



STATE SENATOR **JIM FERLO**



BIOGRAPHY

- State Senator Jim Ferlo is a Democrat from Highland Park who represents Pennsylvania's 38th Senatorial District. The 38th District includes a large part of the City of Pittsburgh and parts of Allegheny and Westmoreland counties along the Allegheny and Kiski rivers. Senator Ferlo was first elected to Pittsburgh City Council in 1987 and served two terms as Council President during his 14 year tenure (1994 – 1997). Ferlo has been incorporating his own passionate style of community activism since the late 1960s. It was during those early years as a union activist, political organizer and community advocate that the Senator affirmed his commitment to the public and his confidence in people. This commitment and investment has translated into an experienced legislator who is accessible and accountable. Elected to the Pennsylvania Senate in 2003, Senator Ferlo currently serves as the Minority Chairman of the Senate Law and Justice Committee, Minority Vice Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and on three additional standing committees: Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure, Education, and Finance.
- Ferlo was born to Italian immigrant parents in the small upstate town of Rome, NY. He credits part of his legislative effectiveness as being one of 10 siblings. Senator Ferlo's father worked both a day job and also in a tavern in the evenings in order to support his family. Senator's background and upbringing make him sympathetic and cognizant of the importance of small businesses for the contribution they make to people, communities, and the tax base.
- Senator Ferlo's convictions have resulted in legislative results in Harrisburg. In 2006, Ferlo passed Visitation legislation that enabled and encouraged local municipalities to offer tax credits for residential improvements to meet the accessibility needs of elderly individuals and members of the disabled community. In addition, Ferlo was the prime sponsor of the Research & Development Tax Credit, enacted in 2004.
- Senator Ferlo's career reflects not only his emphasis on small businesses, but also local development, green jobs, health care, historic preservation, civil rights, and environmental protection. He remains an active participant in the communities of the 38th Senatorial District and statewide.
- Senator Ferlo has been a leader in shifting the mindset of local development and investment. He serves as Board Treasurer of the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the Green Ribbon Commission, the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee, and Preservation Pennsylvania. He is an active member of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission and the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission.
- Senator Ferlo has fostered the development of the Pittsburgh Green Innovators, a collaboration of 29 community, government, corporate, philanthropic, education and labor groups aiming to develop a trained "green-collar" work force and stimulate growth in the economy through sustainable development. He has also worked closely with community leaders throughout his district to begin non-profit community development engines such as; the Allegheny River Towns Enterprise Zone (ARTEZ), Vandergriff Improvement Program (VIP), Freeport, Leechburg, Apollo Group (FLAG), and Natrona Coming Together

Association (NCTA). He has worked closely with the Urban Redevelopment Authority and Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc to develop a former BP Gas Station into the Energy and Environment Community Outreach Center (EECO) to be an energy efficiency education and resource center that connects the public to money saving green building technologies and programs.

- A staunch supporter of health care reform, Senator Ferlo has been a public health advocate since the early 1970s. He has helped to draft the PA Hospital Patient's Bill of Rights and the National Health Services Act. He acts nationally with the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) as well as numerous local health advocacy programs. He is a member of the American Public Health Association and has been active on various health advocacy issues including his support for a state-wide and national single-payer health care system which would cover all Americans. He worked at the Pittsburgh Free Clinic in the 70's and was a patient's right advocate for the Community Health Advocacy Network. He is currently an active organizer in the debate regarding the future of the Southwest Pennsylvania health care market as Highmark, UPMC, and the West Penn Allegheny Health System vie for position in the region. He has been vocal about his support both for Highmark patients maintaining access to UPMC doctors, and Highmark's bid to take over West Penn Allegheny to ensure the system's future.
- As a man whose history is steeped in advocacy issues, Ferlo fosters that same activism within his constituency. His development of the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Alliance encouraged the creation of citizen councils on a citywide level for just that purpose. Community input and citizen empowerment are intricate parts of Ferlo's public service equation. He led the effort for establishment of District Council elections and sponsored the city's Human Rights Ordinance. He founded the US-CUBA Sister Cities Association nationally and works to promote an appreciation of Pittsburgh's diversity and history. The Allegheny County Community College recently honored Jim with one of its first Vanguard Diversity Awards because of his commitment to equal rights for all.
- Recently, Senator Ferlo sponsored SB 1447, the Statewide Marcellus Shale Gas Drilling Moratorium Act, proposing to discontinue new gas drilling and permitting related to the Marcellus Shale for 1-year, pending further study of known and potential economic, environmental, and public health impacts.
- To stay up to date on Senator Ferlo and the latest in the 38th Senatorial District, subscribe to our email list [HERE](#).