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## PA GI Bill Expansion, a National First, Aids Guard Members

*Representative Torren Ecker, Pennsylvania 193rd Legislative District*

It's not often Pennsylvania can claim to be the first in the nation. But when it comes to looking after servicemembers' families, we can. A new initiative to help our Pennsylvania National Guard members and their families was signed into law to extend the Pennsylvania GI Bill to close family members in exchange for additional service.

Act 32 of 2019, formerly House Bill 1324 extends the current Pennsylvania National Guard Military Education Program to a guard member's spouse or child. The benefit will be offered in exchange for a guard member's six year reenlistment. It was an honor to co-sponsor this legislation and to move the legislation through the Veteran's Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee and vote in favor of the bill when it was in the House. Under the law, the educational benefit can be used at any Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) institution or any institution of higher learning approved by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. If the approved institution costs less than the annual tuition rate charged by the state system schools, the student would not pay anything. If it costs more than PASSHE's annual tuition rate, the student would only pay expenses in excess of PASSHE's annual tuition rate.

Please see *PA GI Bill Expansion* on page 2

## Adams County Council of Governments (ACCOG) Celebrate Their 10th Year Anniversary

*Supervisor Barbara Underwood, Cumberland Township and Past President of the ACCOG*

In early 2009, we had a vision of a group in Adams County, meeting and exchanging ideas for our municipalities; it morphed into the concept of a Council of Governments (COG).

The Adams County Commissioners, led by chair George Weikert, agreed to the COG by providing their solicitor at no charge, to review our start up documents. They would also provide financial support for start-up costs of

Please see *ACCOG 10th Anniversary* on page 2

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1 PA GI Bill Expansion  
Aids Guard  
Members

1 ACCOG Celebrates  
10th Year  
Anniversary

3 Personal  
Enhancement  
Opportunities  
Offered on  
Community  
Education Day

3 Adams County  
Medicine Take Back

4 PSAB Legislative  
Priorities

4 PSAB Fall Leadership  
Conference

*PA GI Bill Expansion* continued from on page 1

This initiative helps to not only increase reenlistment, but also helps provide for a better future for our Commonwealth through additional educational opportunities. Working to ensure equity for the dedicated members of the Pennsylvania National Guard, a new law, Act 55 of 2019, requires higher ranking guard members to be compensated at the same level as their U.S. military counterparts. Our Pennsylvania's National Guard members are some of the best and well-trained soldiers in the nation. Often, guard members are tasked with responding to disasters, such as hurricanes. The professionalism of the men and women who oversee these missions is at par or exceeds their federal counterparts.



Both laws are commonsense and will help retain the brave men and women we rely on most. It was truly an honor to witness the signing of the bills into law. I want to thank the members of the Pennsylvania National Guard and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, as well as all members of our armed forces. Your service ensures our safety.

*ACCOG 10th Anniversary* continued from on page 1

of advertising and insurance to be repaid as the COG developed.

With guidance from Judy Chambers, (Penn State Extension), Linda Costa (Penn State COG0), Franklin County Commissioner Bob Thomas, and then Washington Township manager Mike Christopher, Brad Hunt (GASD), Bob Gordon (Hamiltonban Township), Stephanie Egger (Hamilton Township), Dave Hazlett (Carroll Valley Borough), Sharon Hamm (Straban Township), and Bill Chantelou (Mt Joy Township), the COG took form. Membership was to be made up of Boroughs, Townships, and School Districts. Each entity would have one vote, regardless of size. Municipalities would join by ordinance with joint advertising: costs to be shared by each. School districts would join by resolution.



And so, the COG officially began on August 27, 2009 at the GASD administration building. The importance of communication was stress then and it continues to be a major to be a major thrust today; sharing with your neighbor municipality how you did something, and what worked and didn't. Most productive are the before and after the meeting group chats between the attendees. Our speakers have been varied over the years, providing us with an immense amount of education. From right to know laws to spotted lantern fly to the privilege of executive session. We have learned of various opportunities within our County government departments; reassessment, Office of Planning and Development. Drone anyone?



We have learned what our school districts are dealing with regarding funding and charter, and cyber schools. We are looking forward to the Open House at the new Tech Building at Conewago School District. Members have testified at a Senate hearing regarding prevailing wage. Also, the State Fire Service held a hearing in this building ( Emergency Services Center) regarding the serious problem our volunteer fire departments have with recruitment and retention. The COG was a driving force behind the Adams County fire funding project. We have pushed for and held e-cycling events when our trash haulers incurred changes in the foreign companies they previously contracted with. We encouraged our friends in ACTVESA to complete their training tower on this property. We encouraged the Junior Fire Academy startup. See pictures [ronspictures.net](http://ronspictures.net)

Please see *ACCOG 10th Anniversary* on page 3

ACCOG 10th Anniversary continued from on page 2

We continue to support the fire folks in their efforts to bring certified training locally.

There are so many projects we have supported in the first 10 years. Special thanks go to Sandy Vazquez, Biglerville Borough, for keeping us straight with her record keeping for several years. The ACCOG continues to be the vehicle for communication and education for the municipalities in Adams County.

I am proud of all of us. It has been an honor to be part of this from the beginning. In the next 10 years may we continue to bring our constituents and school districts new ideas, helping us to provide for their safety, health and education in a prudent financial manner. Thank you all for supporting COG.

## Personal Enrichment Opportunities Offered on Community Education Day

Expand your personal enrichment horizons on **Community Education Day** on Friday, October 11, 2019, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at HACC's Gettysburg Campus. Participants can choose three educational sessions from among 12 topics that range from Historic Architecture of Adams County, Pennsylvania, Walk among Heroes, How are You Composing Your Life? Historic Homes and Grounds Tour at the Seton Shrine, Leadership from the Movies: Moby Dick, and much more. Sessions are presented in a short workshop format and led by HACC faculty or community presenters. The cost of \$49 per person includes the choice of three class sessions, morning refreshments and a bagged lunch.

If you have questions, contact Tonya Heckman-Hann at [TMHECKM2@hacc.edu](mailto:TMHECKM2@hacc.edu) or 717-339-3506. For information on registration and a complete listing of Community Education Day session topics, please visit <https://www.hacc.edu/Campuses/GettysburgCampus/Gettysburg-Community-Events.cfm>



## Adams County Medicine Take Back

This is reminder that the next collection will be held on Saturday, October 26th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The Adams County DRUG TAKE BACK began in September 2010 as part of the national effort by the Drug Enforcement Administration. Local and state police partner with Collaborating For Youth (CFY), local government and environment agencies, community volunteers and various health organizations to sponsor Adams County's Medication TAKE BACK. The program provides an opportunity for doctor offices to dispose of unused or expired medications safely. There are nine sites in Adams County where medication can be dropped off— no questions asked. To fine the locations of the collection site, go [cfygettysburg.com/medicine-take-back](http://cfygettysburg.com/medicine-take-back) website.



## The Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) Priorities for 2019-20 Legislative Session

These priorities are listed on the PSAB website (boroughs.org). The following is a **highlight** of a few. Under **Borough Code changes**: (1) Seek legislation to revise compensation schedules and rates for elected officials; (2) Support an amendment to Section 1141 of the Borough Code adding the ability of borough council to appoint a person a partnership, association, or corporation as the borough manager; (3) Seek legislation to raise the current cap on real estate property tax millage for general borough purposes from its ceiling of 30 mills to 35 mills. Under **Right-to-Know Law, Legal Advertising, & Sunshine Law**: (1) Opposes any measures that would further restrict the use of executive sessions and require those sessions to be recorded; (2) Supports measures to correct unintended consequences of the Right-to-Know Law on municipalities, including allowing boroughs to charge for commercial requests; allowing for a 10 day response time; and clarifying that municipal bank account numbers and passwords are private; (3) Seeks legislative remedy in the current Right-to-Know law to clarify its definitions in law of the terms “harass” and “overburden; and a venue of remedy for a public body to solicit relief from the Office of Open Records, the Courts, or a designated Commission to address those who could be recognized as a “Vexatious Requestor.” (4) With regard to newspapers of general circulation, supports allowing municipalities to electronically publish meeting notices on their website to comply with the Sunshine Law. Under **Recycling**: (1) Seeks remedies to the Covered Device Recycling Act of 2010 to allow new options for recycling bulky electronic waste like TVs and computers; (2) Supports legislation authorizing counties and boroughs to levy reasonable fees to pay for mandated recycling programs under Act 101. Under **Public Safety**: (1) Supports legislation to charge municipalities larger than 3500 in population a per-person fee for utilizing state police services. (2) Advocates the use of radar by municipal police. Under **General**: (1) Supports the current county-wide system for Earned Income Tax collection as provided for under Act 32 of 2008; and opposes any effort by the Pa Department of Revenue in assuming any future role in the Earned Income Tax collection process; (2) Opposes House Bill 349 and any similar legislative proposal to the UCC which places additional and unnecessary unfunded mandates on municipalities.

### 2019 PSAB Fall Leadership Conference

The PSAB 2019 Fall Leadership Conference will be held October 11–13, 2019 at the Nittany Lion Inn, State College. The keynote speaker will be retired Colonel Greg Fadson, United States Army. He will talk about the core principles of “Pride, Poise, and Team” he used to command the only battalion in the 4th Infantry Brigade without suffering a single fatality in Iraq and how to apply these same principles in working in your environment. To see the full program, go to the boroughs website boroughs.org and select conferences

### Next ACBA Meeting...



November 18, 2019

#### ACBA Association Staff

Mayor Ron Harris.....President  
David Bolton.....Vice President  
Sandy Conrad.....Secretary  
Councilor Charlene Westcott.....Treasurer

#### Special Interests

PSAB Liaison..... Mr. David Bolton  
ACBA Legislative Committee..... Mr. David Bolton  
AC Transportation Planning Org... Mr. David Bolton  
AC Transportation Planning Org... Mr. David Hazlett  
AC Transportation Planning Org... Councilor Susan Naugle  
AC COG..... Mayor Ron Harris  
AC Land Conservancy..... Mr. Bill Chantelau  
ACTCC..... Mayor Ron Harris  
YATB..... Supervisor LuAnn Dille