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### North Warren Wins Over Veritas Christian Academy in Girls Basketball



North Warren went head to head against Veritas Christian Academy in girls basketball on February 16th. North Warren won 53 to 33. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

### North Warren Goes Head To Head Against Walkkill Valley Boys Basketball



North Warren took on Walkkill Valley in Boys Basketball on February 18th. North Warren lost, 41 to 63. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

### North Warren Takes on Boonton During Senior Night Wrestling Match



North Warren took on Boonton High School during their Senior Night Wrestling on match on February 20th, North Warren was defeated, 57 to 21. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

### Game Commission Monitoring Avian Influenza In Wild Birds

This winter, avian influenza viruses have continued to circulate in wild birds across Pennsylvania, and more birds will be migrating to and through the state in the coming weeks. Strains of highly pathogenic avian influenza virus have been present in Pennsylvania's wild birds since early 2022.

As migration unfolds, the Pennsylvania Game Commission continues to respond to the outbreak, and is asking the public to report any wild birds observed sick or found dead.

Reports can be phoned in to 1-833-PGC-WILD (1-833-742-9453). Submitting reports allows the Game Commission the opportunity to step in with wildlife-management actions including dispatching sick wild birds, recovering and removing carcasses, pursuing diagnostic testing, and conducting stakeholder outreach. The agency continues to work with the Wildlife Futures Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other partners when deploy-



ing these strategies. The most substantial activity this winter involved the removal of an estimated 2,000 wild bird carcasses, predominantly snow geese, from a quarry in Northampton County in December and January. "Over the past five years, Game Commission dispatchers and field personnel, along with our dedicated partners, have worked tirelessly to respond to and investigate suspected highly pathogenic avian influenza events across the Commonwealth," said the agency's wildlife veterinarian, Dr. Andrew Di Salvo. "Responding

to every report received from the public is neither logistically possible nor in the best interest of the wildlife, so incidents are prioritized to ensure our actions will have the most impact. High-priority incidents include cases with clear human or domestic animal exposure, a public site, such as a park or playground, that could pose an exposure risk to humans or domestic animals, or a large number of sick or dead wildlife on the landscape that could pose an exposure risk to scavenging wildlife."

Waterfowl – from wood  
*FLU cont'd on pg 6*

### Kean Introduces Legislation To Protect Local Taxpayers From Bearing Costs Of Federal Law Enforcement Facilities

*New Bill Would Direct Federal Funding To Offset Financial Burden On Towns Like Roxbury And Other Host Communities Across The U.s.*

Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ-07) introduced the Local Taxpayer Protection Act of 2026, federal legislation to ensure that local taxpayers and municipalities like Roxbury, New Jersey, are not left shouldering the costs associated with hosting federal law enforcement processing or detention facilities.

The bill would create a dedicated federal grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to offset the real costs townships face when physical facilities are maintained or under development in their communities. Under the bill, municipalities can apply for funding for covered expenses, such as lost property tax revenue, increased demand on public utilities, and infrastructure upgrades needed to support expanded capacity.

“Federal agencies operate in all 50 states, and law enforcement agencies have a particularly important job, one that often demands a higher level of resources,” said Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. “Local taxpayers cannot be expected to foot the bill for federal facilities, and towns like Roxbury should not have to absorb the costs.”

Kean continued, “My legislation would ensure that law enforcement facilities in New Jersey and across the country can operate self-sufficiently without straining municipal utilities, resources, or local budgets. I have heard directly from communities in our district, and I am fighting to make sure they are fully protected from bearing costs that are not theirs to carry, while also ensuring community safety and enforcement of our nation’s laws.”

Specifically, the Local

Taxpayer Protection Act of 2026 would establish a new grant program through DHS for municipalities hosting law enforcement processing or detention facilities, including those currently under development. Federal funding can be used to compensate for unrealized property tax revenue, as well as public utilities expenses and infrastructure upgrades (including water, gas, natural gas, electricity, internet connectivity, garbage collection, recycling, and sewer systems). The grant provides a five-year funding authorization with the ability for municipalities to apply for renewal for the duration of facility operations.

A copy of the full bill text is available at: [kean.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/kean.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/local-taxpayer-protection-act.pdf](http://kean.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/kean.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/local-taxpayer-protection-act.pdf)

### Project Self-Sufficiency Hosts Event For Expectant And New Parents To Learn About Safe Sleeping For Infants & Toddlers



dren, including home visitation programs, monthly Mommy Parties, and Parent Cafes.

“We are excited to be offering these innovative and fun gatherings to the community,” explains Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. “Pregnant women and parents of young children have a great need for accurate information about a host of topics, and these Baby Beginnings Fairs will allow them to receive up-to-date health and wellness advice, as well as free items for baby and family.”

In addition to Project Self-Sufficiency, representatives from DASI, Family Connects, NJ Safe Kids, Partnership for Maternal & Child Health, SIDS Center of New Jersey, Sussex County Library System, and Zuffall Health Center will be on hand to offer ideas for supportive activities and events for families.

To register for Baby Beginnings, to discuss your parenting needs, or to find out more about other programs and services available at Project Self-Sufficiency, call 973-940-3500.

Project Self-Sufficiency will host a special Baby Beginnings event Wednesday, February 25th, 1:00 p.m., to help pregnant women and parents of young children to access the resources they need to be successful. The event will offer expert advice about safe sleeping and bedtime routines from healthcare specialist Laurie Herrick, along with free baby items, prizes and giveaways. Participants will also learn about free and reduced cost

activities for families, lead prevention, early childhood development, positive parenting techniques, and other topics related to early childhood health, safety and education. Lunch will be provided. Pregnant women and parents of young children are invited to call 973-940-3500 to register. The Baby Beginnings event is part of a series which supplements Project Self-Sufficiency’s robust programs for pregnant women and parents of young chil-

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## Congressman Kean Announces Summer Internship Program



Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ-07) announced that his offices in Washington, D.C. and Lebanon Borough, NJ are now accepting applications for the Summer 2026 Internship Program. This competitive program offers college students the chance to gain firsthand experience in the fast-paced environment of a congressional office. Interns play an essential role in the daily operations of the office, working closely with staff members on a range of responsibilities, including legislative research, constituent services, communications, and more. Participating students will also gain valuable insight into the legislative process and the ways in which a Member of Congress serves the residents of their district. "I am pleased to offer this internship program to motivated students who are passionate about public service," said Congressman Kean. "Our interns play a vital role in the day-to-day operations of the office and take an active role in serving the people of New Jersey. This is a meaningful opportunity to develop real-world skills and experience, and I encourage all eligible students to apply." Interested students must be currently enrolled in college and should complete the online application form at [kean.house.gov/services/internships](http://kean.house.gov/services/internships). The deadline to apply is Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 11:59 PM. Positions are available in both the Washington, D.C. and District offices.

## Preventing Food Allergies and Cutting Costs for Taxpayers



Making preventative supplements available to families could prevent more than 80% of peanut and egg allergies and save taxpayers millions, according to testi-

mony given at a Senate Majority Policy Committee public hearing. Approximately 1.3 million Pennsylvanians are afflicted with a food allergy. One expert tes-

tified the rate of children with a food allergy has grown by 50% over the past 20 years, with rates of peanut and tree nut allergies rising by 300%. The average cost of a child with a peanut allergy is more than \$7,200 per year.

Among the topics discussed was legislation that would require no-cost health insurance coverage for early peanut and egg introduction dietary supplements for infants. Video of the hearing and written testimony can be viewed at: [policy.pasenate.gov.com/policy-021726/](http://policy.pasenate.gov.com/policy-021726/)

## New in the Bangor Public Library

### Adult Fiction:

Racing Hearts: A Novel by Ann Adams; The Hadacol Boogie: A Dave Robicheaux Novel by James Lee Burke; Operation Bounce House by Matt Dinniman; Robert B. Parker's Big Shot by Christopher Farnsworth; The Witching Hours by Heather Graham; Two Can Play by Ali Hazelwood; Keeper of Lost Children by Sadequa Johnson; Queen of Faces by Petra Lord; Throne of Nightmares by Kerri Maniscalco; Little One: A Novel by Olivia Muentert; Cross & Sampson by James Patterson; Crux by Gabriel Tallent; Cold Zero: A Thriller by Brad Thor; How to Kill a Guy in Ten Dates: A Novel by Shailee Thompson; Im Looking for a Man in Finance by Sabrina Waldorf

### Adult Non Fiction:

The Flower Bearers: A Memoir by Rachel Eliza Griffiths; How to Be a Rich Old Lady: Your Guide to Easy Investing, Wealth, and Creating the Wild, Beautiful Life You Want by Amanda Holden

### Easy Fiction:

The Big Mess and Other Stories by Greg Pizzoli; Dr. Seuss's Thing One, Thing Two and the Leprechaun by Dr. Seuss

### Easy Reader Fiction:

Stop That Mop! By Jonathan Fenske

### Junior Fiction:

The Bad Guys in One Last Thing by Aaron Blabey; The Bad Guys in Look Who's Talking by Aaron Blabey; The Bad Guys in the Serpent and the Beast by Aaron Blabey; The Bad Guys in the Other?! By Aaron Blabey; The Bad Guys in Let the Games Begin! By Aaron Blabey; The Bad Guys in the Furball Strikes Back by Aaron Blabey; Cupcake Diaries, the Graphic Novel 1: Katie and the Cupcake Cure by Coco Simon; Cupcake Diaries, the Graphic Novel 2: Mina in the Mix by Coco Simon; Cupcake Diaries, the Graphic Novel 3: Emma on Thin Icing by Coco Simon; Cupcake Diaries, the Graphic Novel 4: Alexis and the Perfect Recipe by Coco Simon; Cupcake Diaries, the Graphic Novel 5: Katie, Batter Up! By Coco Simon; Cupcake Diaries, the Graphic Novel 6: Mia's Baker's Dozen by Coco Simon; Cupcake Diaries, the Graphic Novel 7: Emma All Stirred Up! By Coco Simon; Cupcake Diaries, the Graphic Novel 8: Alexis Cool as a Cupcake by Coco Simon; I Survived the California Wildfires, 2018: The Graphic Novel by Georgia Ball

### Young Adult Fiction:

Stolen Midnights by Katherine Quinn

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## Acting AG Davenport: Trump Administration Must Obey Court Order and Restore Critical FEMA Program Protecting New Jersey from Natural Disasters

Acting Attorney General Jennifer Davenport and a coalition of 21 other states and the District of Columbia asked a U.S. District Court today to enforce its December 2025 order prohibiting the Trump Administration from terminating the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which provides New Jersey communities with critical resources to fortify their infrastructure against natural disasters. As the filing explains, the multistate coalition won a December 2025 order from the U.S. District Court barring the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from terminating the BRIC program, but the Trump Administration has not yet signaled that it has any intention of complying with the court order, and FEMA regional offices

appear to be delaying implementation of the court's order. The motion filed today seeks immediate action from the court to ensure that the Trump Administration does not continue to deprive states of the essential funding provided through the BRIC program. For 30 years, the BRIC program has provided communities with resources that have saved lives, reduced injury, protected property, and saved money that otherwise would have been spent on post-disaster costs. Every dollar FEMA spends on mitigation—primarily through the BRIC program—saves an average of six dollars in post-disaster costs. In New Jersey alone, federally funded grants for disaster mitigation have saved New Jerseyans more than \$10 billion in post-disaster costs. "New Jersey is no

stranger to natural disasters that have devastated our state. Instead of working with us to prepare for the next major natural disaster and reduce the massive costs these catastrophic storms impose, the Trump Administration is doing everything in its power—now even going so far as to ignore court orders—to keep New Jerseyans from accessing critical federal resources for disaster preparedness," said Acting Attorney General Davenport. "The Trump Administration's actions are as unconscionable as they are unlawful, and they will dramatically increase the costs that hard-working New Jerseyans will bear when the next natural disaster strikes. Make no mistake: We will do everything in our power to protect these critical programs from unlawful attacks out of Washington." "By funding innovative and proactive flooding resilience projects, the BRIC program is critical to reducing the cost of post-disaster relief," said Acting Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner

Ed Potosnak. "We stand firmly with our partners from across the nation in fighting to ensure the continuation of this program. I commend Acting Attorney General Davenport and her team for helping us to protect lives and property while delivering on Governor Sherrill's promise of efficiency and affordability for the people of New Jersey." As outlined in today's motion, the states have seen no signs that the Trump Administration has reversed the unlawful termination of the BRIC program. Projects that are ready to move forward remain stalled, and FEMA has been unable to provide any information or guidance. States have been unable to obtain any grant information or to move their projects from planning phases to construction phases. Some communications from FEMA regional offices appear to indicate that the agency may have unilaterally decided it can delay its implementation of the court's order. In one instance, regional FEMA staff said they had no information to share because

of "ongoing litigation." In another instance, an acting director told a state "that the situation is 'wait and see'" and that there was a "litigation hold." Today's filing argues that these examples demonstrate that FEMA is actively delaying compliance with the court's order. The December 2025 order issued by the District Court affirmed the states' position that FEMA's decision to abruptly terminate the BRIC program contravenes Congress's decision to fund it, and that the Executive Branch has no lawful authority to unilaterally refuse to spend funds appropriated by Congress. The order also concluded that FEMA's actions violate the separation of powers, the Appropriations and Spending Clauses, and the Administrative Procedure Act. The states now ask the court to enforce the December 11 order by requiring the federal government to make pre-disaster mitigation funds available as required by statute, communicate the status and next steps for current BRIC projects to the states, communicate the

reversal of the BRIC termination to all relevant stakeholders, and file status reports with the court outlining any actions taken or planned to comply with the order. The BRIC program supports often difficult-to-fund projects, such as constructing evacuation shelters and flood walls, safeguarding utility grids against wildfires, protecting wastewater and drinking water infrastructure, and fortifying bridges, roadways, and culverts. Over the past four years, FEMA has selected nearly 2,000 projects to receive roughly \$4.5 billion in BRIC funding nationwide. Joining Acting Attorney General Davenport in filing this motion are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Washington, and the governors of the Commonwealths of Kentucky and Pennsylvania.



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### Nominations Sought For Hackettstown, NJ, Area 2026 Senior Hall Of Fame

The Hackettstown Business Improvement District, in partnership with the Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame committee, is currently seeking nominations for the Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame Class of 2026.

The Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame was established in 1997 to recognize individuals aged 60 and above who reside in the Hackettstown area/Northwest New Jersey region and have made a significant impact in the lives of others in the community, primarily through volunteerism. Since its inception, over 274 members have been inducted into the Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame.

Individuals who are 60 years of age or older as of January 1, 2026, are eligible to be nominated, and nominations should include ample details of the nominee's volunteer activities and accomplishments. Inclusion of up to two supplemental testi-



als and/or letters of recommendation is also encouraged. Nomination forms must be received by Friday, February 27 to be considered by the selection committee.

Those selected for membership in the Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame Class of 2026 will be recognized during a celebration luncheon and ceremony in May, Older Americans Month. This year's luncheon will be held on Wednesday, May 27, from 12-2 pm at David's Country Inn

in Hackettstown.

Sponsorships are also available now, and include various media opportunities, making this event an ideal opportunity to promote a business or organization.

For complete information about the event, including nomination guidelines, sponsorship opportunities, and luncheon reservations, please visit [www.hackettstownbid.com](http://www.hackettstownbid.com), or email [socialmedia@hackettstownbid.com](mailto:socialmedia@hackettstownbid.com) or [director@hackettstownbid.com](mailto:director@hackettstownbid.com).

### Flood Announces More Than \$190,000 for Fire and EMS Companies in 138th District

Rep. Ann Flood (R-Northampton) is pleased to announce 17 fire and EMS companies in the 138th Legislative District have been awarded more than \$190,000 in funding through the 2025-26 Pennsylvania Fire Company and Emergency Medical Services Grant Program.

"Our volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel work tirelessly to protect our families, homes and businesses," Flood said. "These grants provide essential support to ensure these companies have the equipment, training and resources they need to continue serving our communities."

Projects eligible for funding include construction or renovation of a fire or ambulance company facility, purchase or repair of equipment, training, recruitment and retention initiatives, public education about fire prevention, and reduction of existing debt.

The following companies were awarded grants: Blue Valley Rescue

Squad (Fire), Bangor — \$12,014.

Bushkill Township Volunteer Fire Company (Fire), Nazareth — \$14,075.

Columbia Fire Company (Fire), Roseto — \$12,014.

Community Fire Company of Forks Township (Fire), Easton — \$14,693.

East Bangor Volunteer Fire Company (Fire), East Bangor — \$12,220.

Liberty Fire Company (Fire), Bangor — \$12,014.

Lookout Fire Company No. 1 of Pen Argyl (Fire), Pen Argyl — \$12,014.

Lower Mount Bethel Sandts Eddy Fire Company Inc (Fire), Martins Creek — \$12,838.

Mount Bethel Volunteer Fire Company Inc. (Fire), Mount Bethel — \$13,457.

North Bangor Volunteer Fire Company (Fire), Bangor — \$12,426.

Plainfield Township Volunteer Fire Company (Fire), Wind Gap — \$16,136.

Portland Hook and

Ladder Company No. 1 (Fire), Portland — \$12,014.

Rescue Fire Company No. 1 (Fire), Bangor — \$12,632.

Second Ward Fire Company (Fire), Bangor — \$12,426.

Washington Township Volunteer Fire Company (Fire), Bangor — \$14,075.

Wind Gap Ambulance Corps Inc. (EMS), Wind Gap — \$10,000.

Wind Gap Fire Company (Fire), Wind Gap — \$12,426.

Companies must file a grant agreement with the Office of the State Fire Commissioner to receive their funding. The funding program was created by the General Assembly and is supported through gaming proceeds. It is administered by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, with the application process handled through the Office of the State Fire Commissioner. All companies that apply and meet program requirements receive funding.

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# FLU

Continued from page 1

ducks and pintails to snow geese and tundra swans – have been bottled up farther south by cold weather and frozen conditions here. Timing is important for these and other birds returning to their breeding grounds because arriving late means delayed nesting. But they also can't make the demanding journey if food and resting areas

along their route are too hard to come by, as happens when conditions are harsh. As Pennsylvania continues to thaw out, though, migrating birds will begin showing up.

Snow geese often come to mind when talking about migration because they flock in large numbers and attract much attention when they come through Pennsylvania on their way to the Arctic. The Game Commission's Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, on the border of

Lebanon and Lancaster counties, is a key stop for migrating snow geese, in some years hosting more than 100,000 of them. Snow geese have just begun showing up at Middle Creek, and more will follow.

Wild birds are natural carriers of avian influenza viruses and bird migration enables the disease to be spread over vast distances. The disease also can be spread by legal and illegal movement of infected birds, poultry products,

contaminated materials, equipment and vehicles if appropriate biosecurity precautions are not taken.

Aside from waterfowl and shorebirds, avian influenza viruses can significantly impact wild poultry such as turkeys and grouse, raptors such as hawks and eagles, and other avian scavengers, such as crows and ravens. Birds infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza can exhibit neurologic signs, such as swimming or walking in circles, tilting their heads in an unnatural position, trembling, seizing or having difficulty flying.

Infected birds shed the virus in their feces and saliva, and the disease can impact other mammals, including humans. The public should avoid contacting wild birds or their feces. The Game Commission does not advise that the public handle any abnormal, injured, sick or dead wildlife unless authorized to do so.

Waterfowl and upland bird hunters are encouraged to continue participating in open seasons, but should take precautions while handling and dressing birds. These include wearing nitrile gloves, protective eye wear, and a mask. Fol-

lowing any hunt, make it a point to practice good hygiene, including washing hands and any clothing used in the process of dressing game that may contain blood or feces. Also never handle wildlife that is sick or displaying signs of sickness. Instead, report it to the Game Commission. Hunting dogs can also be protected from the virus by preventing them from contracting or consuming wild bird feces or environmental water that may contain bird feces, and preventing them from contacting sick or found dead wild birds (i.e., non-harvested).

Good hygiene is also recommended in maintaining backyard birdfeeders. While avian influenza typically does not affect bird species that frequent birdfeeders – and there's no prohibition on feeding birds during the outbreak – birdfeeders and bird baths should be emptied every couple of weeks, washed with soapy water, rinsed, then disinfected with a 10% household bleach solution before refilling (either allow a 10-minute contact time before rinsing or allow to air dry). Any spilled seed should also be cleaned up to mitigate disease spread.

If noticing multiple sick or dead birds over a short period of time, taking feeders down and emptying bird baths helps ensure a potential outbreak is not made worse.

Pennsylvanians who raise captive wild birds, domestic backyard poultry, or are involved in commercial poultry operations, meanwhile, should review their biosecurity plans to protect their flocks. The USDA offers free biosecurity information on its website.

Any sick or dead domestic birds should be reported to Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture at 717-772-2852. If you have had contact with sick or dead birds and are not feeling well, contact your primary care physician or the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 877-724-3258.

And everyone should always observe wildlife from a safe distance, avoid contacting surfaces that may be contaminated with feces from wild or domestic birds, and refrain from handling wildlife unless you are hunting, trapping, or otherwise authorized to do so.

More information about avian influenza is available through the Game Commission's website.



# BRUNCH

SUNDAY MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup> | 10AM - 2PM



<p><b>EGGS BENEDICT (2 EGGS)</b> COMES WITH TOAST &amp; HOME FRIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>JERSEY BENEDICT \$15.00</b> Taylor Ham   Hash Brown   Spicy Hollandaise</li> <li><b>REGULAR BENEDICT \$15.00</b> Canadian Bacon   English Muffin   Hollandaise Sauce</li> <li><b>LOBSTER BENEDICT \$22.00</b> 1.2 Lobster Tail   Lobster Hollandaise</li> <li><b>HEMINGWAY BENEDICT \$19.00</b> Housecured Salmon Pastrami   English Muffin   Hollandaise</li> </ul>	<p><b>BLOODY MARY'S</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>MARY N THE BOYS \$20.00</b> Original Bloody Mary with House Vodka   Bacon   Two Shrimp</li> <li><b>BLOODY MARIA \$18.00</b> Original Bloody Mary with House Tequila &amp; a Pork Tamale</li> <li><b>BLOODY BULL \$18.00</b> Original Bloody Mary with House Vodka, Au Jus Sauce &amp; Cowboy Crouton</li> <li><b>CLAMATO JUICE \$17.00</b> Original Bloody Mary with House Vodka, Clam Juice &amp; 3 Clams on a Half Shell</li> </ul>	<p><b>SWEET BITES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>CRANBERRY FOCASIA FRENCH TOAST \$14.00</b></li> <li><b>CHICKEN N WAFFLES \$16.00</b> Hot Honey</li> <li><b>BUTTERMILK PANCAKES \$11.00</b> 3 Pieces</li> <li><b>TOPPINGS \$2.00 Each</b> Banana, Chocolate Chips, Strawberry, Blueberry</li> </ul>	<p><b>ENTREES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>CHILIQUELES \$22.00</b> Fried Tortilla   Salsa Verde   Fried Egg   Grilled Skirt Steak</li> <li><b>STEAK N EGG SKILLET \$25.00</b> Peppers N Onions   2 Eggs ( Any Style ) Grilled Ny Strip   Home Fries</li> </ul>
<p><b>STARTERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THICK BACON \$16.00</b> Maple Glaze</li> <li><b>BISCUITS &amp; GRAVY \$12.00</b></li> <li><b>AVOCADO TOAST \$12.00</b> Sourdough Bread</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>SEASONAL FRUIT BOWL \$6.00</b> Mix Of The Freshest Fruits Of The Season</li> <li><b>SCONE TRIO \$16.00</b> Blueberry   Rasin   Cinnamon With Strawberry Jam &amp; Lemon Curd</li> </ul>	<p><b>FARM FRESH EGGS</b> COMES WITH TOAST &amp; HOME FRIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2 EGGS \$12.00</b> Any Style</li> <li><b>3 EGG OMELET \$16.00</b> Plain</li> <li><b>CRABMEAT OMELET \$18.00</b> Jumbo Lump</li> </ul>	<p><b>CREATE YOUR OWN OMELET \$16.00</b></p> <p><b>\$2.00 Each</b></p> <p>Choices: Egg Whites, Bacon, Ham, Sausage, Onions, Peppers, Spinach, Mushrooms, Jalapeños, Cheese</p>
<p><b>SIDES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bacon \$4.00</li> <li>• Sausage \$6.00</li> <li>• Taylor Ham \$5.00</li> <li>• Corn Beef Hash \$8.00</li> <li>• Pastrami \$8.00</li> <li>• Homefries \$6.00</li> </ul>	<p><b>KIDS MENU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Waffle \$12.00</li> <li>• 1 Egg \$6.00</li> <li>• 2 Pancakes \$7.00</li> </ul>	<p>Call For Reservations 908-854-5300</p>	



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Jackson Foehr with his father, Jake, his step mother, Becky, his mother, Jamie, his step father, Steve, and his siblings



Trey Zebrun with his parents, Mike and Brooke



Conor Hallowich with his parents, Todd and Kerry, and his brother, Aiden



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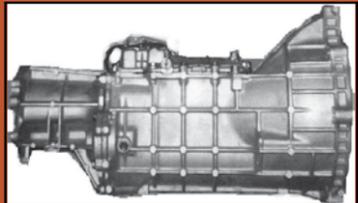
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### Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary?



**Mary E. Stone**  
Stone Associates  
Landscape Design  
& Consulting,  
Blairstown, NJ

Hello, fellow readers,  
Susan from Blairstown, NJ, shared what many of us are feeling: "Spring can't come soon enough. A friend reminded me that this hard winter is long overdue—that it curbs the bad bugs. I hope ticks are on

that list!"  
Don't we all hope so. But ticks, like many insects, are remarkably resilient. They tuck themselves beneath leaf litter and snow cover, which acts like a thermal blanket, and enter a state of diapause—conserving energy while waiting for warmer temperatures to return. Under a foot of snow, soil temperatures often hover close to thirty-two degrees, even while the air above is bitterly cold.

Susan's question leads to a bigger conversation — one I found myself immersed in at the NJ Nursery and Landscape Association's Total Pro Expo.

Steven Rettke of Rutgers Cooperative Extension gave a

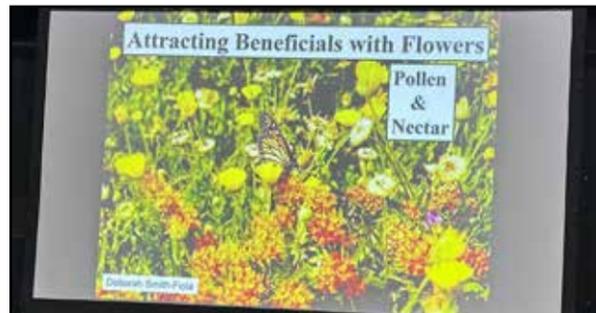


talk titled: "Backyard Beneficials: Inviting Insects into the Landscape." (But not ticks, thank you very much.)

It's astounding to learn that while about 2% of insects in North America are exotic, meaning they come from other countries, nearly half of our major pest insects are exotic, such as the Spotted Lantern Fly and Emerald Ash Borer, devastating trees.

But most insects be-

long here. They are part of a balanced, living web. What we consider "bad bugs" are also food. And predators need prey. Lady beetles, Lacewings, Hoverflies, Assassin bugs, Minute pirate bugs, Predatory mites, to name a few. They often prevent pest outbreaks. And they work for free. Unless, of course, we unintentionally kill them with broad-spectrum pesticides. It's such a clear



cause-and-effect. We want fewer pests, and some people spray, killing the very allies doing the work for us.

We can design landscapes that invite beneficial insects by Increasing Plant and Habitat Diversity, providing Nectar and Pollen, and Increasing Habitat Stability. Simple landscapes (low in plant diversity, with lots of space between plants) tend to be hot, dry, and sunny and are more prone to pest outbreaks.

Complex landscapes, rich in plant diversity and layered with native plants, with wall-to-wall color and textures (as I like to design), are cooler, moister, and shadier. The dense plantings, layered vegetation, and diverse flowering plants create shelter, food, and stability.

Steve shared encouraging research showing that, after 10 to 15 years, diverse urban landscapes often stop experiencing major pest outbreaks. In fact, over ninety percent of plants in mature landscapes are essentially pest-free. Not because homeowners fought using nasty chemicals. But because balance had time to grow.

Another beautiful reminder from Steve's slides: "Flowers are not just decoration. They are invitations."

Steve, a self-professed non-plant expert, provided a list of flowering herbs and wildflowers that produce abundant nectar & pollen. Some of which are native plants such as Goldenrod, Giant Sunflower, Purple Coneflower, Blazing Star, and

Purple Stem Angelica. (Check out the post—Inviting Beneficial Garden Guests on AskMaryStone.com—for a complete list.)

He wrapped up with a slide of Biorational Pesticides derived from natural sources that break down quickly and target specific pests, suppressing them rather than eradicating them, with far less impact on non-targeted organisms. Among them is my go-to Neem Oil.

Even when pest control becomes necessary, the message remains the same: Choose biorational approaches that protect beneficial life whenever possible — horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps, biological products, and carefully selected treatments compatible with pollinators because the goal is not to eradicate them, but to encourage harmony.

Driving home from the landscape show, I passed winter-farm fields resting beneath snow and thought about how this conversation mirrors our lives. We try to eliminate every discomfort, frustration, or unwelcome presence. But nature shows us something wiser.

Balance doesn't come from removal. It comes from relationships, from diversity, and the patience of allowing time for harmony to take root. So, it's not about getting rid of bad things. It's how to propagate more of the good things.

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# NJ Congressman Kean Delivers \$560,000 to Washington Township for Police Department Renovations

Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ-07) presented \$560,000 in federal funding to Washington Township in Morris County to support long-overdue renovations for the police department headquarters. Kean secured this funding through the FY2026 Community Project Funding process to directly support local law enforcement and modernize critical public safety infrastructure.

Constructed in 1996, the police department building now requires significant upgrades to remain fully operational for officers and the public. Due to the building's age and wear, renovations are needed for the roof, HFAC system, and parking lot.

The police headquarters serves as a hub for public safety operations, including educational programs, licensing services, and Office of Emergency Management services. In addition to serving Washington Township, the department also provides full-service police coverage to Califon Borough. These improvements will enhance working conditions for officers and ensure the building can continue meeting the surrounding community's public safety needs.

"Our police officers make incredible sacrifices every day to protect our communities. I secured \$560,000 for Washington Township to ensure their police force has a workplace that is both safe and up to modern standards," said Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. "This investment will strengthen public safety infrastructure and support the department for decades to come. I remain steadfast in my commitment to the

safety and security of our families, our neighborhoods, and the dedicated men and women of law enforcement."

"We are very fortunate to have strong working relationships with our elected leaders, and Congressman Kean has worked hard advocating for our residents," said Washington Township Mayor Michael Marino. "This funding will go a long way towards repairing and improving our police department. As an agricultural community, it can be challenging to manage our budget, especially as one of the largest municipalities in Morris County. Because of that, every extra dollar truly makes a difference for our residents. We are incredibly appreciative of the time and effort Congressman Kean put into helping us secure this grant."

"One of the most important things for our constituents is having good working relationships at every level of government — from the municipality all the way up to the federal level," said Washington Township Vice-Mayor Matthew Murello. "We had the opportunity to apply for a grant to address a critical need that never quite makes it into our local budget. This funding is tremendous. It will bring our police department's building up to the same quality as the officers who serve in it, and we could not have done it without the Congressman - so thank you."

"I want to thank Congressman Kean, Mayor Marino, and Vice-Mayor Murello for bringing this together — it truly means a great deal to our department," said Washington Township Chief



Washington Township Committeeman Bill Roehrich, Committeeman Walter Curioni, Morris County Commissioner Deborah Smith, County Clerk Ann Grossi, Esq., Assemblyman Michael Inganamort, County Surrogate Heather Darling, Washington Township Vice-Mayor Matthew Murello, Congressman Tom Kean, Jr., Mayor Michael Marino, Chief Jeffrey Almer, County Sheriff James Gannon, Washington Township Police Officers

of Police Jeffrey Almer. "Our building is nearly 30 years old and we are facing some structural issues, so this funding is incredibly significant for us."

"We appreciate Congressman Kean securing \$560,000 in Community Project Funding to address necessary repairs and improvements at the Washington Township Police Department," said Morris County Commissioner Director Stephen Shaw. "This funding will support critical renovations to the roof, HVAC system and parking lot, helping ensure the department can continue supporting Morris County and its residents at a high level through policing, emergency management and other essential services residents rely on every day. Morris County is home to some of the safest communities in the state, thanks to the dedication and professionalism our law enforcement officers and first

responders demonstrate around the clock."

"Through the efforts of Congressman Kean and Washington Township, this \$560,000 federal grant was made possible. We are very appreciative and thank Congressman Kean for supporting our police," said Morris County Sheriff James Gannon. "The Washington Township Police Department is exceptional, and these renovations will allow them to provide even better services to the public."

"Once again, Congressman Kean has delivered for our district," said New Jersey Assemblyman Michael Inganamort (LD-24). "By bringing more of our federal tax dollars back home, we can ensure the Washington Township Police Department has the modern equipment and upgraded facilities to continue protecting and serving residents. I'm grateful for this strong partnership and our shared commitment

to Northwest New Jersey."

Since taking office, Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. has secured over \$12 million for police departments across New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District through the Community Project Funding process, demonstrating a consistent, tangible commitment to backing the blue with real resources. Kean remains steadfast in ensuring local law enforcement officers receive the support and equipment necessary to keep our communities safe.

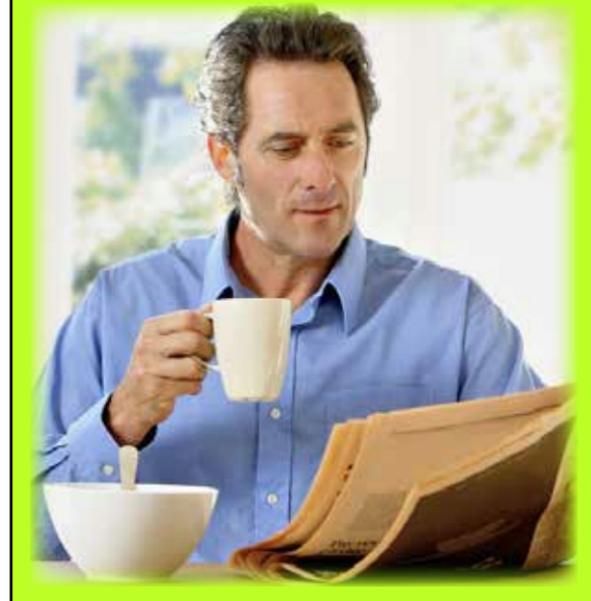
All 15 projects that Congressman Kean was allotted for the FY2026 Community Project Funding process have now passed the U.S. House of Representatives.

to public safety through-

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# “Balancing Wildlife And Agriculture” Joint Town Hall Meeting Held At Great American Outdoor Show

In continuing joint efforts to provide solutions surrounding wildlife crop damage, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, and Hunters Sharing the Harvest held their third town hall meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026, at the Great American Outdoor Show in Harrisburg to share updates, including more opportunities for hunters, landowners, and farmers to work together.

The panel featured Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding, Pennsylvania Game Commission Deputy Executive Director Dave Gustafson and Landowner Engagement and Hunting Access Manager Tyler Strohecker, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau President Chris Hoffman, and Hunters Sharing the Harvest Executive Director Randy Ferguson.

This was the third public meeting between this group of stakeholders, the previous two were held in 2025 in response to urgent concerns and reports of increased deer pressure on agriculture crops across the state. Farmers and landowners in many cases depend on hunters to manage deer on their properties and limit crop losses, in turn providing hunters with opportunities to hunt and fill tags.

“Wildlife belongs to all residents of the Commonwealth,” said Game Commission Deputy Executive Director Dave Gustafson. “Due to the

work and support of this group, the Game Commission has been able to implement creative and successful pathways to address wildlife crop damage, while keeping hunters on the front lines of managing healthy wildlife populations. From expanding Sunday Hunting opportunities, to working to expand more statewide opportunities for our Certified Hunter Program and Agricultural Deer Control Program, we’ve accomplished a lot in a little more than a year’s time.”

Act 36 of 2025 repealed the ban on Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania and gave the Game Commission full authorization to provide Sunday hunting opportunities. In the 2025-26 hunting season, 13 Sundays were open to deer hunters to fill tags. With many farmers relying on hunters to help manage deer on their properties, the additional hunting opportunities are mutually beneficial.

“When wildlife pressures threaten farm viability, collaboration is the solution,” said Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding. “From updating Pennsylvania’s Sunday hunting law to investing additional funding to get venison into our food banks, the Shapiro administration is partnering with the PGC to deliver real, commonsense solutions that support farmers, expand opportunities for hunters, and help feed Pennsylvanians in need. By bringing farmers, landowners, hunters, and conservation partners to the same table, we’re protecting

crops, strengthening our agricultural economy, and ensuring working farms remain viable for generations to come.”

The Game Commission is continuing its work to expand programs to help farmers and landowners better meet their deer management goals. At its meeting on Jan. 24, 2026, the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners voted to preliminarily approve regulations to guide the agency’s Certified Hunter Program, which connects hunters and landowners as a means of addressing crop-damage concerns. The program launched last year in the Southwest Region and is expected to expand statewide in 2026.

The board also preliminarily voted at its January meeting to expand the Agricultural Deer Control Program, commonly known as the Ag Tag program. The program enables landowners to enlist the aid of hunters in removing antlerless deer from agricultural lands. If approved, hunters would be able to use any devices authorized for hunting deer in the regular firearms season during the Ag Tag season. Additionally, the limit was removed on the number of Ag Tags a hunter can receive. The preliminarily approved regulations for both the expansion of the Certified Hunter Program and the Ag Tag Program will be brought back up to the board’s April meeting for a final vote.

“Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is thankful for

the opportunity to continue working alongside the Pennsylvania Game Commission to find equitable solutions to mitigate crop damage, and to have more tools and resources available to our farmers to improve their operations,” said Pennsylvania Farm Bureau President Chris Hoffman. “We greatly appreciate the collaborative efforts that led to legislation that was signed into law last year to help farmers combat crop damage. We are also elated to be able to continue to collaborate with the Pennsylvania Game Commission on the development of the Certified Hunter Program. These discussions are vital to finding adequate solutions to wildlife issues that our farmers face every day. We are excited to continue to partner with industry stakeholders to drive meaningful change to allow our farmers to thrive.”

Due, in part, to the increased opportunities for hunters to fill tags, Hunters Sharing the Harvest has continued to see record breaking numbers of venison being donated through cooperating processors across the state. During the 2024-25 season, hunters set an all-time high venison donation record with 283,789 pounds donated from 7,855 deer. That equates to approximately 1.1 million servings of lean, nutritious venison being shared with food-insecure Pennsylvanians.

In fiscal year 2025/26, the Game Commission has provided a total of \$250,000 to Hunters Sharing the Harvest, including \$150,000 in



new funds to support an increased need for deer processing for deer harvested through the Agricultural Deer Control Program and organizational capacity building.

Governor Josh Shapiro’s bipartisan 2025-26 budget invested \$500,000 to support the program through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Food Assistance. These funds support the processing and transport of donated venison to food banks, food pantries, and other charitable feeding organizations throughout the Commonwealth. This funding comes at a critical time, as food prices remain high, and food banks across Pennsylvania continue to report increased demand, and federal funding has significantly decreased. The Shapiro administration has responded swiftly to protect food access and security in the Commonwealth, ranging from legal actions protecting

farmers to issuing a disaster declaration, directing \$5 million for the immediate purchase of food through the PASS program to support food banks serving all 67 counties.

“Hunters Sharing the Harvest exists at the intersection of wildlife management and food security,” said Hunters Sharing the Harvest Executive Director Randy Ferguson. “When hunters help farmers manage deer populations, they’re not only protecting crops, they are providing millions of servings of nutritious venison to Pennsylvanians in need. This partnership ensures conservation, agriculture, and community all benefit.”

The panel answered questions from hunters and people in attendance, both live and watching online. To view the town hall meeting, visit the Pennsylvania Game Commission’s YouTube channel.

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# Food Processing Hub And Warren CC Receive \$980,000 Grant For New Center

Warren County Community College and an innovative regional hub for food processing have been awarded nearly \$980,000 federal grant for a sophisticated facility that will train workers in the use of the farming sector's latest technology and techniques while supporting and growing the agriculture industry in the region.

U.S. Rep Tom Kean Jr. and U.S. Sen Cory Booker gave their support to the grant for the food processing facility as it first was imagined by college and community leaders, and now the funding has been included in appropriations requested by Kean and approved by President Trump last week.

The Northwest Food Processing and Innovation Center (NFPIC) grew from a collaboration between Warren President Will Austin and local entrepreneur and farmer Richard Cotton, who has been a leader in finding ways to make the rich northwest New Jersey farmland even more valuable with new thinking about agriculture, technology and social trends.

The two wanted to find new ways to train workers for jobs of the future by providing training in the latest cutting-edge technology – while supporting the farmers and agriculture industry in the region.

"I am thrilled to deliver over \$900,000 in federal funding for Warren County Community College's Agricultural Educational and Training Center," Kean said. "I toured the site with President Austin, and it is clear this is exactly the kind of strategic workforce investment our region needs."

He noted that the facility "will serve as both a technology incubator and workforce training hub while also providing local farms with the accessible processing partner they need to thrive".

"Ultimately, this investment will bring good-paying jobs, career opportunities, and access to fresh, locally grown food to families right here in Warren County," he said.

Austin said Cotton has been the key figure in the development of NFPIC and saw the merit of collaboration to fill a need in the farming sector and in the workforce.

"Richard Cotton and the Northwest Food Processing Innovation Center have been paving the way for the development of this facility, bringing together leaders in agriculture, government and business to create a plan that has gained this important federal support," Austin said.

He noted that Warren's nationally recognized drone and robotics program, and its recent move to provide precision agriculture training, puts the college in a perfect position to make this connection to NFPIC.

"Our students and those in other colleges and vocational programs at the high school level who are interested in agriculture, technology, business – including processing, marketing and distribution – and culinary science will be able to get hands-on training at this facility and move into jobs where workers are desperately needed.

The proposed center will benefit the region's livestock producers who lack

a facility to process their cows and pigs in New Jersey and must use operations in Pennsylvania that have limited capacity, Cotton said.

"This facility provides a major piece of agricultural infrastructure that has been lacking for decades," he said. "The project is critical to the region's agricultural and economic future and is strongly supported by the area farming community, county and municipal governments and regional colleges and vo-tech programs."

He noted that a regional processing facility will enable farmers in the Northwest New Jersey region to expand their livestock operations or to create new operations and serve other farmers as it grows knowledge and resources about the latest ways to make farms more productive, efficient and friendly to the environment

"Lands that are currently deep tilled for corn, soybean and other commodity crops could potentially simultaneously accommodate livestock grazing, which can benefit the agriculture sector and have considerable environmental benefits, for example," he said.

Plans call for the facility to be located in Oxford on county-owned property that was previously the site of the incinerator that was taken out of commission in 2019 and destroyed in 2024. NFPIC is working with the county to potentially use the former site of the incinerator.

Warren County Community College has been on the cutting edge of precision agriculture with its drone and robotics training through Warren-

UAS and is continuing to develop agriculture and technology offerings by meshing the two to address various stages of food production.

"We will continue to find new ways to increase yields through artificial intelligence and precision agriculture, but we also must work hand-in-hand with our local agricultural producers like Richard to develop and get more product to market at competitive levels that both sustain existing farms and encourage the broadening of future opportunities," Austin said.

Cotton said young people have long been discouraged from agricultural careers, but these new technological advances coupled with concerns about supply chain limits and climate modifications are creating a reality where farming and food production can offer exciting careers and be among our nation's most important high-tech industries.

The new federal funding will support the first stages of the project expected to cost \$10 million and eventually employ 37 workers and offer class-

room space and access to the facility for students. Cotton noted that the project received \$150,000 in support from the New Jersey Highlands Council and that other private and public funding streams are being explored, noting that interest in the facility has been high.

"Leaders in the region can see how this facility will benefit farmers, students and consumers, and we've gotten excellent feedback about the plan," Cotton said.

The non-profit NFPIC was established by Cotton and other leaders in agriculture and business in the region to build regenerative agriculture and sustainability which allows for soil health, water conservation and biodiversity. Its focus is also on local food systems and food security along with education and training to "empower the next generation with the skills for agricultural innovation and sustainable food systems."

It is also critical for us to build partnerships like the one with Warren County Community College and the Warren County government, which can bene-

fit those entities and their students and constituents.

Austin says his goal is to have students graduate who understand safe and efficient robotic and AI use, coupled with the fundamentals of farming and the way the two mesh. Beyond that, through NFPIC he hopes to offer training in new ways to handle food production with new techniques – and even deliver it more efficiently.

"We have built a structure where cutting-edge research in precision agriculture can take place – where our students and people working in agriculture can find new ways to use this technology," he says. "But I want our students to have an opportunity to access this food production and processing sector with the newest skills using the latest technology."

Cotton, whose family has been in the county for five generations, has seen the area farmland shift over time, moving out of production as development grew and being overtaken by commodity farming that produces largely corn and soybeans as feed for animals, at facilities often located out of the region.

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# NORTH WARREN (53) VS VERITAS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY (33) GIRLS BASKETBALL

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### Flood Hosts Policy Hearing on Back-to-School Affordability

Rep. Ann Flood (R-Northampton) hosted a House Republican Policy Committee hearing in her home district recently to examine the rising cost of back-to-school supplies and explore solutions to ease the financial burden on Pennsylvania families.

The hearing, titled "Affordability for Families," was held at Crayola's world headquarters in Easton. Flood was joined by House Republican Policy Committee Chairman David H. Rowe (R-Snyder/Union/Mifflin/Juniata) and other lawmakers.

The discussion focused on Flood's legislation, House Bill 1596, which would establish an annual back-to-school sales tax holiday in Pennsylvania.

"Back-to-school shopping has become increasingly expensive," Flood said. "House Bill 1596 would provide meaningful, targeted relief to help families afford essential school

supplies when they need it most."

Testimony was provided by Mikal Sabatine of Families First of Pen Argyl; Sarah Whitworth, a school counselor at Moore Elementary School; and Marisa Elias, a Pennsylvania parent raising six children. They shared how rising costs and growing poverty are impacting local families. According to testimony, 14% of Pennsylvania students live in poverty, and in the Pen Argyl Area School District, 55% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Flood highlighted the significance of hosting the hearing at Crayola, a longtime employer in the 138th District and a company deeply tied to education and back-to-school traditions.

"Crayola has been part of this community for generations," Flood said. "It is fitting that we hold this conversation about affordability,



Rep. Ann Flood (R-Northampton) shares a moment with Pete Ruggiero, president and CEO of Crayola and the green crayon mascot at Crayola headquarters in Easton.

education, and opportunity in a place that has supported families and students for decades."

House Bill 1596 was referred to the House Finance Committee for

consideration.

A full video recording of the policy hearing is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLBCTabOxE8>

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