

## "I'm Guilty Of Living Too Long"

By Taylor W. Munoz / Chief of Staff Office of Senator Mario Scavello

**HARRISBURG** - Last week Senator Mario Scavello offered formal remarks on the Pennsylvania Senate floor urging his Senate and House colleagues to act on school property tax reform. Mr. President, today I rise to speak on an issue that is of critical importance to the constituents of my home communities in Monroe and Northampton Counties – the issue of school property tax reform.

For years, there has been much discussion in this legislative body about how to reform and make fair the burdensome and outdated school property tax. All too often, this issue gets buried in discussions about a host of high-profile topics – including pension reform, charter schools, fair education funding and others – and these issues are certainly all worthy of discussion and much-needed action.

However, these issues are often used as an excuse to ignore the very real, very pressing and, in some cases, very deadly issue of school property tax reform. You may wonder why I used the term "deadly."

Well, in my district, we have the highest school property tax burden of any region of the state. We have seniors who are pinching what pennies they have and choosing between whether to buy their food and medication, or whether to pay their school taxes. We have widows who, after the death of their spouse, had their social security income slashed in half. Now they're trying to live on \$1,200 per month and cannot make ends meet. Their home is paid off, but they've had 300, 400 or even 500% school property tax increases over the last couple decades.

One woman who could no longer afford her school tax told me, "I'm guilty of living too long." Another resident told me how he came to his neighbor's rescue. His elderly neighbor could no longer afford the school property tax on his home and shut himself in his garage with his car running in order to try and take his own life. The gentleman I spoke with said he found the man and was able to pull him out of the garage before he died.

This is how deadly the continued inaction on school property tax reform has become. Another incident happened in Monroe County not too long ago where a man facing tax sale of his long-time family home barricaded himself in his home and had a standoff with police before committing suicide in his house. These scenarios are truly heart-breaking.

Every day I receive calls at my office asking when the Legislature is going to act on school property tax reform. Since the early 2000s, this body has been talking about school property tax reform in the form of Senate Bill 76 and House Bill 76, known as "The Property Tax Independence Act." I have been and continue to be a co-sponsor of SB 76.

For 15 years, I have authored and co-sponsored numerous bills to provide relief to our property owners around the state to no avail. While my district was the fastest growing region in the State, we did not receive fair funding in line with the population growth we experienced. And that lack of funding has caused long-lasting and far-reaching consequences for our communities – and other communities across the state.

I am calling on my colleagues in the Senate and House today to DO SOMETHING. I have had enough talk. We know the possibilities and it's time to act to provide relief where it is needed most. Today, my priority remains with our seniors and those on fixed income living in our Commonwealth. If we cannot muster the votes for a comprehensive elimination package and the 15-year school property tax reform stalemate continues, then we MUST do something to help our seniors. Seniors who have paid their fair share for decades, who haven't had children in school for years and who have struggled to make ends meet in the wake of the death of a spouse.

I have run the numbers. A one half percent increase in the State Sales tax would wipe out school property taxes for a majority of seniors within the Commonwealth. And you know the nice thing about the sales tax? 30% is paid by non-residents. And a small sales tax increase is a fairer, simpler and more affordable solution than our current situation where our seniors are shackled to their homes as they watch their retirement savings disappear with the ever-increasing school property tax.

While full elimination of school property taxes remains a goal, we CANNOT allow inaction on reform to continue to prevent us from taking care of our seniors. Because, when a senior leaves a house, you know what happens? They are often replaced by a family with children – children who cost our school districts to educate. I can point out areas within my District where many seniors used to reside, but that have now moved on or lost their homes to their high school property taxes.

Mr. President, today I call on my colleagues to join me in pushing this issue forward, to develop real action. After two decades of "conversations" and "studies" and "commissions" and "working groups," it's time to see REAL ACTION. Thank you, Mr. President.

## "Mission Of Love Ministries" Annual Holiday Community Dinner

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**NOTICE**

**ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE EMAILED ONLY TO BVTIMES@RCN.COM BY FRIDAYS NOON**

**Ackermanville United Methodist**  
**1410 Ackermanville Road, Bangor**  
 Sun 10am Worship. Rev. Sukja Bang  
 (610) 588-7818,  
 www.ackermanvilleumc.org

**Bangor Church of the Nazarene**  
**150 Bunny Trail, Bangor**  
 Sun 9:30am SS, 10:40am Worship  
 (Children's Church to grade 2), 5pm  
 Powerhouse Praise Practice, 6pm Teen  
 Straight Talk & Small Groups. Kenneth  
 L. Bean, Pastor  
 (610) 588-6929

**Belfast Bible**  
**483 Belfast Rd., Belfast**  
 Sunday School (all ages) 9:30am, Wor-  
 ship 10:45am, Evening Service 7pm.  
 Pastor Michael Yaworski.

**Belfast Wesley United Methodist**  
**607 School St., Belfast**  
 Children's SS & Adult SS 9am, Wor-  
 ship 10am, coffee fellowship following  
 worship. Pastor Paul Milligan. (610)  
 746-3652.

**Benders Mennonite Church**  
**975 Benders Church Rd., Pen Argyl**  
 Sun Worship service every Sunday at  
 10:10am; Food Bank 3rd Saturday of  
 the month 9-11am. 610-863-9114.

**Bethel Bible Church of Mt. Zion**  
**7742 N. Delaware Dr. (Rt. 611),  
 Martins Creek**  
 Free Bread Every Saturday, 3eryone  
 welcome, questions 908-483-8231;  
 Sunday School 9am, Sunday Morning  
 Worship 10am. Pastor Rick Tunis, 610-  
 250-9890. Learn about us online  
 www.bethelbiblechurchofmtzion.org.

**Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**703 S. Delaward Dr. (Rt 611),  
 Mt. Bethel (Stone Church)**  
 Every Sunday- 9am Worship, Commu-  
 nion offered 1st & 3rd Sundays.  
 610-588-7056, www.celcpa.org

**Clearfield Bible Holiness Church**  
**1502 Bushkill Ctr Rd, Wind Gap**  
 Sun- SS 10:15am, Worship 11:15am &  
 3pm. Pastor Donald Herrick.  
 (812) 653-3975.

**Community Baptist**  
**Weona Park Center, Pen Argyl**  
 Sun - Bible study 7pm. Separate  
 class for age 10 & under.

**Community Presbyterian**  
**1755 S Delaware Drive, Mt. Bethel**  
 Sun. - SS 9:15am, Worship service  
 10:30am, Coffee hour on last sunday of  
 every month following service.  
 www.mtbethelpresbyterian.org,  
 (570) 897-6766.

**Cross Road Baptist Church**  
**201 Second St., Bangor**  
 Sun- 9:15am Praise Sing, 9:30am SS,  
 10:45am Worship; Wed- 7pm Prayer/

Bible Study. Rev. Jay VanHorn, Pastor  
 (610) 588-3966,  
 www.crossroadbaptistbangor.org

**The Lady's Guild of Our Lady of Vic-  
 tory R.C. Church, Tannersville** will hold  
 a Chicken Cordon Blue Dinner on April  
 28th. We would appreciate your help  
 in advertising this year's event without  
 cost to the church.

**The East Bangor United Methodist**  
**Community Church**  
 Thurs., Nov. 7  
 -1:00 p.m. Bazaar Workshop  
 -6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal  
 Fri., Nov. 8 -6:00 - 8:00 p.m. "Shoe  
 Box" Packing Party  
 Sat., Nov. 9-8:00 p.m. A.A. Meeting  
 Sun., Nov. 10 -8:30 a.m. Choir Re-  
 hearsal -9:15 a.m. Worship Service  
 w/Children's Church  
 -10:30 a.m. Adult Forum  
 Pastor David Goss  
 (610) 588-4453 Dial-A-Message  
 (610) 588-3896 www.ebumc.org

**Faith Alive Community Church**  
**10 Mechanic St, Wind Gap**  
 Tues- 6pm Ladies Prayer Meeting (2nd  
 Tues); Wed- 6:30pm Revival Prayer,  
 7:15pm Adult Bible Study; Sat- 10-2pm  
 Prayer Stop (1st Sat); Sun- 9:15am  
 Family Fellowship, 9:30am Interces-  
 sory Prayer, 10am Worship, 10:45am  
 Children's Church, Communion at  
 10:30am (1st Sun). Pastor Matthew  
 Whistler. (610) 863-6911,  
 www.faccpa.org

**Faith United Presbyterian**  
**Penna & Heller Aves., Pen Argyl**  
 Sun.- 9am Choir, 10am Worship/  
 Communion/Food Bank/Church School.  
 (610) 836-4447

**Family Life Community Church**  
**1115 Richmond Rd, Bangor**  
 Wed- Kidz Night Out at The Hub 6:30-  
 8pm (kids 6 thru 6th gr.); Thurs- Teen  
 Night Out at The Hub 6:30-8pm (gr.  
 7-9); Sun- 10am Celebration Service.  
 Pastor Mike Poppa. 610-588-3736,  
 www.flccbangor.com.

**First United Evangelical**  
**25 S 2nd St., Bangor**  
 Sun. - 7pm Prayer Meeting & Bible  
 Study; Jan 20- 9am Prayer Meeting,  
 9:30am Church School, 10:30am Wor-  
 ship. Pastor Ronald Shipman at  
 (610) 588-3226

**First United Methodist Church**  
**55 N. Third St., Bangor**  
 Worship every Sunday at 11am, Adult  
 and Children Sunday Schools 9:45am,  
 Communion first Sunday of month,  
 Wednesday evening Bible Study  
 6:30pm. Pastor Chris Hardy  
 (610) 588-4673.

**First United Methodist**  
**19 West & Water St., Wind Gap**  
 Sun.- 9am SS, 10am Worship/Commu-  
 nion, 11am Fellowship on 1st Sunday of  
 each month. Pastor John Vidal  
 (570) 426-0645

**Flicksville United Church of Christ**

1337 Lower South Main Street  
 Bangor, PA 18013  
 Pastor Ken Hess  
 610-588-4648  
 www.flicksvilleucc.com  
 Sunday School at 9:30 AM  
 Worship at 10:45 AM  
 All are welcome!

**God's Missionary Church**  
**of Northampton**  
**4965 Nor. Bath Blvd (Rt 329),  
 Northampton, PA**  
 Sun- SS 9:30am, Service 10:30 & 7pm,  
 Youth Service 6:30pm; Wed- Prayer  
 Meeting 7:30pm. Rev. Rodney Keister.  
 (610) 262-4412.  
 http://GMC-N.com

**Good Shepherd Evangelical**  
**Lutheran Church,**  
**2904 Church Rd, Martins Creek PA**  
 Sunday Worship Service 9:00 am. Adult  
 Bible Study Following Worship. Pastor  
 Louise Williams.  
 www.goodshepherdmc.com

**Grace Lutheran Church**  
**5907 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth**  
 Tue. - 6:30pm Choir; Jan 20- 9am  
 Service/Communion, 10:15am SS,  
 10:30am Confirmation/Adult Forum.  
 (610) 759-9080, www.gracebelfast.org

**Grace United Methodist**  
**404 Mountain Ave., Pen Argyl**  
 Sun.- 8:30am Contemporary, 10am  
 Blended, 10am SS. Rev. J. Timothy  
 Fisher. (610) 863-4811. www.worshipat-  
 grace.org

**Holy Trinity Orthodox Church**  
**1501 Trinity Court, Stroudsburg**  
 Divine Liturgy Sundays 9:30 AM;  
 Vespers Saturday 6:30 PM. (570) 421-  
 4455, www.holytrinitypoconos.org.

**Hopesprings Community of Faith**  
**301 Market Street, Bangor**  
 Sun-Services 10am. Jonathan Alman-  
 zar, Lead Pastor. 855-INFO-HOPE.  
 www.hopespringscommunity.org.

**Hope UCC**  
**2nd & Cherry St., Wind Gap**  
 Sun- 10:30am Worship (Communion  
 1st Sunday of the month). All are wel-  
 come! SS every other Friday.  
 Pastor Emily B. Hall. (610) 863-4474

**Living Waters Christian Church**  
**396 Sterling Rd. Unit D, Tobyhanna**  
 Thurs- 6pm Christian Edu Sun- 9:15am  
 Christian Edu, 10:30am Worship. Rev.  
 Dr. Jacqueline R. Walters  
 570-350-4710

**Mt. Bethel Church**  
**A Church of the Lutheran Brethren**  
**1270 Belvidere Cr. Rd, Mt. Bethel**  
 Sun.- 8:30am Traditional Service ,  
 11am Contemporary Service Visit our  
 website www.mountbethelchurch.org or  
 call (570) 897-7142 for info.

**Our Lady of Good Counsel**  
 436 South 2nd Street  
 Bangor, PA 18013  
 Rectory (610) 588-5445  
 Parish Website: www.ourladystvincent.

com Mass Schedule  
 Weekdays 8AM excluding Thursdays  
 (See Church Website)  
 Saturday 4 PM Sunday 8:30 AM  
 Holy Days (See Church Website)  
 Saturday Confessions 3:25-3:45 PM

**Our Lady of Victory R.C. Church,**  
 Tannersville, PA will hold a Free Com-  
 munity Dinner on Sunday, July 21st  
 from 3pm to 4pm. They would appreci-  
 ate your assistance in advertising this  
 dinner without cost to the Church.

**Portland Baptist Church**  
**601 Delaware Ave., Portland**  
 Sun- Sunday School 9am, Service  
 10:30am; Wed- Bible Study 10:30 with  
 Prayer Meeting to follow. Elevator and  
 rampsWe are handicap accessible with  
 automatic doors, elevator and restroom.  
 (570) 897-6866  
 www.portlandbaptistchurch.com

**Prince of Peace Lutheran Church**  
**2445 Lake Minsi Dr., Bangor**  
 Saturday Worship: 1st & 3rd 5:30 pm.  
 Sunday School starts at 8:30am (Sep-  
 tember-May )  
 Sunday Service- 9:45am  
 Holy Communion is served weekly. All  
 are welcome!

**Presbyterian Parish of**  
**Bangor-Roseto**  
**332 Kennedy Dr., Bangor**  
 Sun.- Worship 10:30am. Rev. Albert  
 Martin. (610) 588-4864, email presbyteri-  
 anbr@frontiernet.net.  
 www.facebook.com/Presbyterybr

**Richmond United Methodist Church**  
**8538 Delaware Dr, Bangor**  
 Sun.- Service 10am; 4th Sunday Fel-  
 lowship Hour; Christmas Eve Candle-  
 light Services 4pm and 7pm. Pastor Ed  
 Van Arsdale. (610) 588-7317

**The Roseto Independent**  
**Presbyterian Church**  
**210 Garibaldi Ave, Roseto**  
 Sunday Worship Services 9:15am  
 Greeting/Welcoming, 9:30am Service.  
 All Welcome. Rev. Barry Eng. (610)  
 599-9949, www.RIPC-OnlineToday.org.

**Slate Belt - Nazareth Baptist**  
**1620 Church Rd, Pen Argyl**  
 Sun.- 9:30am SS, 10:30am Worship &  
 Children's Church (nursery provided),  
 5:30pm Bible Study. Pastor Scott J.  
 Davis. (570) 664-4603.

**St. Brigid's Episcopal Church,**  
**Nazareth.**  
 Delete Sunday school  
 Holy Eucharist @ 9:30 a.m.  
 St. Brigid's Episcopal Church  
 310 Madison Avenue  
 Nazareth, PA 18064  
 Phone: 610-746-3910  
 Fax: 610-746-4515

**St. Elizabeth's Parish**  
**300 West Babbitt Ave., Pen Argyl**  
 Sun.- Masses 8am, 9:30am & 11am.  
 Rev. Msgr. Vincent P. York.  
 610-863-4777

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran**  
**12 N. Westbrook, Pen Argyl**  
 Sun.- 8:45am SS, 10am Worship/Holy

Communion. (610) 863-4332

**St. Joseph's Episcopal**  
**1440 Verona Dr., W. Bangor**  
 Jan 20- Eucharist 11am; Christmas Eve  
 Service 4pm. Rev. Joel Atkinson. Coffee  
 hour after service.

**St. Luke's U.C.C. Belfast**  
**471 Belfast Rd., Nazareth (Belfast)**  
 SS 9am, Worship 10:30am. Rev. Frank  
 Gassler. 610-759-0244.  
 www.stlukesuccbelfast.com

**St. Mary's Episcopal**  
**340 Lehigh St., Wind Gap**  
 Sun.- service 9am. Coffee hour follows  
 service. Rev. Joel Atkinson.

Maundy Thursday Service will be held  
 at St. Mary's Episcopal Church Wind  
 Gap at 5:30 P.M. Easter Morning Ser-  
 vice will be held at St. Mary's Episcopal  
 Church Wind Gap at 9:00 a.m.

**St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran**  
**1422 Church Rd, Pen Argyl**  
 Sun.- Bible Study 11am, Praise Band  
 7pm; Jan 19- Youth Choir 6pm, Adult  
 Choir 7:30pm; Jan 20- Services 8am  
 and 10:15am, 9am SS.  
 (610) 863-6859

**St. Vincent dePaul**  
 720 Delaware Avenue  
 Portland, PA 18351  
 Rectory (610) 588-5445  
 Mass Schedule Weekdays (at OLCG)  
 Saturday 6 PM Sunday 10:30 AM  
 Holy Days (See Church Website)  
 Saturday Confessions 5:40-5:50 PM

**The Pentecostal Christian**  
**Church the Truth**  
**(Iglesia Pentecostal La Verdad)**  
**4 Jory Ave Pen Argyl**  
 Sun.- Prayer 14- Sunday School  
 (Escuela Dominical) 12 noon, Praise &  
 Worrship (Cuho Evangelistico) 1pm.

**Temple Israel of the Poconos**  
**Egalitarian Conservative Synagogue**  
**660 Wallace Street, Stroudsburg**  
 Sabbath Services: Friday evening 7pm  
 followed by a Traditional Oneg Shabbat.  
 Saturday morning 9:30am followed by a  
 traditional Kiddush. Dr. Sandra Alfonsi  
 570-223-7062.

**Trinity United Church of Christ**  
 632 S Delaware Dr.  
 Mt Bethel Pa 18343  
 Sunday Worship 10:30 am SS and  
 Confirmation 9:00 am Rev. Rodney  
 Wells pastor

**Trinity Evangelical Lutheran**  
**404 Broadway, Bangor**  
 Thur - Christian Ed 6:30pm, Choir  
 7:30pm; Jan 20- SS 9am, Worship/  
 Communion 10am. Pastor Laine. (610)  
 588-2023, www.tlcbangor.com.

**Zion Presbyterian Church**  
**Water St., Wind Gap**  
 Sun.- Rev. Albert Martin will be speak-  
 ing at the 9:30am service. Children SS  
 during the service. Visitors welcome.  
 (610) 863-8896.