

# Profile



## State Senator Lisa Baker

### 20TH DISTRICT

*Luzerne, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties*

Senator Lisa Baker is serving her third term representing the 20th Senatorial District, which includes substantial parts of Luzerne and Susquehanna counties and all of Pike, Wayne, and Wyoming counties.

She is noted for her accessibility in the district, for her practical and reasonable approach to problem-solving, and for her bipartisan work on constructive legislation. Numerous community organizations and projects have benefitted from her concerted advocacy, including business development and job creation efforts, library expansions, senior housing initiatives, and recreation programs. Working with county and municipal officials, she has helped to secure essential funding for sewer and water system upgrades, transportation priorities, and intergovernmental cooperation efforts.

This session is her first chairing the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, which has wide-ranging jurisdiction over significant programs and services. An immediate challenge came when Governor Wolf proposed consolidating four state departments, on which the committee is doing extensive fact-finding and conducting public hearings.

She serves as a member of the following committees: Aging and Youth, Appropriations, Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure, and Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness. These assignments give her the chance to work in-depth on many of the concerns expressed by individuals and groups in the district, to push forward on reform and cost-efficiency measures, and to shape programs opening the door for opportunities that residents are seeking.

In the last session, Senator Baker championed two measures extremely helpful to citizens with disabilities and their families, one creating ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) accounts, and the second establishing the I Want to Work program.

She led the push for changes to the laws and procedures governing the juvenile justice system, in the wake of widespread corruption in Luzerne County. She also contributed an important bill to a successful bipartisan legislative effort strengthening Pennsylvania's child protection laws.

Her efforts on behalf of crime victims resulted in the opportunity to offer in-person testimony before the Board of Probation and Parole when an offender is eligible for release from prison. She also collaborated on the passage of Kevin's Law, eliminating a loophole that rewarded drivers who fled the scene of an accident where a death resulted.

Her dedication to Pennsylvania's veterans is evidenced by her work to secure funding for veterans' outreach and support programs and her leadership in establishing the Pennsylvania Veterans Trust Fund to help needy veterans and their families. She has supported numerous bills to assist our deployed servicemen and women and veteran-owned businesses and was successful in securing approval of a "Veteran" designation on driver's licenses.

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Senator Baker's commitment to emergency services personnel has produced added protections for emergency medical workers through the Good Samaritan Act, the modernization of the EMS code, and recommendations for addressing the manpower and money challenges facing many volunteer fire companies. She pushed legislation through to create Pennsylvania's first state disaster assistance program, to extend grants to municipalities and counties hard hit by flooding and other natural disasters when federal aid is unavailable to cover losses.

Her focus on responsible natural gas drilling standards and safeguards to protect public health and the environment has resulted in greater water protection and improved well-site safety. She is a leader in the effort to extend and expand Pennsylvania's One Call Law, to provide greater community and worker safety.

A proponent of good government measures, she played a key role in strengthening Pennsylvania's Whistleblower Law. She is sponsoring legislation to ban gifts to public officials and employees.

Senator Baker is an inductee of the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Hall of Fame. Other honors and awards include Advocate of the Year from the ARC of Luzerne County, the Commitment to Children Award from the Children's Service Center, the Legislator of the Year Award from the ARC of Pennsylvania and the American Heart Association, the Distinguished Citizens Award and the Silver Distinguished Citizens Medal from The Marine Corps League of Pennsylvania, the Jesse S. Heiges Distinguished Alumnus Award from Shippensburg University, the Guardian of Small Business Award from the National Federation of Independent Business, the Patrick Henry Award from the National Guard Association of the United States, the James Baird Legislative Award from the Firemen's Legislative Federation, and the Outstanding Service Award from the Pennsylvania War Veterans Council.

Active in community and civic organizations, she is a member of the Gino J. Merli Veterans Center Advisory Board, and serves as the Wyoming Conference United Methodist Church trustee at Wyoming Seminary.

She is a graduate of Dallas High School and Shippensburg University, where she received a B.A. in Government Administration. She resides in Lehman Township, Luzerne County, with her husband Gary. They have one son, Carson.