



# State Senator **JIM BREWSTER** *Reports*

Serving the 45th District

June 2011

Dear Friend:

On November 17, 2010, I took the oath of office and pledged to lead by example, fight for you, work to create jobs and improve education.

My top priority will be to address the needs of the people who live in our region. I will work hard, seek positive results and be responsible with tax dollars.

My staff and I are ready to assist and serve you. Please do not hesitate to call or stop into one of my offices for help, or visit my online office at [www.senatorbrewster.com](http://www.senatorbrewster.com). We have brochures and information pamphlets on Pennsylvania government programs and services, including prescription assistance, property tax/rent rebate applications, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) applications, just to name a few. We can also assist in getting answers from any of the state agencies if you encounter problems.

Your interests are important to my legislative work, and your input and ideas will make this process work much better.

We need to work on a bi-partisan basis on this year's budget to get control of excessive spending, and we must also consider how careful investment can yield great returns by creating jobs, growing businesses, and supporting our residents and communities.

The people in this district are my top priority. Thank you for your encouragement and support, and I look forward to working to make our region a better place to work, do business and raise families.

## ◆ Swearing-In Ceremony



Jim Brewster was sworn in as State Senator of the 45th District on November 17, 2010 by the Honorable Eugene F. Riazzi as wife Linda looks on.

★ ★ ★ *Save the Date* ★ ★ ★

**STATE SENATOR JIM BREWSTER**

*invites you to the*

**SENIOR WELLNESS  
& SAFETY EXPO**

**Friday • October 14 • 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

*Community College of Allegheny County • Boyce Campus  
Gymnasium - West Wing • 595 Beatty Road • Monroeville*

**INSIDE**

- ◆ Brewster Bill Would Restore Funding for Education
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## ◆ **Brewster's Response to Corbett Budget Proposal**

While spending cuts and better spending practices will need to occur at every government level, we must resist 'passing the buck' to local governments and school districts. The governor's proposed budget cuts to education would force municipalities to raise taxes to make up for the loss of state funding to their school districts.

Perhaps even more alarming are the governor's proposed cuts to higher education. If implemented, cutting state support to colleges by over 50 percent would result in huge tuition spikes and put a college education out of reach for many working people.

This is the time to focus on new revenue. One way to do this is to impose a moderate tax on the booming gas drilling industry. There are approximately 5,800 permitted wells across Pennsylvania and we are the only major gas-producing state without a severance tax.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the weeks ahead to pass a budget that spurs economic development, and protects our schools and municipalities.

## ◆ **State Capitol Tours Available**

Senator Brewster welcomes groups from the 45th District to the State Capitol in Harrisburg. For more information on touring the 100-year-old beautiful State Capitol, contact any of my district offices.

## ◆ **"Save Our Buses" Rally**



*Sen. Brewster addresses the crowd following the "Save our Buses" march against PAT's plans to cut local bus routes. Speaking at the rally, Sen. Brewster noted that the cuts would cost hundreds of jobs and hurt business activity in our communities: "While I understand the need for agencies to cut costs, we must do all we can to protect the people who rely on these services to get to work or travel throughout these communities."*

## ◆ **Brewster Bill Would Restore Funding for Education, Area Projects and Environmental Needs**

On May 6, I held a news conference in Monroeville to discuss my legislative package that would place a 7 percent extraction tax on gas drilling to restore education funds, pay for adequate environmental protection and fund local road, bridge and sewage system improvements.

My legislation would also mandate that those who work at drilling sites be trained to prevent and respond to drilling-related emergencies.

The measure would generate up to \$280 million annually. However, the bill offers the drilling companies tax credits — enough to cut their overall tax liability to as little as 5 percent — for hiring Pennsylvania workers and investing in local community projects, such as parks, libraries and other facilities.

The revenue proceeds would be split three ways: 50 percent for education; 25 percent for state environmental protection and emergencies, and 25 percent for local public works projects and services.

In addition to the severance tax, my package requires additional training for employees who work or have access to well-sites and drilling pads. This health and safety component would help protect workers, local citizens, our waterways and environment.



*Sen. Brewster held a news conference in Monroeville to discuss his bill that would use gas drilling proceeds to restore education dollars, protect the environment and fund local public works projects.*

*Around the 45th District • Around the 45th District • Around the 45th District  
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**Around The 45th District**



*Senator Brewster visits with senior citizens at Pitcairn High Rise Building.*



*Sen. Brewster is pictured during a tour of gas drilling sites in southwestern Pennsylvania. The senator said, "Much has been written, said and debated about this new Marcellus Shale industry that promises to be such a boost for our economy and job market. This tour provided me an opportunity to get a first-hand look and talk to the folks who operate and work at these drilling sites."*



*Senator Jim Brewster and UPMC McKeesport President Cindy Dorundo review outdoor improvement plans for McKeesport hospital.*



*Sen. Brewster reads a story to students at an AIU Pre-K Counts Classroom.*



*Senator Jim Brewster attends a check presentation at Serra Catholic High School—United States Steel Corp. gave \$44,000 in Educational Improvement Tax Credit scholarships to Bridge Educational Foundation for Serra Catholic and 10 other Allegheny County schools.*

# Children's Health Insurance Program

Pennsylvania's first-in-the-nation Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is working today to provide quality health care coverage to more than 197,000 previously uninsured Pennsylvania children.

I am pleased that more families will qualify for CHIP under the new guidelines. The CHIP program provides free or low cost health coverage for children whose families earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to be able to afford private health insurance. Children are covered by CHIP regardless of any pre-existing medical condition.

For more detailed information on eligibility, visit [www.chipcoverspakids.com](http://www.chipcoverspakids.com) or call toll-free at 1-800-986-KIDS.

## NEW ELIGIBILITY INCOME GUIDELINES

Family Size	Free Coverage For Ages 0-18	Low Cost Coverage For Ages 0-18
	Maximum Income Level	Maximum Income Level
2	\$29,420	\$44,130
3	\$37,060	\$55,590
4	\$44,700	\$67,050
5	\$52,340	\$78,510
6	\$59,980	\$89,970
7	\$67,620	\$101,430
8	\$75,260	\$112,890

## ◆ Property Tax/Rent Rebate Applications Available in Sen. Brewster's Offices

Application forms for rebates on property taxes or rent paid in 2010 are now available in my local offices.

I urge all seniors to see if they are eligible for this Lottery-funded rebate program. If you are not sure, contact one of my local offices and we will help you determine your eligibility and apply for benefits.

All homeowners and renters who received rebates last year should have received their 2010 application form in the mail by now.

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. Half of Social Security income is excluded.

### PROPERTY TAX & RENT REBATE INCOME REBATE SCHEDULE

Income	Homeowner's Rebate	Renter's Rebate
\$0-\$8,000	\$650	\$650
\$8,001-\$15,000	\$500	\$500
\$15,001-\$18,000	\$300	—
\$18,001-\$35,000	\$250	—

The rebate filing deadline for Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications is June 30.

Applications are also available online at [www.revenue.state.pa.us](http://www.revenue.state.pa.us) or by calling 1-888-222-9190



## ◆ Do You Have Unclaimed Property?

The Pennsylvania state Treasury is holding over \$1.5 billion in "unclaimed property" — things like abandoned bank accounts, forgotten stocks, and unpaid life insurance benefits. This property from inactive accounts is turned over to the state until claimed by the rightful owners. One in ten Pennsylvanians has unclaimed property. There is no charge to claim what's yours.

To find out if the state is holding anything that belongs to you, visit the "unclaimed property" link on my website or call toll-free at 1-800-222-2046

## ◆ Monroeville Convention Visitors Bureau

In March, I was appointed to serve on the board of the Monroeville Convention Visitors Bureau.

I am thrilled to serve on the board and will work to further partner state government and its resources with efforts to bolster the Monroeville community's appeal as a tourism and economic hub.

The board oversees **Visit Monroeville**, which was established in 1987 to increase and serve the convention, trade show, and travel industry. The agency also works to promote local businesses and services—including hotels, restaurants, and retail businesses.

*For more information on the bureau and its efforts, visit*

**[www.visitmonroeville.com](http://www.visitmonroeville.com)**



*Speaking at the Capitol Media Center in Harrisburg, Sen. Jim Brewster details a Democratic legislative package aimed at creating jobs and strengthening Pennsylvania's economy.*

## ◆ Brewster Bill Would Spur Business Investment and Activity

I recently introduced legislation that would expand the use of the successful state Small Business First Loan program.

The loan program currently provides low-interest financing of up to \$200,000 for land and building acquisition, construction, machinery/equipment purchases and working capital.

Under my proposal, the program's loan amounts would be increased by \$50,000; interest rates reduced by an average of 0.5 percent; and loan periods expanded by up to three years to spur greater program use and make more funding accessible to small businesses.

My legislation is part of the state Senate Democratic Caucus' six-point "PA Works" program. The package of bills would stoke Pennsylvania's economy, create 28,000 jobs and cut state spending by \$150 million.

PA Works would help small businesses be more competitive, strengthen and streamline workforce training programs, make targeted investments in clean and green energy industries, invest in public works projects, save money by streamlining government programs and lower small business taxes.

We all agree that creating jobs is the key to improving our state's economy. My legislation fits this bill by optimizing a proven business loan program.



*Senator Brewster participates in bear research during a recent visit to a state nature conservancy. The senator, who serves on the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee, is an avid hunter and outdoorsman.*

**PA Works**



**STATE SENATOR  
JIM BREWSTER**

Senate Box 203045  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3045

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**DISTRICT OFFICES  
TO SERVE YOU**

**MONROEVILLE OFFICE**

One Monroeville Center  
3824 Northern Pike • Suite 350  
Monroeville, PA 15146  
Phone: (412) 380-2242  
Fax: (412) 380-2249

**McKEESPORT OFFICE**

627 Lysle Boulevard • Suite 100  
McKeesport, PA 15132  
Phone: (412) 664-5200  
Fax: (412) 664-5202

**NEW KENSINGTON OFFICE**

New Kensington City Hall  
301 11th St. • Suite L  
New Kensington, PA 15068  
Phone: (724) 334-1143  
Fax: (724) 334-1152

**HARRISBURG OFFICE**

Senate Box 203045  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3045  
Phone: (717) 787-5580  
Fax: (717) 772-3588

**E-MAIL:** brewster@pasenate.com

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Visit me on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.

You can sign up to be a fan of mine and be one of the “first to know” about happenings in Harrisburg and throughout the 45th Senatorial District. You can find me on Facebook and Twitter by searching for **Senator Jim Brewster** or by visiting [www.SenatorBrewster.com](http://www.SenatorBrewster.com) and clicking on the Facebook or Twitter icon.

If you are not familiar with Facebook or Twitter, you can also keep abreast of issues by signing up for my “District Digest” at [www.SenatorBrewster.com](http://www.SenatorBrewster.com).

I will then send you emails about important information that I wish to share.

I hope you will take a moment to visit my website and sign up for any or all of these ways to stay in touch with me and current issues.

**WEBSITE: [www.SenatorBrewster.com](http://www.SenatorBrewster.com)**