear Residents of SD-44:

In this newsletter you will find information on the montco strong small business grant application window, an 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

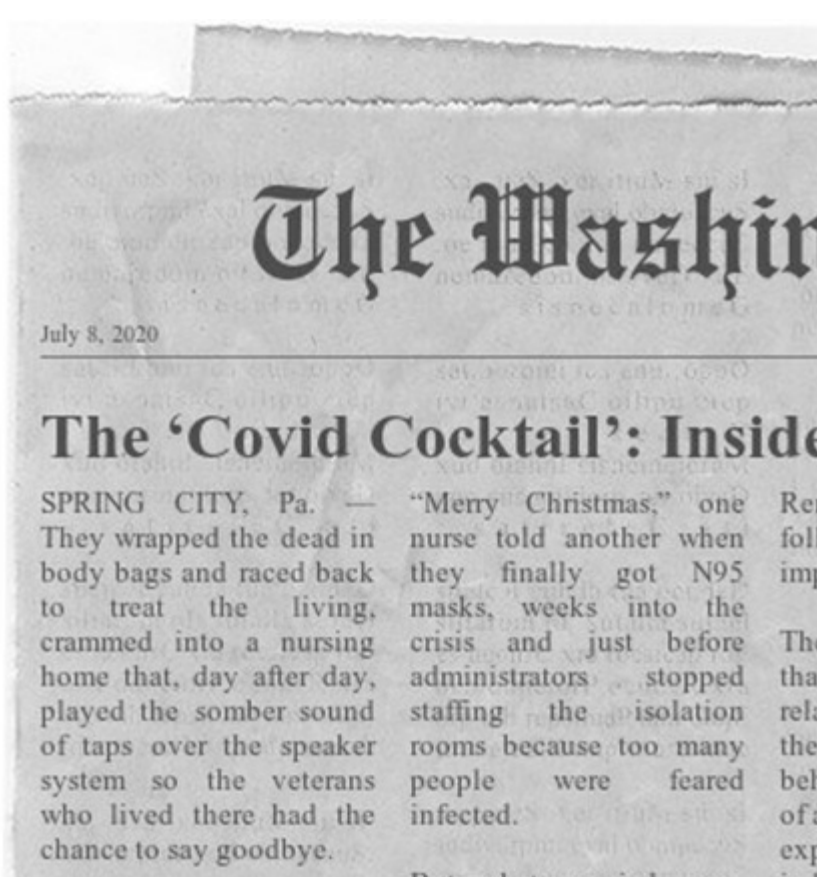
National News: Standing up for veterans

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.



State Sen. Katie Muth, who lives two miles from the Southeastern Veterans' Center, is heading up an unofficial investigation into infection-control breakdowns and the use of hydroxychloroquine at the home, which has attributed 42 deaths to covid-19. (Bonnie Jo Mount/The Washington Post)

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**.

MONTCO STRONG SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM



Questions? Contact my office at
(610) 792-2137 or senatormuth@pasenate.com

**KATIE⁴⁴
MUTH**
PENNSYLVANIA STATE SENATOR

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!

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Senate of Pennsylvania

July 9, 2020

COMMITTEES:
BANKING & FINANCE,
BUDGET & TAXATION,
AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS,
APPROPRIATIONS,
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES,
URBAN AFFAIRS & HOUSING,
TRANSPORTATION, & INFRASTRUCTURE

SENATOR JAY COSTA
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The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Senator Jay Costa
Democratic Leader
535 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Colleagues:

We are living in unprecedented times. Recently, the Independent Fiscal Office released a report on the projected revenue impact of COVID-19 on state General Fund revenues, and it is dire. During the current 2019-2020 fiscal year, the IFO estimated the General Fund would lose \$3.9 billion due to COVID-19, including \$2.1 billion that would be shifted to the next fiscal year and a \$1.8 billion permanent revenue loss from a contraction of economic activity. We should do absolutely everything we can to raise revenue. That is why we come together as a committed group of Pennsylvania Senators to urge our leaders to take up the bi-partisan issue of adult-use cannabis legalization.

For starters, cannabis legalization is immensely popular. Polls show that nearly two-thirds of likely voters in the Commonwealth support the sale of adult-use cannabis. It is popular in every region of Pennsylvania. It is popular among Democrats and Republicans, men and women, every age group, and every ideology. Not only is it popular, but it will help raise desperately needed revenue to support Pennsylvanians. Polling also consistently shows that the citizens of our Commonwealth overwhelmingly prefer raising new revenue through the regulation of legalized adult-use cannabis rather than increasing broad-based taxes. We are amid a historic crisis, and we should be doing everything possible to avoid raising taxes that could have far seen and unintended consequences on so many of our communities who are struggling to get by right now.

We should also avoid spending cuts when possible. The emergency we face right now is historic yes, but first and foremost, it is a health crisis. Cutting programs now would endanger the lives of Pennsylvanians, many of whom rely so much on our assistance. We need to ensure our spending on healthcare, education, housing, and small businesses continues unabated throughout this crisis. Legalizing adult-use cannabis will raise revenue and help mitigate the possible need for cuts, and additionally can serve as a revenue saving tool in agencies such as the Department of Corrections.

SENATOR JAKE CORMAN
REPUBLICAN LEADER
350 MAIN CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA 17120

SENATOR VINCENT HUGHES
DEMOCRATIC APPROPRIATIONS CHAIR
545 MAIN CAPITAL BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PA 17120

While it is common knowledge that we spend far too much on cannabis related offenses, it is equally true that these offenses disproportionately fall on our black and brown citizens. While the rate of cannabis usage holds steady across racial lines, black Americans are arrested at nearly 4 times the rate of white Americans for cannabis related offenses and in some areas, it is even higher. Hispanic Americans, too, face disproportionate arrest rates, and in terms of sentencing both black and Hispanic Americans face average sentences longer than those of white Americans convicted of the same wrongdoing. This is damaging to communities and families and a waste of valuable resources. Legalizing adult use cannabis will not only save the Commonwealth money but will bring much needed justice to those who have suffered the most under the impact of prohibition.

Legalization would also bring benefits to other industries, giving a significant boost to our agricultural sector while creating new jobs at a time when millions of people could use them. New jobs revolving around cultivating, growing and extracting, bud-tending, and dispensary management have popped up by the thousands all around the country where legalization has been implemented. Prior to the onset of COVID-19, cannabis-related occupations were among the fastest growing in the United States, with a nearly 50% increase throughout 2018, and were expected to reach upwards of 200,000 new jobs by 2020. Pennsylvanians deserve to be involved in this growing industry and the Commonwealth will reap the rewards of our participation.

Furthermore, we can look at our successful medical marijuana program as a roadmap to success. We saw a 500% increase in medical marijuana sales during year two of our program, and we expect that number to increase. The number of active dispensaries increased 50% last year, and the number of patients crossed the 150,000 mark. This has translated into millions of dollars in tax revenue that would never have existed before legalizing medical marijuana. We know medical marijuana works, we know medical marijuana raises revenues, and we know adult-use cannabis will as well.

Naturally, there are still some questions around adult-use legalization, and we would like to address a few of those. First, legalizing cannabis will not create a gateway to other drugs. In fact, studies have shown that in states with legalization, the average number of fatal opioid overdoses has decreased by roughly 20-35%. We can look to those numbers with hope and expect legalization to literally save lives. Second, legal cannabis for adults does not increase underage use. In studies of teenage cannabis use, it is shown in states where cannabis has been legalized, due to black-market supply chain disruptions and proof of identification being required at licensed dispensaries, it is harder for underage people to acquire marijuana. Legalizing adult-use cannabis would bring strengthened protections to keep it out of our kids' hands.

Finally, while we already know that legalizing cannabis will raise revenue, it is just as important to know how much. Thanks to a report from our Auditor General, we know that legalization would raise around \$581 million per year through taxation and regulation. This is no small sum and would be instrumental as we navigate this hundred-year crisis.

Once again, the single most important goal we should have right now is ensuring we can continue to provide for the communities of Pennsylvania. Through legalizing adult-use cannabis, we can protect Pennsylvanians from harmful tax hikes and spending cuts and raise new revenue to continue providing vital services and assistance for our constituents. We urge you to consider this issue during this year's budget negotiations, and work with us to enact a responsible budget that will benefit all Pennsylvanians.

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.



PENNCAPITAL-STAR.COM

General Assembly sends Wolf a bill adding protections against sexual assault in police custody | Pennsylvania Capital-Star

Evictions and Foreclosures Suspended Until August 31, 2020



EVICTIONS & FORECLOSURES HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED IN PA 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@pasenate.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: votesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot

If you already asked to be on the annual mail-in ballot request list, you do not need to apply again.

APPLY ONLINE FOR A
**MAIL-IN
BALLOT**



[VotesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot](https://votesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot) 

Events

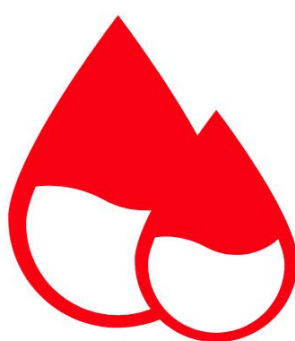
Join us on July 15 and 16 for our blood drive in coordination with the American Red Cross! Due to the pandemic, blood donations have significantly decreased, but the need has increased. Blood drives are safe and all employees adhere to CDC guidelines. Help a neighbor and give blood.



**American
Red Cross**

KATIE⁴⁴MUTH
PENNSYLVANIA STATE SENATOR

BLOOD DRIVE



**WED & THURS JULY 15 & 16
2:00 - 7:00 PM**

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**367 WASHINGTON STREET
ROYERSFORD, PA 19468**

Help a neighbor - Save a life!

For more information, call (610)792-2137
or visit senatormuth.com/events

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](#)



Submit your mobile number to stay up-to-date with the latest events and happenings from Senator Katie Muth sent right to your phone.

Submit



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