



Summer  
2024

# DANIELLE FRIEL <sup>155</sup> OTTEN

## PA STATE REPRESENTATIVE



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## DEAR NEIGHBOR,

As your state representative, my role is to ensure that you are represented in the lawmaking process in Harrisburg. I am always mindful that the votes and actions my colleagues and I take in the Capitol affect our constituents' everyday lives at home. That's why I have consistently fought for investments in public education, affordable housing, our workforce, and environmental protection.

I encourage you to share your views on state legislative issues that are important to you. An active and engaged constituency is essential to a government that works for all people, and your input and involvement help to ensure that the interests of the 155th Legislative 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. We have responded to thousands of emails, letters, and phone calls; helped hundreds of constituents with unemployment claims; and assisted with tax rebates, state forms, and questions and concerns about state offices, agencies, and public utilities. Should you need to contact us regarding any state-related issue, please email, call, or stop by our district office. We strive to provide a welcoming, informative, and helpful experience to every constituent. My team and I are here to help make state government work better for you!

## UPDATES FROM HARRISBURG AND HOME

### How I Voted

While state legislators' votes are always public record, the reasons behind those votes may not always be clear. For the past two legislative sessions, I have maintained a "How I Voted" section on my website with the goal of keeping constituents as informed as possible about the bills that come before the House, my positions on those bills, and why I voted the way I did. We strive to update this page as quickly as possible following the end of each session week to make it easy for you to stay up to date.



Since 2019, I have had the honor of representing the 155th Legislative District, and in that time, we have made tremendous progress to make Pennsylvania a place where people from all walks of life have an equal opportunity to grow, learn, and succeed. This year, we advanced a diverse and bipartisan agenda that lifts up the voices of the people of Pennsylvania. In just over a year and a half in the majority, House Democrats have delivered on our promise to prioritize the issues Pennsylvanians care about by passing nearly 400 bills, many with bipartisan support, focusing on a variety of critical issues that will improve the lives of Pennsylvanians.

Read on for more about what I've been working on in Harrisburg and at home, including:

- Historic investments in K-12 education.
- Increased funding for the Student Teacher Support Program.
- Addressing period poverty in our schools.
- Working to protect the health and safety of Pennsylvanians and our environment.
- How my office can help you navigate state government services.
- Climate action, reproductive rights, and more!

# DELIVERING FOR YOU

## BUDGET UPDATE

In July, Governor Shapiro signed a \$47.6 billion state budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

I voted in support of this budget, which makes significant investments in public education, affordable housing and healthcare, human services, our workforce, and the future of Pennsylvania—all without raising taxes.

This budget is not perfect. It falls short on some of the priorities important to me and our community, but there is also a lot to like. The reality is that we have a Democratic-controlled House and a Republican-controlled Senate, and this budget reflects the compromise that was required for both sides to reach agreement. I believe that on balance, this budget contains more good than bad and will bring relief and growth to our families and communities.

## INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION

The headline in this year's budget is school funding. Heading into budget season, school funding was the number one priority for me and my House colleagues, and I am happy to say that we delivered. While the budget falls short of the full amount and some of the important reforms we advocated for, it represents an enormous win for students and families across the Commonwealth, including here in Chester County.

### Investments in K-12 Public Education:

- This budget invests \$1.3 billion in public schools—a historic investment that helps every school district in Pennsylvania and takes the first steps toward meeting our moral, constitutional, and legal obligation to our students, schools, parents, and taxpayers.
- For the 2024-2025 school year, the Coatesville Area School District will receive an increase of \$7.9 million in new state funding and cyber charter savings combined. Downingtown Area School District will receive an increase of \$2.5 million.

### Transparency and Accountability Reforms for Cyber Charters:

- This budget includes new ethics requirements for cyber charter school boards and a requirement for cyber charters to make their advertising expenditures publicly available.
- Any advertisements must clearly state that their tuition, technology, and transportation are paid for by taxpayers.
- Cyber charters will be required to conduct certified audits and make the audits and their budgets publicly available.
- Cyber charters will also be required to conduct weekly student wellness checks, verifying that the student has been seen and communicated with in real time by a teacher.



## OTHER NOTABLE INVESTMENTS IN THE BUDGET

Here are some additional high points in this year's budget that deliver some much-needed resources to our families, seniors, and infrastructure.

- Investments in Childcare, Health Care, and Human Services: The budget includes increased wages for childcare workers and tax incentives for employers that contribute toward childcare costs. It adds funding for rural hospitals, home care workers, and OB-GYN services, and makes historic investments in care and support for our communities, including \$273.4 million for MA Community Health Choices, \$261 million for Intellectual Disabilities through the Community Waiver program, a \$5 million increase for Homeless Assistance, and millions more for outcome-focused programs to make Pennsylvania safer and more equitable for all.
- Investments in Mass Transit and Infrastructure: This budget includes \$80 million for public transportation systems and more than \$200 million in funding to fix and upgrade roads and bridges across the commonwealth.
- Solar for Schools Program: This budget includes \$25 million to help schools, community colleges, and technical schools take advantage of federal tax credits to fund solar energy installation.

# KEEPING YOU INFORMED

## OTTEN INITIATIVES RECEIVE FUNDING IN 2024-2025 STATE BUDGET

### INVESTMENTS IN THE STUDENT TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM:

The budget allocates an additional \$20 million for the student teacher stipend program, on top of the \$10 million allocated for the 2024-24 school year in last year's budget, for a total of \$30 million for the program's first year.

This falls short of fully funding demand for the program, but it will provide stipends to more than 2,000 student teachers in the 2024-2025 school year and help us grow and diversify the teacher pipeline in Pennsylvania. I'm especially proud of and excited for this investment, which builds on the proposal I introduced and passed in the House in 2023.

### FUNDING FOR MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS:

The budget allocates \$3 million for grants to allow schools to provide menstrual products to students. In every legislative session since 2019, I've introduced a bill that would make menstrual products available in public school bathrooms, and I'm excited to see this program come to fruition. We can and must do better for Pennsylvania's students and provide them with these basic supplies while they're at school—just as we provide other essentials such as toilet paper, hand soap, and paper towels. No student should have to miss class time or entire school days because they lack access to a basic hygiene necessity.



## WHAT I'M WORKING ON

### PENNSYLVANIA RELIABLE ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD (PRESS)

Twenty years ago, Pennsylvania led the nation by establishing the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards (AEPS), which successfully promoted cleaner and more sustainable forms of energy generation in our Commonwealth. However, Pennsylvania has now fallen behind other states in the race to diversify energy sources and create clean, reliable, and affordable energy. PRESS has the potential to cement Pennsylvania's place as one of the world's top energy producers while delivering net improvements in our emissions, grid reliability, and energy resilience.

This legislation would:

- ensure reliable, affordable energy for ratepayers by encouraging the development of baseload energy, creating a more diverse mix of energy resources, and adding more energy to the grid to meet our increasing demand,
- help to create clean energy jobs and economic development by incentivizing clean energy projects, and
- address climate change and carbon pollution by providing the greatest incentives to the cleanest, lowest-emission energy sources, plus incentivizing battery storage and demand reduction.

### REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Two years ago, our current activist U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, erasing nearly 50 years of established protections for our reproductive freedoms.

Right now, abortion remains legal in Pennsylvania, and my fellow pro-choice legislators and I are taking every action we can to keep it that way. That is why Rep. Liz Hanbidge and I are proud to have introduced HB 1888, which would explicitly affirm and enshrine the right to reproductive healthcare for all Pennsylvanians in the PA constitution by ballot initiative.

Bodily autonomy and control over reproductive healthcare is central to the freedom, liberty, health, and economic opportunity of every woman, girl, and birthing individual. Decisions about a pregnancy belong between an individual, their family, and their doctor—not their state legislature. I will keep fighting to ensure that abortion and reproductive healthcare remain safe and legal in Pennsylvania.



# Working For You IN HARRISBURG AND AT HOME



*This year, I hosted House Democratic Policy Committee hearings on the Basic Education Funding Commission report in March (left) and on Gun Violence Intervention in August (right). The Policy Committee provides a platform for legislators to hear from community members and advocates on the issues that matter most to all of us. The testimony we hear can directly impact the legislation we introduce and ultimately vote on.*



*In May, I joined my colleagues in the Southeast Delegation for a tour of Lincoln Financial Field to learn more about the Philadelphia Eagles Go Green sustainability initiative.*



*Last year, my legislation to create a Student Teacher Stipend Program was signed into law with \$10 million in funding allocated to the program. I was proud to see an additional \$20 million allocated for the program in this year's budget.*



*For generations, PBS has made significant contributions to our communities through their informative and educational programming. Thank you to WHY? and all the PBS affiliates across the commonwealth for educating, entertaining, and informing our communities!*



*This spring semester, I had the honor of once again serving as a Legislative Fellow for Dr. John Kennedy's Pennsylvania Politics and Government class at my alma mater, West Chester University of PA. I was proud to have my class visit our Capitol and join me on the House floor as my distinguished guests.*



*In January, I was honored to participate in a roundtable discussion on women's reproductive freedom and abortion access with the Shapiro Administration, the PA Women's Health Caucus, and leaders from Planned Parenthood.*



# PREPARING FOR ELECTION DAY

The 2024 General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 5. By participating in elections, voters help shape the direction of policies, laws, and leadership, ensuring that the government reflects the will of the people. It only takes a few minutes to make sure you're ready to vote in the November 5 General Election.

Visit [vote.pa.gov](https://vote.pa.gov) to register to vote, check your registration status, find your polling place, find important election dates, or request a mail-in or absentee ballot. Remember, new voters who will turn 18 on or before November 5, 2024, are eligible to register as well!

**VOTE.PA.GOV**

## ★ 2024 General Election ★ ★ Important Dates ★

★ **Oct. 21** Last day to register to vote in the general election.  
[vote.pa.gov/Register](https://vote.pa.gov/Register)

★ **Oct. 29** Last day to apply for a mail ballot.  
[vote.pa.gov/MailBallot](https://vote.pa.gov/MailBallot)

**Nov. 5** Election Day. Polls are open from 7 AM to 8 PM.  
[vote.pa.gov/Polls](https://vote.pa.gov/Polls)

★ **Nov. 5** Completed mail ballots must be received by 8 PM.  
[vote.pa.gov/County](https://vote.pa.gov/County)

## MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- PennDOT documents, disability plates, and placards
- SEPTA Senior Key Cards
- Questions about REAL ID
- Birth certificate applications
- Unemployment Compensation issues
- Department of Human Services benefits (SNAP, Medical Assistance, Rent & Utility Assistance)
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Consumer complaints
- Concerns about state road conditions
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications
- Unclaimed Property searches
- And more!



## Do you have a SEPTA Senior Fare Card?

Seniors ages 65 and older can ride SEPTA routes in PA for free with a Senior Fare Card! Sign-up or reapply for your card at my district office today!



**Exton**

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## Unclaimed Property Office Hours

First Wednesday of the Month  
9 AM - 4:30 PM



Search & Claim  
for FREE



It's fast &  
simple



1 in 10 Pennsylvanians has unclaimed property held by the PA Treasury, and the average claim is about \$1,600!



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## STAY INFORMED!

Visit [RepDanielle.com/emailsSignup](https://RepDanielle.com/emailsSignup) to join my email list for regular updates from Harrisburg and the district.

lpo.kg.0824

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Join us for Mobile Office Hours at the Downingtown Library!

Staff from my district office will be at the Downingtown Library, 122 Wallace Avenue, on the fourth Wednesday of each month, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

This is a great opportunity to get help with state services like Unclaimed Property or Unemployment Compensation, sign up for your SEPTA Key Senior ID Card (must be age 65+/bring your ID), or let us know about the issues that most concern you.

Stop in to say hello and find out how we can help! We look forward to meeting you!

### Free Paper-Only Shred Event

**Saturday, October 26, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.**

Mark your calendars! My office will hold a FREE Paper-Only Shred Event on Saturday, October 26, in the parking lot of the Downingtown Middle School, 115 Rock Raymond Rd, Downingtown.

Bring your confidential documents to be destroyed! Each car will be limited to 4 file-size boxes. Small paper clips and staples are OK, but please no binder clips, binders, or cardboard (plan to take your boxes home with you).

Shredding is a great way to securely dispose of sensitive documents and protect yourself from identity theft and fraud.

This event is first come, first served. When the trucks is full, the event will end. All shredded paper will be recycled!