

# Senate Committee Advances Senator Boscola's Genetic Testing Access Bills

By Senator Lisa Boscola

HARRISBURG, PA – The Senate Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure Committee today unanimously approved legislation sponsored by Senator Lisa M. Boscola (D-Northampton), Senate Bills 535 and 536, which would allow licensed genetic counselors in Pennsylvania to directly order genetic tests.



The two-bill package updates both the Osteopathic Medical Practice Act and the Medical Practice Act, removing outdated restrictions that currently delay patient care and increase costs.

"Last session, this General Assembly did something incredible with Act 1 of 2023 by eliminating financial barriers to life-saving

BRCA-related genetic testing for high-risk women," Boscola said. "Today, we took another step to improve access, this time by removing the procedural hurdles that delay diagnoses and drive up costs."

Pennsylvania remains one of the few states that explicitly prohibits licensed genetic counselors from ordering genetic tests, despite their advanced education and clinical training.

"Patients should not face unnecessary delays, waiting for a doctor to sign off on a test that a qualified genetic counselor is already prepared to order," Boscola added. "These professionals are trained to guide patients through complex decisions. This reform simply lets them do the job they've been licensed to do."

The legislation has received broad support from the medical community, including the Pennsylvania Medical Society, the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association, St. Luke's University Health Network, Penn State Health, and patient advocacy groups like the PA Breast Cancer Coalition.

The bills now move to the full Senate for consideration.

## Supporting Pennsylvania's Pollinators: How the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Is Making a Difference

By DCNR

PA. - Pollinators like bees, butterflies, bats, and hummingbirds play an essential role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and supporting agriculture. Recognizing their importance, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has been helping to protect and restore pollinator habitats across the state.

From enhancing habitat within state parks and forests to transforming community open spaces, DCNR's multi-faceted approach is fostering a buzz of positive environmental change.

Enhancing Pollinator Habitats in Pennsylvania State Parks

State parks are natural refuges for pollinators, and DCNR resource staff are actively incorporating pollinator habitat enhancements into restoration projects whenever possible.

Several parks have converted former lawns and agricultural fields into native meadows. For example, Big Elk Creek in Chester County and Codorus State Park in York County have undertaken large-scale agricultural-to-meadow conversions, creating acres of native grass and wildflower habitats. Prince Gallitzin in Cambria County and Mt. Pisgah in Bradford County have restored meadow buffers along waterways, improving water quality and pollinator resources.

One innovative collaboration at Swatara State Park in Lebanon County involved renewing agricultural leases with a provision that fields would gradually be taken out of crop production and planted in native meadows.



## Submit your I-80 comments to DEP

By State Rep. Tarah Probst

STROUDSBURG - The PA Department of Environmental Protection received a permit request from PennDOT for the I-80 expansion project in Stroud Township. They are requesting permission to fill wetlands, build a bridge, install or replace stormwater outfalls, and fill in floodways near tributaries to Pocono Creek,

The permit ran in the PA Bulletin on Saturday, June 7, triggering a 30-day public comment period. With past non-compliance and the scope of the I-80 expansion project, I am insisting on a public hearing ASAP! Our community deserves a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement to fully assess potential environmental risks of this \$935 million, 3.5-mile project.

Major concerns include stormwater runoff and erosion, increased flood risk, loss of forested wetlands, construction disruption, erosion and sedimentation runoff risks to Appenzell Creek and McMichael Creek, wetland mitigation being done in a different county 150 miles away, stormwater overload risks that could lead to potential flash flooding, risks to our excellent water quality, and more.

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## Juneteenth National Freedom Day

By State Rep. Joe Emrick

BETHLEHEM - This Thursday, June 19, is Juneteenth National Freedom Day. Considered the longest-running African American holiday, Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when union soldiers reached Galveston, Texas – the furthest point in the south – with news of the end of the Civil War, which had occurred two months earlier with the surrender of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee in Virginia.

The troops' arrival also came two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves and ending slavery in the United States. Learn more about the history of Juneteenth here [https://links.pahousenews.com/q/ZdY00tn\\_IE0Xa3lfhDi3JUKirrDdEOzkZtaZcOJYnZ0aW1lc0ByY24uY29tw4gX7yRNbwKdLSQLR9cP2971Mle8kg](https://links.pahousenews.com/q/ZdY00tn_IE0Xa3lfhDi3JUKirrDdEOzkZtaZcOJYnZ0aW1lc0ByY24uY29tw4gX7yRNbwKdLSQLR9cP2971Mle8kg).

