

Supporting Our Veterans

By State Rep. Ann Flood

I recently joined in the unanimous support of a new state law that aims to improve services for veterans affected by military sexual trauma.

Act 38 of 2026 will require county directors of veterans affairs to undergo additional training and certification in trauma-informed care, including military sexual trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. The goal is to help staff recognize symptoms, reduce potential triggers, and better connect veterans with appropriate services and resources.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, nearly one in three women and one in 50 men in the armed forces report experiencing sexual assault or sexual harassment during military service. The actual number is believed to be higher because many incidents go unreported.

The law takes effect in 180 days.

New Law to Boost Human Trafficking Awareness

By State Rep. Ann Flood

Statistics show hotels, motels and short-term lodging rentals are some of the most common venues where human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking, take place. A new state law aims to stop that.

I recently voted in support of Act 31 of 2026, which requires training to ensure employees of these establishments are prepared to identify and respond to suspected human trafficking as it occurs. The law takes effect in one year.

The measure is the latest effort by the General Assembly to stop this fast-growing crime. Another new law, Act 41 of 2026, aims to help the Pennsylvania attorney general and law enforcement more effectively target and prosecute human trafficking by moving most of the state's prostitution offenses to the human trafficking section of the state Crimes Code and enhancing penalties. This law will take effect in 60 days.

If you or someone you know is being trafficked, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

Clean Team Workforce July Employee of the Month

By Stefanie Appel

ALLENTOWN, PA – The Clean Team Workforce congratulates its Employee of the Month for July, Bill M. Bill has lived in the Lehigh Valley for over thirty years and considers Allentown his home. He served in the United States Army as a Light Weapons Infantryman fire team leader and was honorably discharged after his commitment ended.

Most recently, Bill worked as an over-the-road tractor-trailer driver until his CDL license was suspended because of an unpaid traffic violation. Bill admitted he made "poor life choices" while unemployed, which led to his savings disappearing quickly. Then, after a fight, Bill's girlfriend kicked him out, and he suddenly found himself homeless in January. Facing the cold and with nowhere to go, he turned to the Allentown Rescue Mission for warm, safe shelter.

Having never experienced homelessness, Bill didn't know what to expect, but he found the Mission was a place where he could get the help he needed until he got back on his feet. While in the Emergency Shelter, Bill learned about the Mission's eight-week Transformation Program, which combines life skills training with the Gospel message. Bill joined the Transformation Program and was a model guest. He grew in his faith and encouraged other guests on their

journey to independence. After graduating from the Transformation Program, Bill took a job on the Clean Team Workforce. He started as a street cleaner; however, when the Mission's kitchen department desperately needed help,

Bill stepped in. He didn't have any kitchen experience, but graciously accepted the position to help the Mission. Bill did a great job. He was reliable and always showed up ready to work, but looked forward to returning to street cleaning when the time was right. Today, Bill is back in his original job, enjoying working outside as a key employee cleaning Hamilton Street and mentoring new employees. Bill has been saving money and hopes to start trucking again in August. He reinstated his license and has been applying for jobs. His goal is to accept one of the jobs he has been offered, save more money, and eventually relocate to the south.

The Allentown Rescue Mission knows Bill is ready to move on to bigger and better things. When reflecting on his journey, Bill thanked the Allentown Rescue Mission and the Lord for his transformation. He shared, "I was rescued here! I literally owe the Mission my life, since I was homeless in the middle of winter with nowhere else to go.



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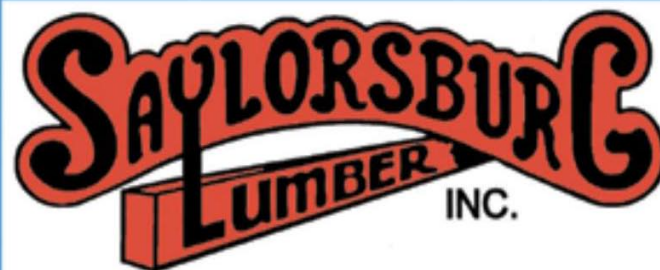
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