

President's Message

by Judith Eschberger, Esq.

What's The Easiest Way To Access The Capitol Building?

No, the title of this article is not a trick question - the correct answer is not, "resign your position as an elected official and you'll be issued the 'former elected official badge' which allows you to avoid the metal detectors and the lines at the entrances to the Capitol Building."

The correct answer is that after many months of work, there is a method that will permit the ordinary, garden variety lobbyist a way to access the Capitol Building without waiting in line and going through the metal detector. You heard right, you no longer have to be a former elected official in order to be issued an identification badge that allows you to avoid the metal detectors and the lines. There is, however, an additional step - namely, the criminal background check.

After many months of discussions with a variety of interests, PAGR is happy to report that the ten dollar Pennsylvania State Police background check finally gets you something, besides that which you no doubt already know; namely, that you don't have a criminal record.

What does it get you? Although we still cannot access the Capitol by any door, we are permitted to enter the Capitol Building at any of the five doors designated last year by the Department of General Services (the main rotunda entrance, the entrance near the fountain, the main doors of the North and South or Irvis Office Buildings and the Ryan Office Building without going through the metal detector and waiting in line.

You can obtain your criminal background check either online or by filling out the form and submitting it along with your ten dollar payment to the Pennsylvania State Police. The paper option takes four to six weeks to obtain, but the online method is virtually instant. You may access the State Police website via the state webpage and by choosing the "criminal history record check" option, agreeing to the terms of the site, inputting your name, address, birth date and social security number (optional).

Once you've provided the information to be checked, you simply provide the credit card information and within minutes you receive a response certified by the State Police along with an invoice evidencing payment.

Once you've printed the certified response stating that there is no criminal record, you can proceed to contact Marilyn Bygall in the North Office Building to get your picture taken and obtain your badge. Of course, if there is a criminal history or if there is some question as to whether you're clear, you will not receive the certified response, instead, you will be provided with information regarding how long it will take to obtain clearance or a statement that there is a criminal history.

PAGR members have started using the system and obtained their identification badges. We are happy that the many discussions with the leadership in both the Senate and House, the Department of General Services and the Governor's office led to a solution that will benefit our

membership and serves as a recognition that the lobbying community is a part of the legislative process.

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Membership Meeting

Monday, February 2nd

11:30-12:30 PM

Firehouse Restaurant

(on the third floor)

606 N. 2nd Street . Harrisburg

Guest Speaker: Rep John Maher

Sponsor, House Bill 1770

Lobby regulation & disclosure legislation

You Want the Badge? Here's How to Get It!

To renew or apply for a Commonwealth ID badge, you must first undergo a criminal history background check (CHRIA). This can be done by accessing the State website at (<https://epatch.state.pa.us>) Fill out the information form and use your credit card, if you have no criminal history; you will receive a clear CHRIA almost immediately to your email address. Click on the control number and then certified form. Print the certified form. Be advised that the Security Administration will only accept the certified form, which contains the state seal. If there is a criminal history, it will be sent in the mail.

Once the clearance is obtained, contact Marilyn Bygall at the Security System Administration, B05 North Office Building (717-346-1402 or mbygall@state.pa.us). If you are renewing your badge, let them know and they will have the badge ready for you upon pick-up. If this is your first badge, you must make an appointment to get your photo taken. To save time, ask that they send you an application form which can be completed prior to your scheduled appointment. Also, bring a copy of your drivers license for expedited service. Badges may be picked up Monday-Friday from 8 am-noon and 1 pm-4 pm.

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Welcome New Members

Michaele Alcaro
Wolf Block Government Relations

Kimberly Hess
Pennsylvania Legislative Services

Jeffrey A. Feirick
Hatfield Quality Meats. Inc.

Steve Neidlinger
PA Homecare Association

David Ferris
PSEA

Gretchen Ramsey
PA Chamber of Business & Industry