



DANIELLE FRIEL ¹⁵⁵ OTTEN

PA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

District Office:

631 Pottstown Pike • Exton, PA 19341 • (484) 200-8259

Capitol Office:

102B East Wing • P.O. Box 202155 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2155 • (717) 783-5009



Summer
2020

@RepDanielle /RepDanielle @Rep_Otten RepDanielle.com

COVID-19 UPDATE

The COVID-19 crisis has deeply affected every one of us and has magnified the inequities in our economy, schools, and health care system. I am committed to working with my colleagues toward a just recovery and advancing legislation that protects workers, supports small businesses, and assists those struggling to secure employment, health care, or child care.

While Pennsylvania's early and ongoing efforts to mitigate the spread of coronavirus have allowed us to fare significantly better than other parts of the country, we need to ensure that our collective sacrifices over the past several months have been worthwhile.

The simple act of wearing a face mask is one of our strongest weapons in the fight against COVID-19. Please help in this fight by wearing a mask in all public spaces and continuing to socially distance whenever possible.



For information regarding testing and contact tracing in Chester County, visit chesco.org.

My office is here to help constituents who find themselves in need of resources as a result of COVID-19. We can connect you with the many state, county, and community services available throughout this crisis.

- For a list of COVID-19 resources for individuals and businesses, visit my website, RepDanielle.com.
- For the most accurate, up-to-date COVID guidance, visit health.pa.gov.

Food Resources

- Chester County Food Bank: 610-873-6000
- Lord's Pantry: 610-873-1149
141 E. Lancaster Ave. Downingtown
- Phoenixville Area Community Services (PACS): 610-933-1105
257 Church Street, Phoenixville
- Spring City Food Pantry: (610) 948-5111
First United Church of Christ,
145 Chestnut Street, Spring City

Mental Health Support:

- PA Support & Referral Helpline: 1-855-284-2494
- Crisis Text Line: Text "PA" to 741-741

SCHOOL REOPENING

Throughout the spring and summer, my office held regular calls with school superintendents and board directors in the 155th Legislative District to discuss the needs and safety of students, teachers, and staff.

As a parent of school-age children, I understand that our districts were faced with impossible decisions. I am grateful for the time, consideration, and hard work that our administrators, school boards, teachers, and staff put into their reopening plans, keeping the health, safety, and education of their students at the forefront of their decisions. They have worked hard to ensure equitable access to remote instruction, ensure that meals and childcare are available to families who depend upon them, and accommodate the needs of students who require support services.

As your representative, I am committed to doing all I can to ensure our children's safety and social and emotional well-being. I have pledged to support our administrators and advocate for whatever our districts may need as we embark together on this uncharted journey. My thoughts are with students, teachers, parents, and all who work in our school communities as we begin this unprecedented school year.



STATE LEGISLATURE PASSES TEMPORARY BUDGET

With extended tax deadlines and emergency COVID-19 funding measures impacting the legislature's ability to develop a sound, realistic budget for the full 2020-21 fiscal year, Governor Tom Wolf signed a five-month stopgap budget to be revisited in November. This budget includes federal CARES Act funding to help protect those most vulnerable to the virus, defend worker protections for essential employees, and support our education system.

Earmarked from PA's \$2.6 billion CARES Act funding:

- \$632M for vulnerable populations (including long-term care centers and nursing homes, which have been impacted the most by COVID-19)
- \$150M toward worker protections
- \$870M for business and local services relief
- \$347M for schools
- \$30M to health care initiatives
- \$225M toward food and shelter resources

PIPELINE/ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

June, July, and August were eventful months on the environmental front, both in Harrisburg and here in Chester County.

In June, Attorney General Josh Shapiro shared the **43rd Investigative Grand Jury report**, which specifically outlined the severe impacts of fracking on human health.

Just a few weeks later, the House voted on **HB 732**, which provides a state tax credit to petrochemical manufacturers. According to the PA Department of Revenue, HB 732 could result in \$22 million in lost tax revenue per year, with giveaways to multinational corporations to expand plastics and petrochemical manufacturing in Pennsylvania. I voted against this legislation, but unfortunately it passed the House and Senate and was signed by the governor.

On Aug. 10, **Energy Transfer spilled an estimated 10,000 gallons of drilling mud of undisclosed composition into a tributary of Marsh Creek Lake**, where it flowed downstream and plumed into the lake itself. At the time of this writing, the PA Department of Environmental Protection is still investigating the cause of the spill and assessing the extent of the damage to

private property, private wells, and Marsh Creek's wetlands, streams, lake, and wildlife.

Earlier in August, **drilling was shut down on the HDD-360 segment of the Mariner East pipeline**, which impacts residents on Devon Drive in Uwchlan Township, after hundreds of thousands of gallons of groundwater spilled down the borehole at the opposite end of the segment, on Shoen Road. The DEP has now halted all drilling activities along this section of pipeline until Energy Transfer submits a restart report explaining how the company plans to prevent a recurrence of this scenario if drilling resumes at the site.

Following these incidents and the emergence of more than one dozen sinkholes along the pipeline in Exton in July and August, I called on Gov. Wolf and the DEP to **revoke Energy Transfer's permits** in Chester County and put public health and safety over the profits of an out-of-state, multinational corporation.



STILL WORKING FOR YOU!

Through social distancing and stay-at-home orders, we have never stopped working for you! Since March, I've introduced or co-sponsored multiple pieces of legislation, including several to help our commonwealth respond to COVID-19. Here are just a few of the bills that I've been working on this summer:

PUBLIC SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

→ **HB 2772:** At the recommendation of the Grand Jury investigation into the fracking industry, this legislation would give the PA Office of Attorney General the authority to prosecute environmental crimes.

Last action: Referred to House Judicial Committee on Aug. 13, 2020.

→ **Expanding Setback Distances for Natural Gas Infrastructure:** Also based on Grand Jury recommendations, this bill would require natural gas well sites and related infrastructure to be at least 2,500 feet

from buildings, streams, and wetlands.

Last action: To be introduced September 2020.

→ **Fighting Corporate Misinformation:** There is currently no PA law preventing individuals working on behalf of an industry from knowingly making false statements or presenting biased research to state regulators. My package of bills would combat corporate perjury and ensure integrity and objectivity in research.

Last action: To be introduced September 2020.

ESSENTIAL COVID-19 PROTECTIONS

→ **HB 2729:** Would protect workers' Unemployment Compensation benefits under certain COVID-19-related circumstances affecting employee and public health and safety.

Last action: Referred to House Labor & Industry Committee on July 30, 2020.

→ **HB 2811:** Would require development and enforcement of safety protocols to protect residents and employees of nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and assisted-living facilities.

Last action: Introduced August 2020.

GRANTS AWARDED TO THE 155TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Part of my job as your representative in Harrisburg is to help bring state funding to our community. Since January 2019, our district has received more than **\$4 million** in state grant funding, plus hundreds of thousands of dollars in CARES Act funding for our schools and long-term care facilities.

I am proud to have helped secure state funding for agriculture and dairy production; small business development; fire and EMS departments; hunger relief; municipal sewer and waste system improvements; help for victims of crimes and domestic

violence; transportation improvements; and funding for our children and schools, including:

- youth substance abuse prevention programs;
- preschool programs;
- after-school programs;
- school breakfasts; and
- school safety and security, including increased mental health services and counseling.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES BY EMAIL, PHONE, AND APPOINTMENT

My staff is providing constituent services by email and phone, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. **In-person services are available by appointment only.** Masks are required for all in-person appointments!



AROUND THE DISTRICT



State of the Care Workforce Policy Hearing

In early March, I hosted a PA House Democratic Policy Committee hearing on the State of the Care Workforce in Pennsylvania. Legislators from across the state joined me for a discussion about the rising need for and shortage of care workers; the need to raise wages and reimbursements for home health care workers and direct support professionals; and the need to ensure safe work conditions for all care workers, whether in-home or in a facility setting.

Nurses, care workers, and families of seniors and disabled children and adults testified about the difficulty of meeting community needs and finding skilled care for their loved ones, and the urgent need for funding, resources and awareness around these issues.

COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of prioritizing our health care workers, who have been fighting on the front lines against this virus. A strong, supported workforce means more dignity, access to care, and better quality of care for older adults and individuals with disabilities—and better long-term economic prospects for care workers and our economy as a whole.

#MaskUp Chesco Efforts

Thanks to the efforts of local volunteers and my office's outreach events coordinator, Sarah Heil, we were able to provide 500 cloth masks to a local senior living facility in need! In early spring, Sarah connected with the Chester County chapter of Sew for PA, a group formed to sew face masks for essential workers. The group quickly filled the facility's need for 500 masks, and volunteers from the Coldstream Crossing Retirement Community sewed an additional 500 masks to donate.

In a short timeframe, the volunteer teams and individuals that Sarah reached out to stepped up to sew more than 1,000 masks for seniors, caregivers, frontline workers, and first responders in the 155th Legislative District, plus hundreds more for facilities elsewhere in the county. Thank you to Sarah, the volunteers, and everyone who helped make this possible!



The federal REAL ID enforcement deadline is POSTPONED to October 1, 2021.



PennDOT.gov/REALID

2020 CENSUS

Census data ensures our proper representation in Congress and determines how more than \$675 billion in federal funds will be distributed to states each year of the next decade. **Each Pennsylvanian not counted in the Census amounts to roughly \$2,100 per year in lost federal funding** for public school improvements, small business loans, road and bridge repairs, and such critical programs as Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, and the National School Lunch Program. Be sure to respond online, by phone, or through the mail before Sept. 30 if you have not yet been counted!

SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

The legislature has allotted \$225 million in federal CARES Act funding to help small business owners offset the severe financial impacts brought on by COVID-19 through the new Small Business Assistance Grant Program. The program awards grants of up to \$50,000 to small businesses with 25 or fewer employees. Applications are currently being accepted for future rounds of funding. Visit pabusinessgrants.com.

RENT/MORTGAGE RELIEF

Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency is accepting applications for rent and mortgage assistance from now until Sept 30. Rent relief up to \$750/month and mortgage relief up to \$1,000/month will be available to qualified applicants. Learn more & apply at www.phfa.org. **If you are at risk of losing your current housing, dial 2-1-1 for assistance.**

VOTING BY MAIL

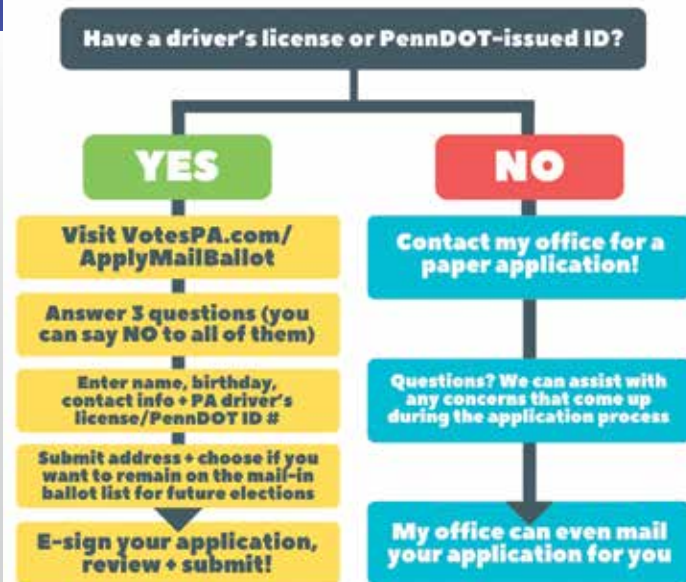
In June's primary election, all Pennsylvanians had the option to vote by mail for the first time. Social distancing precautions fueled an unexpected surge in mail-in ballot requests, with more than 1.8 million PA voters requesting mail ballots. Now county officials are preparing for November's general election by addressing the expected large turnout, another likely surge in mail-in ballots, and equipment upgrades to help the counting process.

Applying for a mail-in ballot is easy and only takes about 5 minutes. You can apply online at VotesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot or contact my office for a paper application.

The USPS recommends that voters request their mail-in ballots at least 15 days before Election Day and return them at least one week prior. Chester County is also finalizing secure ballot drop-box locations.

In-person voting also remains an option for voters. Keep in mind that polling places may be consolidated again as they were in June, so double-check your polling place before heading out!

APPLYING FOR A MAIL-IN BALLOT



VISIT VOTESPA.COM

OCT 19 Last day to register to vote for the general election.
register.votesPA.com

OCT 27 Last day to apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot.
votesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot

NOV 3 Voted mail-in and absentee ballots must be received by the county by 8pm.
votesPA.com/County

NOV 3 General election day. Polls are open from 7am to 8pm.
votesPA.com/Polls



DANIELLE FRIEL ¹⁵⁵ **OTTEN**
PA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

631 Pottstown Pike
Exton, PA 19341

STAY INFORMED!

Visit RepDanielle.com/emailsSignup to join my email list for regular updates from Harrisburg and the district.

lpo.ad.0820

Dear Neighbor,

As your state representative, my role is to ensure that the 155th Legislative District is represented in the lawmaking process in Harrisburg. I am always mindful of the fact that the actions my colleagues and I take affect the everyday lives of our constituents. On behalf of my constituents, I participate in policy hearings, committee meetings, and floor debates. However, the work I do in Harrisburg would not be possible without our vocal and active community. Your input and involvement ensure that the interests of the 155th District are well represented.

While my focus is on being the best possible legislator for our district, my staff strives to be the best at delivering constituent services. Since March, my district office staff has been working from home, continuing to deliver constituent services by email and phone. We have helped hundreds of constituents with unemployment claims, responded to thousands of emails and phone calls, and provided assistance with tax rebates, state forms, and questions and concerns involving state offices, agencies, and public utilities.

Should you need to contact us regarding a state-related issue, please email, write, or call our district office. I also encourage you to share your views on legislative matters and reach out for help with state, county, and community services. We strive to provide a welcoming, informative, and helpful experience to every constituent.

Sincerely,

Danielle Friel Otten

Danielle Friel Otten
State Representative
155th Legislative District

UPCOMING EVENT:
Free, paper-only shred event,
co-hosted with Senator Katie Muth

Saturday, September 26, 1 PM - 4 PM | 631 N. Pottstown Pike, Exton, PA 19341
No contact! Stay in your car, and our staff will remove boxes from your trunk!

FOLLOW FACEBOOK.COM/REPDANIELLE FOR INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS.