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YEAR-END E-NEWSLETTER

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*Wishing all of you
a merry Christmas,
a happy New Year
and a joyous
holiday season!*



Working together for you!

As your Senator, I'm so fortunate to work alongside of so many wonderful public servants. This photo of me with Rep. J.J. Johnson, Rep. Mike Mulrooney and New Castle City Council President Linda Ratchford, taken during the River Towns Festival, sums up just how much we all enjoy working together on your behalf.

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State makes \$350,000 investment in historic Old New Castle

Old New Castle and the living, breathing history there is an amazing treasure for our state and indeed our nation.

That's why I'm so pleased the state's Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is nearing the completion of a series of capital improvements at several state-owned historic properties it administers in town. These improvements represent a \$350,000 public investment in our historic city on the Delaware River that serves as the home of one of the state of Delaware's six museums, as well as the headquarters of the First State National Historical Park.

Improvements include roof replacement at the New Castle Court House Museum, renovation of the Arsenal's south entry-door and first-floor restroom, rebuilding of a deteriorating brick garden-wall at the Academy and stabilization of the Green's pedestrian pathways.

Improvements are being made at the following locations:

- The New Castle Court House Museum, 211 Delaware Street
- The Arsenal, 30 Market Street
- The New Castle Academy, 31 E. Third Street
- The New Castle Green

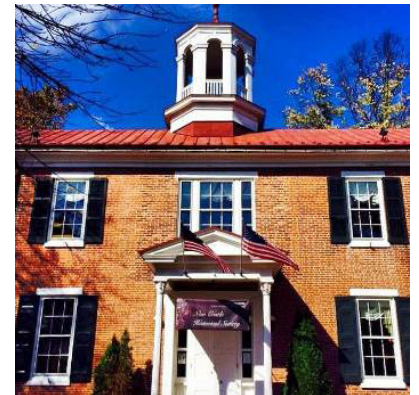


The New Castle Court House Museum, 211 Delaware Street

Constructed in 1732, the New Castle Court House served as Delaware's first court and state capitol. Here in 1776, New Castle, Kent and Sussex counties declared their independence from Pennsylvania and England creating the State of Delaware. Operated by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, the museum features tours and exhibits that illustrate Delaware's unique boundaries, law and government and the Underground Railroad.

The Arsenal, 30 Market Street

The Arsenal was originally constructed in 1809 as a one-story windowless building used by the U.S. government as a storage place for weapons and ammunition. Transferred to the Trustees of the New Castle Common in the mid-1800s, the building was enlarged to two stories in 1855 for use as a school. It served as the New Castle High School until 1930 and was later used for offices and a restaurant. The building is currently leased to the New Castle Historical Society, which utilizes it for office space and as a venue for events.



The New Castle Academy, 31 E. Third Street

The New Castle Academy was built in 1799 according to a design by Peter Crowding, a Philadelphia master builder. It served as a public school until 1930 when the New Castle High School was built. The building is currently leased to Immanuel Episcopal Church, which utilizes it for many church-related and community activities.



The New Castle Green

The New Castle Green was laid out by the Dutch in 1655. Several of New Castle's most important buildings surround this town commons, including The New Castle Court House Museum, the Sheriff's House, the Arsenal, Immanuel Episcopal Church and the Academy.

Women’s rights, children’s advocacy work a theme in 2015

In many ways, this legislative year was all about advocating for some of our most vulnerable Delawareans; fighting hard for enhanced protections for women and children in our state.

I was proud to stand with colleagues from both parties – both male and female – to advance a groundbreaking package of women’s legislation in the General Assembly. The bills address a range of issues that impact Delaware’s women in nearly every facet of their daily lives – their workplaces, doctors’ offices, homes and schools.

One of the bills I sponsored in the Senate dictates that the state must engage in fair pay practices, offering female employees and contractors equal pay for equal work. Two other bills focus on advocacy for victims of sexual assault. One bill requires new victim-centered, trauma-informed training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors who work with victims of sexual assaults. A second resolution mandates the Department of Justice oversee an audit of all untested rape kits in the state.

The bills signed into law are part of a bipartisan 11-bill package announced in March that focuses on three major areas where reform is needed for Delaware women: justice and public safety, health care and employment. It’s my hope that we can pass even more of these bills when we reconvene in January.

On the education front, we successfully passed Senate Bill 33, which gives teachers and parents more latitude in right-sizing Individual Education Programs for students with special needs. And we’ve established a task force to study improvements to the way we educate our visually-impaired student population.

I also joined Rep. Valerie Longhurst in sponsoring important legislation that requires training for public



school teachers and administrators on suicide prevention and awareness, adding a new layer of mental health support for our children in their most vulnerable years.

I also wanted to mention the important work done by the Joint Sunset Committee, which I co-chair. In 2015, we reviewed a number of boards and commissions for efficiency and effectiveness. Those reviews led to proposals to simplify the appointment terms for the state’s Open Space Council, and updated standards for the Board of Funeral Services, among others.

But most significantly, the JSC took a hard look at the Delaware Economic Development Office and its efforts to promote growth and bring new jobs to our state. Details of that review – and the proposals that came out of it, can be found in a “Delaware Voices” piece I wrote for The News Journal and am republishing here on page 8 of this newsletter.

LEGISLATIVE RECORD

Significant legislation sponsored or co-sponsored by Senator Poore during the 2015 session.

Crime and Public Safety

SS1 for SB-13

Sponsor[s]: Ennis

Co-sponsor[s]: Poore

Confirms and establishes the Board of Parole’s authority to exercise discretion in reviewing the risk assessment tier designation of people convicted of an offense that would qualify for inclusion on the sex offender registry prior to the enactment of Megan’s Law.

Status: Signed into law

SB-102

Sponsor[s]: Blevins

Co-sponsor[s]: Poore

Extends from 10 months to one year the time from installation of an ignition interlock device (after which a person may seek full restoration of driving privileges) and adds a minimum of 30 days’ community service for second offenses within 10 years to bring state law into compliance with federal regulations and avoid withholding of federal highway funding.

Status: Senate Judiciary Committee

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LEGISLATIVE RECORD

SJR-1

Sponsor[s]: Poore, Henry, Blevins, McDowell, Townsend

Co-sponsor[s]: Hall-Long, Peterson

Requires all law enforcement agencies, legal departments, hospitals and prosecutorial agencies to report to the Attorney General's Office the number of untested sexual assault kits in their possession and their date of collection. The Criminal Justice Council is directed to prepare an aggregated report by Jan. 11, 2016. The CJC also is mandated to develop strategies to ensure better responses to sexual assault from the criminal justice and medical communities.

Status: Signed into law

HB-1

Senate Sponsor[s]: Peterson Senate

Co-sponsor[s]: Blevins, Hall-Long, Henry, Poore

Mandates that responsible employees of colleges and universities report incidents of sexual assault committed against students to law enforcement within 24 hours of notification. School law enforcement must make reports to the proper municipal/state law enforcement agencies with 24 hours as well as issuing monthly reports to the state Justice Department every 30 days. Exclusions include people with privilege against disclosure and sexual assault victim advocates. Also mandates that institutions train staff in the reporting requirements. Authorizes the State Justice Department to fine institutions found in non-compliance.

Status: House Administration Committee

HB-2

Senate Sponsor[s]: Poore Senate

Co-sponsor[s]: Blevins, Bushweller, Ennis, Peterson, Townsend

Requires ongoing sexual assault training for police officers and deputy attorney generals in the criminal and family divisions.

Status: Signed into law

Business and Economic Development

SB-113

Sponsor[s]: Marshall

Co-sponsor[s]: Blevins, Bushweller, Ennis, Hall-Long, Henry, McBride, McDowell, Peterson, Poore, Sokola, Townsend

This portion of the "Regulatory Transparency Act of 2015" mandates state agencies submit a regulatory impact statement describing anticipated effects of new regulations on businesses and people as well as costs with the Registrar of Regulations. It also requires agencies to describe, if possible, less costly alternatives and requires the registrar to transmit impact reports to the committees of competent jurisdiction in the General Assembly.

Status: Signed into law

SB-120

Sponsor[s]: Marshall

Co-sponsor[s]: Blevins, Bush-weller, Ennis, Hall-Long, Henry, McBride, McDowell, Peterson, Poore, Sokola, Townsend

This portion of the "Regulatory Transparency Act of 2015" requires agencies to develop a regulatory flexibility analysis when proposing to amend or develop new regulations. Agencies must consider, where feasible, means of reducing burdens on small businesses and individuals

through means, such as establishing less stringent requirements and deadlines, establishing performance standards in lieu of design standards, considering small business and individual exemptions. No regulatory change may be proposed without a flexibility analysis.

Status: Signed into law

Courts

SB-51

Sponsor[s]: Peterson

Co-sponsor[s]: Blevins, Hall-Long, Henry, Poore

Expands the definition of people eligible to testify via closed-circuit television if a judge determines the victim or witness is suffering serious emotional distress and cannot reasonably communicate otherwise. Specifically includes victims of stalking and sexual assault.

Status: Signed into law

SB-84

Sponsor[s]: Henry

Co-sponsor[s]: Blevins, Hall-Long, Peterson, Poore

Excuses breastfeeding women from jury service.

Status: Signed into law

Education

SB-31

Sponsor[s]: Sokola, Townsend

Co-sponsor[s]: Poore

Repeals the sunset provision for Teach for America allowing the program to continue operations in Delaware while maintaining other elements of the state's TFA program rules. **Status: Signed into law**

SB-33

Sponsor[s]: Poore

Co-Sponsor[s]: Blevins, Hall-Long, Sokola, Townsend

Omnibus update of the Individual Education Program law that would mandate:

- Provision of more detailed information on IEP rights and resources to parents
- Solicitation of input from parents and children in the process before holding IEP meetings and provision of documents to be discussed at the meetings.
- Facilitation of parent councils to provide peer support
- Ensuring that teachers, staff and contract employees do not suffer retaliation for offering candid opinions during IEP meetings
- Ensuring that employment planning is consistent with Delaware's employment first policy
- A robust annual survey of parents and children to ensure school districts and charter schools are adhering to state and federal IEP laws.
- Ensuring that charter schools are attentive to their responsibilities and provide adequate resources for students with disabilities.
- A Department of Education report to the General Assembly on the status of and possible alternatives to the IEP Plus Computer System.

Status: Signed into law

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LEGISLATIVE RECORD

SCR-2

Sponsor[s]: Hall-Long, Poore, McBride
Co-sponsor[s]: Sokola, Townsend

Establishes a task force to study and make recommendations on improving educational services for blind and visually impaired students.

Status: Passed

HB-13

Senate Co-Sponsor[s]: Poore

Requires all new school construction or major renovation to include the following features: an intruder alarm, bulletproof glass in entrance areas and interior doors and windows, and doors lockable with keys on both sides. Also, all new school construction plans would have to be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget's Facilities Management Section for compliance with these requirements as well as with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles.

Status: House Education Committee

HB-56

Senate Sponsor[s]: Henry

Senate Co-sponsor[s]: Poore

Places a moratorium on new charter school approvals until June 30, 2018 or until the State Board of Education develops a strategic plan for the number of charter and vocational-technical schools in the state. Requires review and comment from the Mayor of Wilmington and City Council and agreement from the appropriate local school board before the state can approve new charter schools in Wilmington.

Status: Signed into law

HB-90

Senate Sponsor[s]: Poore

Senate Co-sponsor[s]: Ennis, Sokola, Townsend

Requires 90 minutes of annual training on suicide prevention for all public school employees, requires all public schools to establish a suicide prevention committee and all local education agencies to develop a suicide prevention policy.

Status: Signed into law

HB-184

Senate Sponsor[s]: Poore

Senate Co-sponsor[s]: Hall-Long

Establishes a method for people receiving special education services under an active Individual Education Plan to receive a driver's license.

Status: Signed into law

Government Operations/Open Government

SB-63

Sponsor[s]: Poore

Co-Sponsor[s]: Sokola, Townsend

Sunset Committee Bill sunsetting The Council on Manufactured Housing and the Delaware Manufactured Housing Alternative Dispute Resolution Act.

Status: Signed into law

SB-65

Sponsor[s]: Poore

Co-sponsor[s]: Sokola, Townsend

Sunset Committee Bill updating standards for the Board of Funeral Services.

Status: Signed into law

SB-135

Sponsor[s]: McBride

Co-sponsor[s]: Hall-Long, Poore, Townsend

Defines, prohibits and establishes penalties for non-essential locomotive idling between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Status: Signed into law

SCR-6

Sponsor[s]: Townsend, Henry, Peterson, Poore, Sokola

Delaware joins states, including Vermont, California and Illinois, in calling on Congress to convene an Article V Constitutional Convention in response to and to override the U.S. Supreme Court's rulings in *Citizens United* and other campaign finance cases.

Status: Passed in Senate

HB-3

Senate Sponsor[s]: Poore

Requires that employers receiving state contracts ensure employees receive equal pay for equal work regardless of gender, permitting pay differentials based on factors, such as seniority, merit systems or production factors in line with requirements of the federal Equal Pay Act.

Status: Signed into law

HB-60

Senate Sponsor[s]: Peterson, McDowell

Senate Co-sponsor[s]: Poore

Creates the Achieving a Better Life Experience program, which builds on federal legislation allowing creation of tax-advantaged savings accounts, similar to 529 college savings programs, to allow people with disabilities to save for qualified disability or education expenses. Establishes a seven-member board to oversee the program.

Status: Signed into law

HB-119

Senate Sponsor[s]: Poore, Hall-Long

Senate Co-sponsor[s]: Bushweller

Synopsis: Removes the prohibition on selling alcohol to people with a mental condition or mental disability.

Status: Signed into law

HB-200

Senate Sponsor[s]: Poore

Updates regulations for handicapped parking spaces to meet federal ADA standards and increases penalties for people illegally parking in a handicapped space from \$100 to \$250 for a first offense and from \$200 to \$500 for subsequent offenses.

Status: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee Health and Welfare

STATE CHAMPS

Congratulations to the DIAA D-II Champion Caravel girls soccer team



For the second consecutive year, I was thrilled to join Gov. Jack Markell in hosting the state champion Caravel girls' soccer team during its visit to Legislative Hall. The Buccaneers went 13-1-1 this season, defeating Indian River 3-1 in the Division II title game to keep the crown. These are some truly dedicated student-athletes whose accomplishments go far beyond the soccer field. It was a privilege to honor them for their hard work.

DELDOT UPDATE

Diverging diamond will improve Route 1 traffic flow

DelDOT is in the process of some innovative new design work that will ultimately result in Delaware's first "Diverging Diamond" interchange at Del. Route 1 and Del. Route 72.

These interchanges have become increasingly popular in high volume areas in other parts of the country, but this would be the first of its kind in our region. By safely and temporarily routing traffic on the opposite side of the roadway, the interchange will cut down on traffic light wait times, while also reducing accidents.

Construction is slated to begin on the interchange in the spring of 2016. In the meantime, you can [watch a DelDOT video](#) detailing the project to get a better understanding of how it will work.

Also, DelDOT has unveiled an innovative web-based program that will allow residents to track



snow plows during winter weather events.

Any resident with a computer or smart phone will be able to track the real-time positions of DelDOT's 300-plus plows thanks to GPS sensors installed in each one. The application is designed to give residents a better sense of the coordination that goes into clearing roadways during winter storms.

Speaking from the heart: Thanking nurses and in-home assistants for their work

I was honored to be asked to deliver keynote speeches this year at two events near and dear to my heart. One event was a luncheon honoring Direct Support Professionals – the amazing nurses, counselors, social workers and others that provide support to families who have a loved one with special needs. The second event – the Delaware Nursing Excellence Awards – honored our state’s fantastic nurses, and really paid homage to our state’s rich tradition of nursing – our nursing schools, hospital networks and clinics.

Both of these groups have played critically important roles in my life.

While I worked alongside many wonderful nurses professionally as a young adult, it wasn’t until my husband Billy and I were expecting our first child that the professional relationship suddenly became a personal one.

In the early morning hours of New Year’s Day, 1999, my son, Nicholas, was born premature at 31 weeks. The nursing staff supported me through that evening, calming me, reassuring me and also congratulating me. For a moment, we thought Nicholas was the first baby of the New Year. Suddenly, Nicholas was swept away, put on a respirator and cared for in that first 24 hours by an incredible group of nurses in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Christiana Hospital. I didn’t realize at the time they’d be the primary corps of nurses caring for Nicholas over the next 31 days.

Suddenly you realize how integral these people – just recently strangers – are to your life and to the well-being of your loved ones. Suddenly I was forming these personal relationships with the caregivers who were giving everything to ensure the health of my most prized possession.

Some of the memories are still hazy, but on the 28th day of Nicholas’ life, I can remember seeing two of the nurses crying as I was trying to process the information the doctor was sharing with me – that Nicholas was being diagnosed with PVL.

There I was, a new mother, in love with my new son, who to me looked happy and healthy – his disability unseen. But at the moment I was informed of his condition, that nursing staff underwent a transformation. Suddenly they were

not merely the caregiver of the patient, Nicholas, but also the lifeline to me and my family – compassionate and ready to help in the transition to a full-time caretaker role.

As Nicholas got older, and also in the twilight of my beloved Aunt Margaret’s life, it was in-home nurses – Direct Support Professionals – who played such a crucial role.

At any given time, I had two Direct Support Professionals at either end of my house caring for each of them. But it didn’t feel invasive at all. In fact, in an instant, they became part of the family. They strengthened our family. They helped show us all what care and compassion truly look like, and I think we all treat each other better as a result. And they’ve also given me the freedom to become a working mother again – to spend time with my other children and to give my all to my Senate job – things I cherish greatly.

I know my story is like so many of your stories – and that’s what makes the work of nurses and Direct Support Professionals so remarkable. They do such personal work for so many, and the care they provide is just the beginning of the varied ways they help us all.

“Suddenly you realize how integral these people – just recently strangers – are to your life and to the well-being of your loved ones. Suddenly I was forming these personal relationships with the caregivers who were giving everything to ensure the health of my most prized possession.”



Evolving to meet the challenges of our 21st century economy

By Sen. Nicole Poore, Co-Chair, Joint Sunset Committee
(*The News Journal*, Sept. 26, 2015)

Today's economy poses new and unique challenges to the future prosperity of our state. But it also offers exciting new opportunities too, particularly through a dynamic approach to economic development.

Contrary to recent claims made by the Delaware Business Roundtable, the Delaware Economic Development Office is evolving in a way that makes our state well-positioned to thrive in this new economic era. And we're seeing results. In fact, Delaware's job growth has more than doubled other states in our region over the last two years.

In announcing his company's decision to create 87 jobs by opening its first U.S. plant in Delaware, AB Group Packaging CEO Dermot Brady said: "Our management team was completely bowled over by the 'can do' attitude, fantastic training centers and support structure in place. We were looking for the very best America has to offer and we believe we have found it here."

Mr. Brady's affinity for Delaware – and his decision to move his company here – isn't just incidental. It's the product of some significant strategic planning and coordination between lawmakers, DEDO and the business community. This year, the General Assembly took an important step toward enhancing that collaboration by passing legislation calling on DEDO to issue five-year strategic plans and annual reports detailing its objectives and strategies. DEDO will also be required to hold public meetings across the state, getting feedback on the use of public funds for economic development purposes. That legislation, which I sponsored, grew out of a Joint Sunset Committee review that was aimed not only at increasing transparency, but also at helping DEDO become more nimble than ever before in responding to changing economic conditions.

Make no mistake, though, DEDO had already shown an ability to adapt.

Hearing that attention should be given to all businesses regardless of industry, DEDO evolved from the cluster-based economic development strategy of years past and established Delaware's first Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program, dedicating a business leader to each county and becoming more responsive to the different markets across the state. In just the last two years, these leaders have assisted over 1,750 established businesses and entrepreneurs, crafting personalized strategies to help them grow.

New programs include the Limited Investment for Financial Traction (LIFT) initiative, which helped 46



small businesses improve cash flow and retain hundreds of jobs during the Great Recession. In addition, the Delaware Rural Irrigation Program has provided more than 50 loans to aid in the irrigation of more than 3000 acres of farmland. That's meant better crop yield to boost our agricultural industry.

In response to concerns from small business owners that they could not easily access capital to explore new opportunities, DEDO created the

new State Small Business Credit Initiative. That initiative supports relationships between banks and entrepreneurs so businesses get access to more of the capital they need to thrive.

DEDO also took a major step to modernize its technology with a new Web site unveiled earlier this year. This site not only helps market the state, but also provides practical tools for businesses. The state's Business First Steps Web site, which was constructed in part by DEDO, also just won a national award from the Center for Digital Government.

The most important need identified by businesses of all sizes has been a highly skilled workforce. That's why DEDO began supporting workforce development training programs across a wide range of skill specialties. Those grants have helped enhance the skills of more than 9,000 Delawareans in recent years.

In order to bolster its abilities to recruit businesses to Delaware's downtowns and city centers, DEDO launched Project Pop-Up. This initiative provides Delaware entrepreneurs the opportunity to open a business in designated downtown business districts rent-free for the first three months. Businesses selected receive one-on-one guidance, free of charge, from a DEDO small business advisor and other subject matter experts. Since the inception of the program in 2012, 14 business owners have been selected for the program; of those, 13 are still in business and nine still occupy their current downtown location.

Through all of these efforts, the state has made considerable progress. But our work to strengthen the economy is far from done. It requires constant evaluation and change. The Joint Sunset Committee is committed to ensuring our reforms become a reality, and that DEDO's new requirements for public engagement lead to even more successful investment in our shared economic future.

By continuing to build on our progress, Delaware has a tremendous opportunity to keep outpacing the region in job growth and ensure our state realizes its enormous economic potential.