

# Profile



## State Senator Jeffrey E. Piccola

15TH DISTRICT

*Dauphin and York Counties*

### EDUCATION

- Senator Jeffrey E. Piccola was born and raised in Susquehanna Township and graduated from the public school system
- Graduated from Gettysburg College
- Graduated from George Washington University Law School

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force
- Pennsylvania House of Representatives (1977-1995) for the 104th Legislative District (Dauphin County)
- Won a Special Election (November 1995) for the 15th Senatorial District (re-elected in 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008)
- Served as Majority Whip, the third-ranking member of the Senate Republican Leadership Team (2001-2006)
- Chair: Senate Education Committee (2009-present)
- Member of the following Senate Committees: Community, Economic and Recreational Development, Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure, Judiciary, and Rules and Executive Nominations

#### ***Ensuring Public Protection/Safety and Judicial Reform***

- Champion of Act 30 of 2007, which severs the tie-in between federal and state judicial salaries, a connection established in the inexcusable 2005 pay raise
- Author of the "Property Rights Protection Act," historic legislation signed into law in 2006 and designed to provide greater protection to owners of private property from governmental authorities who abuse the use of eminent domain powers
- Champion of efforts to pass meaningful lawsuit abuse reform including successful passage of joint and several liability reform (June 2002 "Fair Share Act")
- Supporter of efforts to reduce high medical malpractice costs, eliminate frivolous lawsuits, and set reasonable caps on non-economic damages
- Outspoken House Judiciary Committee Chair who lead numerous judicial and crime issues, including the successful 1995 Special Session on Crime
- 1994 Republican leader of the House team that successfully impeached then-Supreme Court Justice Rolf Larsen
- Sponsor of "Jen and Dave's Law" that established a statewide information system to protect children in custody situations
- Sponsor of legislation that allows professional counselors and marriage and family therapists to be licensed for the first time in Pennsylvania and affording consumers the resources they need to choose quality care
- Former Senate Aging and Youth Committee Chair who strengthened laws to prevent elder abuse
- Honored for his legislative work by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Pennsylvania Optometric Association, the American School Counselors Association, the Pennsylvania Mental Health Counselors Association, Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Association, Common Cause of Pennsylvania, and B'nai B'rith Salem Lodge
- Supporter of state funding and resources for the ongoing expansion of the HACC John Shumaker Public Safety Center

#### ***Fostering Business and Economic Development***

- Fighter to reduce government spending, taxes, and red tape
- Author of legislation prohibiting the City of Harrisburg (after filing for distressed city status) from enacting a commuter tax on non-residents employed in the city

- Supporter and advocate of state funding for the Hershey Center for Applied Research, the innovative medical research facility which will likely be the region's greatest economic engine for perhaps decades
- Sponsor of legislation changing ownership of Harrisburg International and Capital City Airports from state to local control, enhancing economic development, improving services, and a state-of-the-art terminal (opened in 2004)
- Supporter of quality of life projects: Wildwood Lake Sanctuary, Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts, Penn State Cancer Center, National Civil War Museum, Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, Giant Center in Hershey, and the Fort Halifax Park
- Supporter of highway and bridge improvements, including the much needed Dauphin Narrows bypass, reconstructed Paxtang Parkway, Interstate 283 ramps, and Hershey Park Drive extension
- Advocate for facilities providing indigent care including the Capital Region Health System at Hamilton Health Center, Inc., Pinnacle Health System, and Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center
- Sponsor of natural gas deregulation legislation to provide customer choice to families and small businesses
- Recipient of the 2006 Catalyst Award and 2003 Government Leader of the Year, Harrisburg Regional Chamber and the Capital Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC)

## **Improving Public Education**

### **As Chairman of the Senate Education Committee:**

- Spearheaded a comprehensive school choice plan including the creation of an opportunity scholarship program (or tuition vouchers), reform to the state's charter and cyber charter school laws, and expansion of Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program
- Convened 11 hearings, 11 committee meetings and moved 44 bills out of committee during the 2011-2012 legislative session
- Led the successful enactment of the State Board of Education regulation to implement Keystone Exams to ensure high school diplomas have meaning and that every graduate demonstrates mastery of needed educational concepts
- Advanced over 50 bills in the two-year legislative session (2008-2009 and 2009-2010) and held 28 public hearings on important issues relating to school safety, school choice, charter schools, the education budget, reform of poorly performing schools, alternative education, and the state's intermediate units
- Member, Governor's Advisory Commission on Academic Standards, in which he helped lead the charge to establish new rigorous education standards (1996)
- Advocate for charter schools, professional development for teachers, tenure, and sabbatical reform
- Author who secured passage of the "Education Empowerment Act," landmark legislation for poorly performing school districts in the state
- Advocate for the creation of the Harrisburg University of Science and Technology
- Author of provisions to update the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program to assist special needs families
- Leader in creating the South Central Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Program, Inc., a scholarship organization that provides tuition assistance to families in the region
- Champion of Act 157 of 2002, requiring schools to display the American flag in classrooms and to offer either the Pledge of Allegiance or the playing of the National Anthem before the start of each school day
- Sponsor of an annual student government seminar for high school students and Good Citizenship Awards for elementary and junior high school children
- Sponsor of legislation to assist the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees, earning their 2006 Leadership Award
- Supporter of the HACC Midtown Campus, designed to expand its presence and opportunities in the City of Harrisburg

## **Spearheading Urban Revitalization**

- Leader in securing passage of the first laws in decades to fight "slumlords" in Pennsylvania's cities (honored by the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities for this effort)
- Vital player in ensuring that the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, which assists the housing needs of low to middle income families in Dauphin County, remained in the City of Harrisburg

## **Reaching Out to the Community**

- Convener of citizens advisory committees for veterans, sportsmen, business owners, and farmers
- Host of monthly town meetings throughout the 15th Senatorial District
- Author of regular newsletters for constituents, local government officials, EMS/firefighters, and senior citizens (in addition to weekly newspaper columns)
- Host of a monthly cable television show on state issues

## **PERSONAL**

- Member and past president of the Susquehanna Township Lions Club
- Member of the American Legion
- Member of Robert Burns Lodge No. 464, F. & A.M. and Trustee of the Harrisburg Consistory; Piccola is a 33rd Degree Mason
- Partner in the Harrisburg law firm of Boswell, Tintner, and Piccola (and member of the Pennsylvania and Dauphin County Bar Associations)
- Piccola lives in Susquehanna Township with his wife, Denise; they are the parents of two grown children, Jason and Jenny, and the grandparents of three grandsons