

State Senator **JOHN RAFFERTY**



Reports to You

44TH DISTRICT • FALL 2009

State Budget Cuts Spending, Includes No PIT Increase

After a long and difficult budget negotiation process – reflecting the tough times we are facing – the General Assembly approved a final plan that cuts spending below last year's level, and maintains funding for core state services and programs. Most importantly, the budget is a win for state taxpayers because it includes no new

broad-based tax increases and will be sustainable over the coming year.

It will not mortgage our state's future through higher taxes and spending and it will help us to live within our means – just like working families have to do. While spending was reduced over last year, the budget does include increases in education funding, to ensure that schools and

students receive the resources they need.

This has been the toughest economic crisis in many years and the most difficult budget process as we worked to fill a \$3.2 billion revenue shortfall. I believe that we stuck to our core principles and listened to taxpayers who said they were tired of higher spending and taxes.



Saluting Our Area Veterans

More than 300 people mobilized at Sunnybrook Ballroom for the inaugural Veterans Appreciation Breakfast



**VETERANS
APPRECIATION
BREAKFAST
2009**

All veterans invited
Saturday, November 14, 2009
Sunnybrook Ballroom
RSVP: 610-831-8830

2008, and the "troops" will be back Saturday, November 14 as I once again salute veterans from Berks, Chester and Montgomery Counties.

It is important to thank the veterans for their sacrifice and service to our country, and to salute the spirit of the American veteran.

We have seen that spirit at Concord and Lexington. We have seen it in the Argonne Forest and on the beaches of Normandy and Iwo Jima. We have seen it in the frozen mountains of Korea and the steaming jungles of Vietnam.

Today, a new generation of patriots shows us that courageous spirit in the streets of Baghdad and in the rugged terrain of Afghanistan. Ordinary citizens making extraordinary sacrifices in duty to our country – that is the timeless story of the American veteran.

Selfless service, love of country, devotion to duty, sacrifice – that is the story of the American veteran. Those we honor now, along with American veterans from all eras, have kept their promise – the noble promise to protect our nation, the greatest nation in the world.

As we line up the troops, we are looking for any military veterans living in the 44th District to join the ranks of their fellow servicemen and women for a patriotic celebration featuring a keynote speaker and breakfast. All veterans are invited, but please RSVP to my office by November 9 (610-831-8830).

It is my honor to salute the men and women who served and continue to serve in the Armed Forces. They gave of themselves for us; now we can show a level of our appreciation to them. Thank a veteran.

Students 'Capitalize' On Senate Opportunity

More than 130 students convened at Montgomery County Community College, West Campus, in Pottstown and got a hands-on look at how legislation works its way through the Pennsylvania Senate and is defeated or becomes law.

The students, representing 11 area school districts, each became a "Senator for a Day" during the annual Seminar for Future Leaders. Joining me were top officials from the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office, the Pennsylvania State Police, the Department of Environmental Protection and top educators.

The best way to learn about the legislative process is to participate in it. The Seminar for Future Leaders, now in its sixth year, offered the students a first-hand opportunity to develop legislation, debate



Senator Rafferty, serving as "Lieutenant Governor" for the day, addresses the student "Senators" during his annual Seminar for Future Leaders.

the issues in committee, amend the bills, table the bills or send the measures to the full Senate, where again they would be debated, amended and finally voted on.

This is one of the most enjoyable events I have the opportunity to sponsor each year. It is a great learning experience for the students to help them realize the impor-

tance divergent opinions play in the legislative process.

Following an opening discussion on how the legislative process works, the "Senators" were split into Senate committees – Judiciary, Education, Environment and Transportation – and each given two bills.

During the morning session, the committees debated such issues as the death penalty and legislation to protect the 2nd Amendment, banning handheld cell phones while driving, preventing bullying in schools as

well as legislation to promote alternative energy.

Following a recess for lunch, the "Senators" reconvened in full session where the legislation drafted by the committees was introduced by the committee chairmen and then debated, amended in some cases, and finally voted on. I served as "Lieutenant Governor for a Day" and presided over the session.



New Law Ensures Benefits For All Police Officers Killed in Line of Duty

A new law passed by the General Assembly will ensure that the families of public safety employees killed in the line of duty receive death benefits. This measure provides peace of mind and solid assurance to our officers that their

loved ones will receive adequate and full survivor benefits. I am proud to have co-sponsored this legislation.

The law guarantees killed-in-service death benefits to all spouses or minor children of a paid firefighter, law enforcement officer and ambulance service or rescue squad member equal to the amount of the decedent's monthly salary.



State Representative Matthew Bradford, State Police Lieutenant David Buckley, Senator Rafferty and Senator Bob Mensch gather in front of the State Police Barracks in Skippack after the barracks reopened on a full-time basis.

State Grant to MCCC Helps Support the Arts

I was pleased to join State Representative Michael Gerber in presenting a \$150,000 state grant to Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The grant will enable MCCC to equip its Fine Arts Center with cutting-edge technology and industry-standard classroom resources that students need to compete in the current workforce. The college's Fine Arts Program serves 3,500 students and community members annually through degree programs and continuing education classes for local residents.

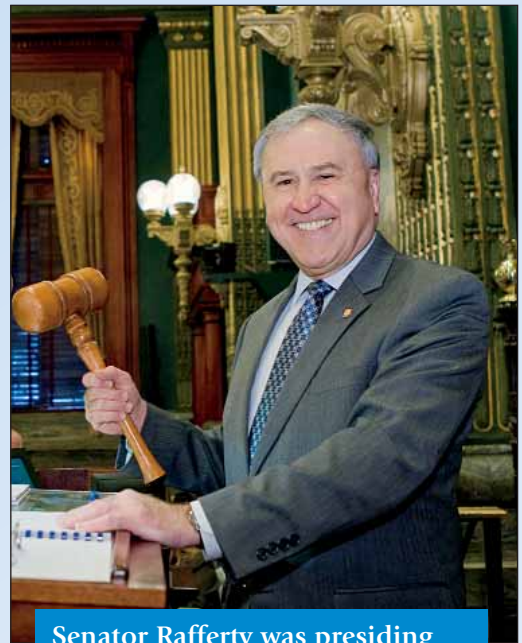
Senator Rafferty chairs a hearing of the Senate Law and Justice Committee.



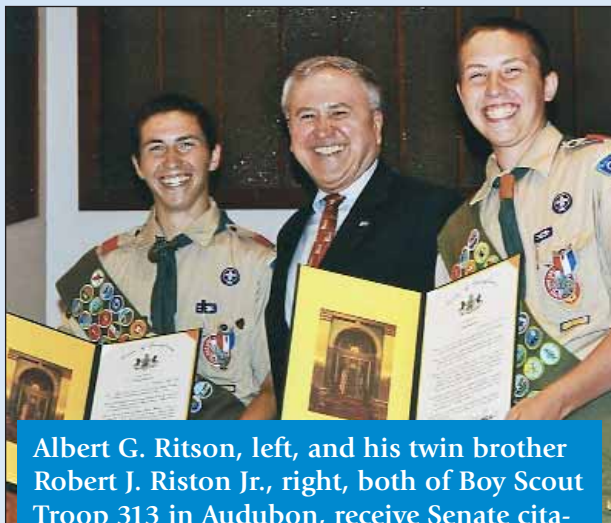
SENATOR JOHN RAFFERTY'S PHOTO GALLERY



Senator Rafferty and Senator Michael Stack speak at the statewide Fraternal Order of Police memorial service for fallen officers.



Senator Rafferty was presiding officer in the Senate during the swearing-in ceremony for new Senators in January.



Albert G. Ritson, left, and his twin brother Robert J. Riston Jr., right, both of Boy Scout Troop 313 in Audubon, receive Senate citations from Senator Rafferty during an Eagle Scout Honor Court at Green Tree Church of the Brethren in Oaks.



Frances Sheehan, President and CEO of the Brandywine Health Foundation, left, and Doris Grassi, past chairman, accept from Senator Rafferty a \$100,000 state grant that will improve health care in Coatesville.

Alternative Energy and Environmental Resources Expo

The environment is on the minds of many people these days, and I want to make sure it stays at the forefront.

We brought a wide range of companies and organizations from across the environmental landscape to Spring-Ford School District's 9th Grade Center this year for the inaugural Alternative Energy and Environmental Resources Expo.

The Expo gave a diverse group of organizations, ranging from the Philadelphia Phillies to national, state and local environmental groups, state agencies and energy producers to auto manufacturers, organic farmers and others, the opportunity to get their message and product before the public.

Each exhibitor made a commitment to encourage a positive environmental stewardship through action and community interaction.



Senator Rafferty drives a solar-powered vehicle at the Alternative Energy and Environmental Resources Expo.

The Expo was a wonderful opportunity for residents to learn more about alternative energy options and ways we can all be more environmentally friendly in our daily lives.

The event was free to the public

and featured more than 40 vendors. It attracted a diverse group of people, from families to students and environmental clubs, educating guests on how individuals and communities can positively impact the environment.



Area Soldiers Welcomed Home

After a year-long deployment, soldiers of the Battery C, 108th Field Artillery with the 56th Stryker Brigade returned home to the Spring City Armory.

I was among the crowd of waiting family, friends and veterans

who welcomed Army National Guard soldiers home after a tour of duty in Iraq.

The deployment of troops was a part of the largest movement of the Pennsylvania National Guard since World War II, with more than 4,000

servicemen and women being deployed.

The returning servicemen and women were escorted to the armory by Patriot Guard Riders and an East Vincent Township Police Department cruiser as they drove under a huge American flag hung between two ladder trucks from Friendship and Liberty fire companies.

I was at the armory to welcome the troops home and thank them for their service to our country.

The American Legion and VFW posts were a part of the welcoming committee.



Senator Rafferty meets with Army National Guardsmen at the Spring City Armory upon their return from a year-long tour of duty in Iraq.



New Health Care Laws

Act 1 of 2009 permits health insurers to withhold payment to providers in the event of a preventable serious adverse event.

Act 2 of 2009 creates a Mini-COBRA Small Employer Group Health Plan to extend continuation of group health insurance policies for former employees and dependents, making the option available to individuals who work for employers with 2 to 19 employees and who are laid off.

Act 4 of 2009 extends health insurance coverage at the option of an employer to an adult unmarried child up to the age of 30 at the insured employee's expense. Nearly half of all uninsured Pennsylvanians are age 18 to 34.

Law Extends Coverage to Young Adults

Because of our economic crisis, more and more young people are having trouble finding jobs, and many who do work may not have access to affordable health care coverage. Other young people lost their insurance coverage upon college graduation, when they were no longer eligible as dependents on their parent's policy.

In fact, nearly half of all uninsured Pennsylvanians are between the ages of 18 and 34. To address this issue, the Senate unanimously approved, and the governor signed, legislation that will extend health insurance coverage to adult children up to the age of 30, at the expense of the policyholders. Before this law, policies removed young

adults from family plans upon graduation from college or at age 19 if not in school.

The law applies to adults who are not married, have no dependents, are residents of the Commonwealth or enrolled as a full-time student at an institution of higher education and are not provided insurance coverage or eligible for government benefits. Insurers would have to offer the policyholder an option to include the coverage and would be able to determine an appropriate increase in premiums to cover this additional benefit.

This new law represents a significant expansion of health care coverage and will provide these young people who qualify with an innova-

tive and fiscally responsible way to obtain insurance at a cost they and their families can afford.

Parents employed by a participating policyholder must pay the additional premium costs and coverage hinges on the employer's willingness to offer the benefit to parents. Coverage would apply to new contracts and contract renewals.



A Healthy Start for Disease and Disability Resource Expo

A healthy crowd turned out for the inaugural Disease and Disability Resource Expo.

The event was held at Arcola Intermediate School and featured 45 vendors. Dozens of residents learned what was available to those living with a range of diseases and disabilities from cognitive to physical, youth to elderly.

The event brought together a group of community resources that were valuable to the people they needed to reach. It was free to the public and for a first-time event, was very successful. We will



Representative Mike Vereb, left, and Senator Rafferty, right, talk with two of the vendors at the inaugural Disease and Disability Resource Expo. Dozens of residents attended the event, picking up valuable information from the 45 vendors that participated.

build on this when we plan for next year's Expo.

This was a total educational event where people of all ages learned of services available to them from the state, the county and non-profit associations. We witnessed people overcoming health issues and living productive lives in society.

The event also served as a catalyst to promote funding for programs for those with disabilities and disease.

Representative Dennis O'Brien, former Speaker of the House, was the featured speaker. Representative Mike Vereb, R-150th, co-sponsored the event with me.



Updates to Constituents on Website

In an effort to better serve my constituents in the 44th Senatorial District, I continue to update my website, which can be found at senatorrafferty.com.

The site has been designed with the constituents in Berks, Chester and Montgomery Counties in mind. I will provide you with important information pertaining to the Pennsylvania legislature, state agencies



Senator's Newsletter Is Now Available Electronically

In an effort to reach constituents quicker and do our part to help the environment, Senator Rafferty's newsletter is now available electronically. You can register at www.senatorrafferty.com/contact.htm for the email version. There also is a link to register on the main page of our website.

and other government services, and update you with information on crucial projects and issues in the 44th Senatorial District.

The homepage features a wide array of helpful information on the latest issues in the news and a schedule of upcoming events. There are quick links to a variety of topics from mortgage issues to help for seniors, how to apply for prescription drug assistance and how to reduce unwanted telemarketing calls. You can also find tax forms and voting information, as well as a special page dedicated to children.

Other features include the latest

developments with the TCE situation in the Greater Collegeville area, as well as updates on the Route 422 corridor.

The homepage is a source constituents can use to track what their state government is doing and gain access to government services. We will keep updating the website, making it as user friendly as possible. The site also allows district residents to email me with their questions and comments. Please feel free to contact any of my offices for additional information or assistance – my staff will be more than happy to assist you.



State Senator John Rafferty

44TH DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE OFFICES

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday evening until 7 p.m. in the Pottstown office only

First Saturday of the month 9 a.m. to noon in the Collegeville office