



# KATIE MUTH

PENNSYLVANIA STATE SENATOR

SPRING 2024

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## TAKING ON THE TOUGH FIGHTS IN HARRISBURG.

### HELLO RESIDENTS OF SENATE DISTRICT 44!

I hope everyone is enjoying a healthy and happy start to 2024! It is an honor and privilege to be representing you, your families, and our communities in Harrisburg for a second term. While the status quo in the state capitol (a.k.a. "dome of corruption") remains the same, I have continued fighting for change, for transparency, and for the issues that matter most to all of our families, from environmental protection to retirement security to affordable housing to fully funding our schools, ensuring our emergency responders have what they need to keep us all safe, and many other worthy initiatives.

In mid-December, months past the June 30 deadline, the legislature finally finished the 2023-24 state budget by enacting two education code bills and a fiscal code bill. And while I am relieved the legislature finally passed the necessary bills to provide funding to our libraries, fund important programs, and reauthorize our 911 statute, these bills are far from perfect and far from what our residents, our schools, and our communities needed. For these reasons, I voted no, to protest the failed efforts of those in power to prioritize the people of this commonwealth and instead allow special interests to be a part of budget negotiations.

As we look ahead to the next budget battle in the months ahead, there is so much that can and needs to get done in Harrisburg. I will continue to fight for people-centered policies and legislation and call out the sham efforts of those in power who think headlines can cover up the wheeling and dealing off the backs of Pennsylvanians. I look forward to continuing my work in Harrisburg to address the challenges and advocate for the priorities of all residents of SD44.

Be sure to keep up with the latest happenings in state government and what's happening across SD44 by following @SenatorMuth on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Also, sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at [SenatorMuth.com](https://SenatorMuth.com) to get weekly informative updates about local and state efforts, programs, and highlights. To see videos and related links to the content in this newsletter, please visit [SenatorMuth.com/Feb24Newsletter](https://SenatorMuth.com/Feb24Newsletter)

In service,

Senator Katie Muth



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# FIGHTING FOR A COLA FOR RETIREES

This fall, I joined several of my legislative colleagues and dozens of retired teachers, school employees, and state workers in the Capitol to call on the legislature to enact cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for PSERS and SERS annuitants who have not received a COLA in over 20 years.

Our retired educators and school personnel – particularly those who retired before July 2001 – are struggling to keep pace with the rising cost of living in Pennsylvania and across the country. Several measures show a cumulative rate of inflation of more than 50 percent from 2002 to 2022. In effect, the value of these retirees' payments is decreasing each year the legislature does not enact legislation that provides a COLA increase, leaving retired school employees to live in poverty.

I have introduced five bills, along with Senator John Kane – Senate Bill 863, Senate Bill 864, Senate Bill 95, Senate Bill 952, and Senate Bill 1029, which would provide COLAs for annuitants with different percentage increases based on retirement year. In addition to immediate percentage increases for Pre-Act 9 retirees, Senate Bills 863, 864, and 1029 would also provide a full COLA to all PSERS and SERS retirees every three years based on the Consumer Price Index. Our bills also specifically indicate that the Commonwealth – not our schools, not through property taxes – will be required to pay the cost for a PSERS COLA.

Everyone deserves to live and to retire with dignity and financial security. Retired teachers and school employees across our Commonwealth worked their entire lives and contributed so much to our communities and to our children, only to struggle with the steady increases in cost-of-living since 2002. It is time that our legislature stands up for public school employees and our retirees and passes one of our several COLA bills this session. ■



# LEGISLATION THAT WILL SAVE LIVES: AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AEDS) IN SCHOOLS

Sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone, at any time, without symptoms or warning signs, which is why it is imperative our children are surrounded by individuals who are prepared to act and to save a life.

My team and I worked with Aidan's Heart Foundation for months to draft two bills that will enhance the safety of our schools and can help save the lives of someone experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. Senate Bill 512 will require that each school building or facility where children from K-12 attend school or participate in school-sponsored activities has at least one AED placed in a central, accessible location. This bill will also require schools to create an emergency action plan and a certified emergency response team to act in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest; and it will require that 10 percent of school personnel in each building are members of the emergency response team and are certified in CPR and trained in the use of an AED. Senate Bill 513 will require all coaches of athletic teams and supervisors of all afterschool activities become certified in CPR and in the use of an AED.

Whether requiring each school building to have an AED or ensuring teachers, coaches and supervisors are certified in CPR and the use of AEDs, this is a public safety issue. It is time the Senate moves SB512 and SB513 out of the Senate Education Committee!

In addition to these bills, I was also able to fund a pilot grant program to put a new AED in every school building in SD44. The program is now rolling out and we are really looking forward to this becoming a model that can be replicated across the Commonwealth. ■



# POLICY COMMITTEE UPDATES



I am honored to serve as the Chair of the Senate Democratic Policy Committee again this session. Under my leadership during the previous legislative session, the Senate Democratic Policy Committee hosted 47 policy hearings across the Commonwealth focused on legislation, policy initiatives, and causes meaningful to all Pennsylvanians. These hearings allow impacted residents, subject matter experts, government agencies, and advocates to share their experiences, their concerns, and their knowledge with our Senators to help inform our votes and our legislative activism.

**Here is a look at some of the recent hearings that we have held across the state so far this session:**

In January, the Committee came to Chester County to hold a public hearing on privatization and consolidation of water and sewer utilities and how the provisions included in Act 12 of 2016 have led to significant rate increases across the Commonwealth.

The Committee traveled to Philadelphia in October to host a public hearing on legislation that would expand background checks to all points of sale for all firearm purchases regardless of barrel length.

We partnered with the House Democratic Policy Committee this fall to discuss the impacts of censorship and book bans in our public and school libraries.

In early December, the Committee held a public hearing in East Vincent Township on minimizing risk and harm in the development of hydrogen infrastructure in the Commonwealth.

For a full list of upcoming hearings and to access video and submitted testimony from previous Senate Democratic Policy Committee hearings, visit [SenatorMuth.com/Policy](https://SenatorMuth.com/Policy). You can also fill out a form on our site if you have an idea or an issue that you would like our Committee to explore. ■

# VETERAN'S UPDATES

## OVER 200 VETERANS ATTEND SENATOR MUTH'S ANNUAL VETERANS EXPO



In September, my team and I hosted our fourth annual Veterans' Expo at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks. This was our biggest and best event yet, with more than 50 local and statewide veterans' organizations and service providers who discussed many programs and services available to Pennsylvania veterans.

Our annual Veterans' Expo is one of my favorite events each year and it was great to again connect with our veterans, hear their stories, and to ensure they are connecting to all of the state and local resources that may be helpful to them and their families. ■

## SENATE BILL 924: ADVOCATING FOR SURVIVORS OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

In the fall, I joined Sen. Lindsey Williams, Sen. Judy Schwank, state Rep. Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, Treasurer Stacy Garrity and several veterans and other elected officials in the Capitol to urge the Senate to take action on legislation to support survivors of military sexual trauma (MST).

Along with Senator Williams, I introduced Senate Bill 924 which would establish an annual day of recognition and awareness on November 9 of each year to honor the strength, resolve, and perseverance of MST survivors. Supporting survivors and supporting our veterans is not a partisan issue and it is time that the Senate majority recognizes this issue and acts on Senate Bill 924. ■

## SD44 SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING SCIENCE OF READING PROGRAMMING

Since announcing a \$3 million structured literacy grant using Pennsylvania's share of American Rescue Plan Act funds just over a year ago, my team and I have worked closely with the Chester County Intermediate Unit to create a one-of-a-kind pilot program that is giving schools across my Senate District an opportunity to access and implement structured literacy and Science of Reading programming and allow teachers to pursue professional development opportunities. These programs will help build a network of highly-skilled educators, focusing on explicit instruction, and ensure that all students can learn to read and thrive in our public schools. I recently visited a participating elementary school and met with several amazing teachers, administrators and students to talk about their experiences with our pilot program and to witness some of the work being done to implement structured literacy programming through Schools Cubed. ■



# SD44 GRANT FUNDING

## LOCAL PROJECTS RECEIVE OVER \$760,000 IN GREENWAYS, TRAILS AND RECREATION FUNDING

Five projects in SD44 communities across Montgomery and Chester Counties received \$764,250 in state grant funding in January to continue to improve the amazing parks and recreation opportunities in our district for residents of all ages through the Greenways, Trails, and Recreation program.

Any investment of state funding back into our region, our infrastructure, and our public resources and recreation is win for our communities and for our residents. I appreciate the work of all of our local and municipal officials for their work to attract state investment back to our communities.

SD44 projects that received funding included the Anderson Farm Park Loop Trail in Upper Providence Township, Victory Park in Royersford Borough, Hidden River Park and Preserve in East Pikeland Township, Pine Creek Park Playground in West Pikeland Township, and Brown Street Park in Spring City Borough.

For more information on these grants and other projects that have received funding across SD44, visit [SenatorMuth.com/grants](https://SenatorMuth.com/grants). ■



## PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE PROGRAM EXPANDED

I supported legislation in June that expanded the eligibility and increased the rebate amounts for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. This critically important program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. Maximum standard rebate amounts are based on income:

INCOME	MAX STANDARD REBATE
\$0 – \$8,000	\$1,000
\$8,001 – \$15,000	\$770
\$15,001 – \$18,000	\$460
\$18,001 – \$45,000	\$380

Contact my office if you need assistance applying for this important program!

## PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE PROGRAM 2024 UPDATES



### THE 2024 PTRR EXPANSION:

- **Increases** the maximum standard rebate from \$650 to **\$1,000**
- **Increases** the income cap from \$35,000 to **\$45,000** for homeowners
- **Increases** the income cap from \$15,000 to **\$45,000** for renters
- **Automatically increases** the income cap to grow with inflation in years to come

## LOCAL FIRE & EMS COMPANIES AWARDED OVER \$575K IN STATE GRANTS

Great news for our communities! Thirty fire and EMS providers that serve SD44 received \$579,015 in state funding through the Fire Company and Emergency Medical Service Grant Program. The local funding was part of an investment of more than \$37 million in over 2,400 applicants across the Commonwealth.

This funding is so important to our local first responders and our overall public safety. Many of these organizations are underfunded and understaffed so every little bit of state support is so critical to their operations and their ability to respond to any emergencies across our region. Visit [SenatorMuth.com/Grants](https://SenatorMuth.com/Grants) for a full listing of local fire and EMS companies that received grant funding.

Reminder: Any fire company or EMS provider that was awarded grant funding must sign their grant agreements by July 1, 2024, to receive the funding. ■



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## RAISING THE ALARM ON WORKERS INJURED BY FRACKING INDUSTRY'S RADIOACTIVE WASTE

In December, I joined several of my legislative colleagues, investigative journalist Joshua Pribanic from the Public Herald and former employees of a Eureka Resources frack waste disposal facility at a Capitol press conference to raise the alarm about the dangers to workers treating fracking's radioactive waste. Pennsylvanians are exposed daily to potentially toxic and radioactive waste produced by the oil and gas industry. And sadly, our government continues to permit the oil and gas and petrochemical industries to further loot and pollute our waterways, air, soil, and poison our families. Visit [SenatorMuth.com/Feb24Newsletter](https://SenatorMuth.com/Feb24Newsletter) to watch the press conference.



## EMS MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE AT THE CAPITOL

It was an honor to join dozens of first responders in the Capitol in September for the annual EMS Memorial Day service to remember and honor those EMS workers who died in the line of duty, serving our communities and protecting Pennsylvania families. Thank you to all of our first responders who are always there to help provide life-saving care when we need them most.

## MLK DAY OF SERVICE: COMMUNITY CPR AND AED TRAINING

To celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., my team and I participated in the 1st Annual MLK Day CPR + AED Training Event and Community Resource Fair hosted by Aidan's Heart Foundation at Marsh Creek Sixth Grade Center at Downingtown Area School District. Student volunteers helped teach over 100 community members the skills that could save the life of a neighbor, friend, or family member. I am incredibly grateful for the work that Aidan's Heart does for our community.



## 2023 NATA FRIEND OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS AWARD

As a former athletic trainer, it was such an honor to receive a 2023 National Athletic Trainers' Association Friend of Athletic Trainers award from the Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Society at the Capitol in November! It is time we pass SB559 and SB560 to allow licensed athletic trainers to practice to the full extent of their education and training.



## PROVIDING CONSTITUENT SERVICES AT COMMUNITY DAYS ACROSS SD44

My team and I had an amazing time again this year meeting so many of you at Community Days across SD44. This year, we set up a table and chatted with constituents in Uwchlan, Royersford, Caln Township, Atglen, East Vincent, Charlestown Township, Lower Providence, West Vincent, Upper Providence, and West Pikeland. We are already looking forward to next year! Let us know if there are any other community days or events we should attend by emailing [SenatorMuth@pasenate.com](mailto:SenatorMuth@pasenate.com).



## SENATOR MUTH'S YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

In January, I joined over 60 high school sophomores and juniors from across Senate District 44, at Owen J. Roberts School District, for the first ever meeting of the SD44 Youth Advisory Council!!!! Through the program, the students will work together to learn about state government and provide their insight, perspectives, and recommendations on issues directly impacting their communities and schools. I am thrilled to collaborate with these brilliant students to help shape policy initiatives.



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# 2023

BY THE NUMBERS

 **10,651**  
CONSTITUENT  
CORRESPONDENCE


**222** **BILLS/RESOLUTIONS**  
**CO-SPONSORED**

**GRANTS**  
**AWARDED**  
**IN SD44**  **\$26.5**  
**Million**

 **217**  
EVENTS  
HOSTED OR  
PARTICIPATED IN

 **12 Policy Hearings Hosted**  
**Across the Commonwealth**

**BILLS/RESOLUTIONS**  
**62** **INTRODUCED**  **1** **COMPANION BILL**  
**SIGNED INTO LAW**  
**3** **COMPANION BILLS &**  
**RESOLUTIONS**  
**PASSED THE HOUSE**



**MONTHLY MOBILE OFFICE HOURS**  
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