

The Slate Belt Heritage Center



Featured in the show Chamber Room: "A Walk Through History: Bangor at 150"

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Open Saturdays & Sundays:
April -October 12:00 -3:00 PM

Free Admission /Donations accepted

*Come enjoy the rich heritage of the Slate Belt Area.
New Members welcome.*

30 North First Street Bangor, PA . During operating hours: 610-599-4993
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Shaping PA's Future: Critical Discussions During State Budget Hearings

By Rep. Ann Flood

Last week, I participated in the House Appropriations Committee's budget hearings, where my fellow committee members and I closely examined Gov. Josh Shapiro's proposed \$51.5 billion budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year, asking critical questions and seeking clear answers.

On Tuesday, I raised concerns with the Department of Community and Economic Development about the proposed \$15 per hour minimum wage increase, highlighting the potential impact on small businesses and emphasizing the need to balance wage growth with economic sustainability. (Watch video.) Later, I questioned the Department of Revenue about declining lottery sales, which fund vital senior programs. While revenue has decreased, I was informed that these programs remain stable for now. (Watch video.)

Public safety was another key focus. On Wednesday, I asked the Pennsylvania State Police about recruitment challenges and preparations for upcoming high-profile events, such as America250 and the FIFA World Cup. Keeping Pennsylvanians safe, especially with large events on the horizon, remains a top priority. I was assured that the State Police, in coordination with local, state, and federal agencies, are actively planning to keep residents and visitors safe from any potential threats. (Watch video.)

During Wednesday afternoon's hearing, I pressed Department of Transportation officials on automatic voter registration, seeking assurance that safeguards are in place to ensure lawful registrations. I also addressed the rising costs of voter registration and the importance of maintaining transparency in the process. PennDOT officials say they are following the law and only registering lawful citizens to vote.

Lastly, I discussed the affordability of higher education, speaking with representatives from the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, community colleges and state-related universities on Thursday. I raised concerns about ongoing delays with the Free Application for Federal State Aid (FAFSA) and their potential impact on students. I was assured that universities have made accommodations to ensure students are not negatively impacted, and they remain committed to addressing any related challenges. (Watch video.)

The House Appropriations Committee continues its review of the state budget this week, holding hearings with several key state departments, including Education, Agriculture, Environmental Protection, State and Labor and Industry.

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