



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE Jordan A. Harris

## 186TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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## CRIMINAL RECORD EXPUNGEMENT LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW

I'm proud to report that legislation vitally important to me and our district has passed the House and the Senate and was recently signed into law by Gov. Tom Wolf.

Criminal record expungement legislation, which I put forward last session and this session, would allow for expungement of specific offenses from a person's criminal record provided certain criteria are met. Basically, this is a way for those who have made mistakes in the past to fully move on and not be tied down by previous poor decisions. After lobbying for this in my first term and continuing to push for this necessary legislation in my second term, I couldn't be happier that this second chance for so many of our friends and neighbors is finally here.

Many other members of the General Assembly were vital in helping to get this legislation done, including the prime sponsor of the bill Sen. Stewart Greenleaf, Reps. Patty Kim, Ron Marsico and Joe Petrarca; and Sens. Shirley Kitchen and Anthony Williams. It was key to achieve support from both sides of the aisle, which we accomplished. We also received support from the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, which played an important role in negotiations.

I can't express to you the importance of being able to get this progressive bill passed through a very conservative state legislature. The House and the Senate are controlled by conservative members who do not always value progressive ideals that could help people in our district. I have fought for criminal record expungement throughout my time in the House, even attempting negotiations with our former governor

– another extremely conservative individual.

This new law has the ability to positively impact those who have served their time and are again trying to become responsible, contributing members of society. That was the goal throughout this entire process, and while this isn't the end of the road, it is a step in the right direction.

Along with the criminal expungement legislation, I will be working tirelessly to try and get the legislature to vote on ban the box legislation. Ban the box refers to limiting an employer's ability to ask for information regarding a job applicant's criminal record prior to employment. This is another piece of legislation aimed at helping people move past mistakes they have made and find good, family-supporting work.

Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in the House and the Senate that would ban the box, and I am working with Rep. Tom Murt on a resolution that would ask the state to institute a ban the box policy relating to certain state agency employment applications. Legislation like this is vital to providing jobs for some of our most at-risk citizens.

We still have work to do on both of these topics to give Pennsylvanians a better chance to turn their lives around. Though not easy, I will continue working toward a resolution with members of the General Assembly who may not understand or recognize some of the issues that we face in our urban areas. Pennsylvania is a large state with many different regions and outlooks on public policy. While we have made small steps in working progressive legislation through a conservative legislature, I will not stop fighting for what our district needs.



*I was proud to stand with fellow representatives, members of the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association and supporters of criminal record expungement legislation at a press conference last summer.*



*It was an honor to join Gov. Wolf when he signed the criminal expungement legislation into law.*

# HARRIS BELIEVES BUDGET SHOWS LACK OF LEADERSHIP IN HOUSE

Unfortunately, late last year Pennsylvania eclipsed the previous modern-day record of longest budget impasse and, as of this writing, we still do not have a full budget enacted for our state. In my opinion, this is unacceptable and shows a general lack of caring by several prominent leaders in the House.

Late last year, a framework compromise plan emerged among all parties involved – House Republicans and Democrats, Senate Republicans and Democrats, and Gov. Tom Wolf. We seemed poised to end the budget stalemate before Christmas. Some items of the framework I agreed with; others I did not.

What was important to me was the increase in education funding, especially for our challenged Philadelphia School District.

However, two days before Christmas, as the House was prepared to vote on the budget framework, the Speaker of the House inexplicably adjourned and sent everyone home for the holiday. This is inexcusable and put Pennsylvania at great risk of further budgetary trouble.

Due to the smoke-and-mirrors gimmicks of the past four budgets by the previous Republican administration, Pennsylvania has a structural deficit and has seen multiple credit downgrades. Gov. Wolf came into office with a mandate from the voters of Pennsylvania to increase education funding and restore cuts to

our human service providers. I support him in his mission to do this, but others in the General Assembly do not.

It saddens me that some would rather play political games than perform the job they were elected to do and help govern our state. I stand with my fellow House Democrats ready to fulfill what we all agreed to and get this budget done. I can only hope that those on the other side of the aisle come to their senses and rejoin all of the other parties involved at the table to finish this important work.



*It was an honor to be sworn-in for a second term representing the 186th Legislative District.*

## MORE IMPROVEMENTS COMING TO AREA PLAYGROUNDS

As you may have heard, following several years of work, the Ralph Brooks Tot Lot was officially completed this past summer. I was proud to work with Philadelphia Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, Philadelphia Eagle Connor Barwin, community groups I Am South Philly and Urban Roots, and



the City of Philadelphia to help secure funding to renovate this public space to make it even better for our community. We were able to bring in new playground equipment, new basketball courts and upgrade stormwater features.

Last month, I was also proud to announce the Lanier Playground is the recipient of a \$350,000 grant to upgrade those facilities as well. The grant, from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, will go toward building a spray pad, softball field, multipurpose field, dog park, pedestrian walkways, installing lighting equipment, ADA access, landscaping and other related improvements.

Both of these projects represent great opportunities to bring something special to our community. We can help build a sense of pride and ownership while giving our young kids and teenagers a place to enjoy outdoor activities. I look forward to seeing the usage of both of these parks grow as the community embraces the positive changes.



*In November, I spoke at a rally calling for proper funding for Cheyney University.*



*It was an honor to give the commencement address at Millersville University this past December.*

# Around the 186th District



*My staff and I spent time before Thanksgiving distributing turkeys to those from our district who needed a little help with food.*



*Last fall, I had the opportunity to kiss a pig to bring financial literacy programs to schools in our district. It's all worth it when our students learn more about finances!*



*Early in 2015, I had the honor of meeting President Barack Obama during his visit to Philadelphia.*



*We had a great turnout at last year's Senior Sweetheart Dance. Thanks to all who attended!*



*It's always important to give back to the community, and one of the ways I like to do that is by volunteering at local food kitchens. I was honored to be joined by fellow legislators who also realize the importance of giving back.*



*Last summer we had another great turnout for my 3rd Annual Summer Street Festival.*





# STATE REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN A. HARRIS

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## 2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

### WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY



Throughout the year, I spend a great deal of time in Harrisburg fighting for the 186th District and back home helping our local community. Whether it's meeting with seniors, talking to teenagers and young adults in schools, or hosting numerous events around our district to provide information and resources, it's very important to me to ensure that you're getting everything my staff and I have to offer.

Below is a list of events we held throughout the year. If you would like to be kept up-to-date on all events, please join my email list by visiting [www.pahouse.com/Harris/EmailSignup](http://www.pahouse.com/Harris/EmailSignup) or contact my office and let them know what you'd be interested in by calling 215-952-3378.

#### JANUARY

- **Community Meeting:** Spoke with students and police officers at Universal Vare Charter School to discuss improving community relations.
- **Chew Playground:** Spoke with children about Dr. Martin Luther King's vision and hope for our country.

#### FEBRUARY

- **Know your Rights Seminar:** Joined by local police officials, I held a seminar to discuss what your rights and responsibilities are when interacting with the police.
- **Senior Sweetheart Dance:** Last year, I hosted my 3rd Annual Senior Sweetheart Dance.

#### MARCH

- **Citation Presentation:** Met with Greater Philadelphia Health Action to discuss their work in the community and present them with a citation honoring their achievements.

#### APRIL

- **Reading to students.**
- **Senior breakfast.**

#### MAY

- **Senior breakfast.**

#### JUNE

- **Community Meeting:** I met with a group of concerned individuals to discuss the pop-up beer garden issue in Point Breeze.
- **Stephen Girard School:** I spoke with students about the importance of education funding and how it impacts their daily lives.

#### JULY

- **Unity in the Community Peace Week:** It was a privilege to join with Unity in the Community for their Peace Week. I took part in a community softball game and helped put on a free record expungement clinic.

#### AUGUST

- **Street Festival and Basketball Tournament:** As I do each summer, I was able to bring the community together for a day of family friendly activity and entertainment at my Summer Street Festival.

#### SEPTEMBER

- **McDaniel School:** I spent time at the McDaniel School welcoming kids back to the new school year and encouraging them to start the year strong.

#### OCTOBER

- **Trunk or Treat:** I joined with Breaking the Cycle to invite local families to Chew Playground on Halloween night for fun, food and entertainment.

- **Senior Brunch:** I joined seniors for brunch at Wilson Park to discuss issues facing them and to ensure they had full access to state programs and resources.
- **Zion AME:** Rev. Points was kind enough to allow me to share an update with parishioners and partake in a short question-and-answer session.

#### NOVEMBER

- **Turkey Giveaway:** I was able to provide many families in our district with a free turkey just before Thanksgiving to try and brighten their holiday.

#### DECEMBER

- **Bike 186:** Again, I was proud to be able to give away over 100 bikes to less-fortunate children in our community. Over the past 3 years, I've given away close to 600 bikes. It is my hope that local kids are able to use their new bikes on the Schuylkill River Trail that I helped secure funding for. With childhood obesity rates doubling in the past 30 years, it's more important than ever for kids to be exercising.

