



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# JOE WEBSTER

SERVING THE 150TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY.



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## COVID-19: Fighting for our community

I'm proud to have voted for legislation, early in the days of this health crisis, that helped to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. This included bills – signed into law – that waived the 180-day school requirement and provided for continuity of education plans, rescheduled the primary election to June 2, dedicated \$50 million in funding for medical equipment and supplies for hospitals and other health care facilities, and expanded unemployment eligibility.

In late May, we also passed bills to ensure that any federal CARES Act funding Pennsylvania receives will put people first and address the needs that COVID-19 is creating in our community, including a bill to create emergency grants to help fire and EMS companies get through this pandemic.

There's more work to do to successfully position Pennsylvania for the future.

As we begin to reopen our economy, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives should prioritize legislation that fully ensures we can move forward safely.

Before we're able to safely ease social distancing restrictions, we need to ensure adequate personal protective equipment for our workforce, make diagnostic testing available for all, and have an effective trace monitoring program. These measures are paramount if we're to effectively combat the spread of COVID-19.

Before we tell employees it is OK to return to their face-to-face workplace, we need to ensure equal access to affordable health care services and reinvest funding into social protection programs. We must effectively support our workforce and their families when they need us.

Before we face the next great public health crisis, we need to do more than replenish our stockpile of medical supplies; an effective response plan is needed to meet the needs of hospitals and those delivering lifesaving care. Preparing now is crucial if we are to successfully care for everyone who needs it.

Before entrepreneurs and small-business owners weigh the decision on how to proceed after they've experienced such financial hardship these past few months, we need to make business recovery funding available for and prioritize

the small "mom and pop" shops that need it, not corporations and chains that always seem to be at the front of the line for bailouts.

Before we ask our first responders to put the needs of the community above their own, as they have during the COVID-19 crisis and every day before it, we need to provide comprehensive funding relief and improve our ability to train and retain firefighters, EMS crews, and police officers.

I've supported bills that would accomplish many of those goals, and I'll continue looking for ways to support our community through this crisis. Pennsylvania deserves

a full investment plan for recovery that's comprehensive enough to prepare us for the future, and effective enough to meet the needs of today.



### Find the latest on COVID-19 at:

[health.pa.gov](http://health.pa.gov)  
[pa.gov/COVID-19](http://pa.gov/COVID-19)

[www.montcopa.org](http://www.montcopa.org)  
[www.repjoewebster.com](http://www.repjoewebster.com)

# We need to end gerrymandering now

## Ensuring equal access to the ballot box isn't enough

You should be choosing your elected officials – not the other way around.

Our current system puts legislative leaders in charge of redrawing district boundaries – a system that's resulted in incredibly gerrymandered districts, drawn to benefit political parties, not citizens.

We need a fair and transparent system for redrawing district boundaries, and that's why I've co-sponsored two pieces of legislation to fix the system.

House Bills 22 and 23 both aim to reform the process by creating an 11-member Independent Redistricting Commission. The commission would be made up of randomly selected voters from both major political parties, plus independents and third-party members. Commission members and spouses could not have been lobbyists, political operatives or federal or state employees within five years of their appointment to the commission.

The goal would be for the commission to handle redistricting for both congressional and state legislative districts.

House Bill 22 would be an amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution, which would have to pass the General Assembly in two consecutive sessions and then be approved by voters. Since that process would take years, House Bill 23 would make changes in state elections law for congressional redistricting to start.

Your voice and your vote count, and we need a system that is fair to you.

# Your voice matters in EVERY election

Voting, like most, is a habit that gets developed. It takes practice and patience. However, it's also an important part of what makes us Americans.

In our representative democracy, elected officials, beholden to the public, are chosen through an election process that should be fair and accessible to every eligible American voter. I have voted for legislation to make that process more accessible, convenient, and secure for all, but the work does not end there. I believe that the government should encourage people to participate in the process.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the serious need for change in many of the services that we provide Pennsylvania taxpayers; none more so than our understaffed Department of Labor and Industry. The department has seen its unemployment staff cut by 42% since 2011 due to lack of state funding and legislative compromise. And it's been responsible for processing the 1.8 million+ unemployment claims Pennsylvania residents have filed since March 15th, 2020. Despite 250 new hires and the return of 70 retired state employees, the work continues to process the backlog of claims.

When voter turnout is high, it increases the responsiveness of elected officials who know that the public is going to hold them accountable. You have the right to demand the best from your elected officials. That means that it's vital to vote in every election: local, state, and federal.

Voting demonstrates both service and leadership by example to your friends, neighbors, family, and our youth. Be the positive change that you would like to see in your community and make Pennsylvania a more beautiful place to work and live.

**Modernizing the vote for 2020**

Effective for the June 2020 Primary Election  
More info | [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) | Register online

**More ways to vote**

- No-excuse mail-in voting**  
New option to vote by mail without providing an excuse
- Permanent mail-in ballot list**  
Receive applications for mail-in or absentee ballots for all elections

**More accessible elections**

- More time to register**  
Deadline to register to vote is now 15 days before an election
- Extended voting period**  
Request a mail-in or absentee ballot up to 50 days before an election

**Extended deadline**  
Submit mail-in or absentee ballot by 8 p.m. on Election Day

# Does the state have something that belongs to you?

Have you checked the Pennsylvania Treasury's Unclaimed Property database?

Unclaimed property can include a closed bank account, uncashed checks, certificates of deposit or lost stocks and bonds sent to the state because the owner could not be found.

My office can help you search the database to see if there's property in your name and help you claim it. Contact my office at 484-200-8263 or search online at [www.patreasury.gov](http://www.patreasury.gov).

# Has your job been affected by COVID-19?

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a historic surge in the number of people seeking unemployment compensation in Pennsylvania.

Since mid-March, more than 1.8 million Pennsylvanians filed for regular UC.

New federal laws also made big changes to increase payments for many people and made other workers eligible for those benefits for the first time. Benefits were extended to individuals not eligible for regular unemployment, such as independent contractors and gig workers.

If your employment status was impacted by COVID-19, visit the state's Unemployment Compensation website at [www.uc.pa.gov](http://www.uc.pa.gov) to find out if you are eligible for benefits. The site has been updated regularly and contains answers to frequently asked questions.

If you are having difficulty with the process, please reach out to my office by calling 484-200-8263 and leaving a message. A staff member will be in touch promptly!

**HAS YOUR JOB BEEN AFFECTED BY COVID-19?** You may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits if:

Your employer temporarily closes or goes out of business because of COVID-19

Your employer reduces your hours because of COVID-19

You have been told not to work because your employer feels you might get or spread COVID-19

You have been told to quarantine or self-isolate, or live/work in a county under government-recommended mitigation efforts

## It's not too late! Fill out the 2020 Census

Every 10 years, the United States conducts a census. This count of U.S. residents helps determine how \$675 billion is spent by the federal government and how Pennsylvania is represented in Congress for the next 10 years.

As of May 27, Montgomery County's response rate was 71.9%, but we have more work to do! Encourage your friends and family to respond now to help shape the future of our community.

### FILL OUT THE CENSUS IF YOU WANT:

- better roads and bridges.
- kids to have better access to quality schools.
- better access to restaurants and shops.
- better public safety.

This year, it is even easier to make sure you and your family are counted. Respond online, by paper or over the phone. The census is printed in English and Spanish, accommodations are

available for those with visual or hearing impairments, and telephone assistance is available in 13 languages.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the census is being extended through October 31st 2020. Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin sending "door knockers" in mid-August to follow-up at addresses that have still not responded.

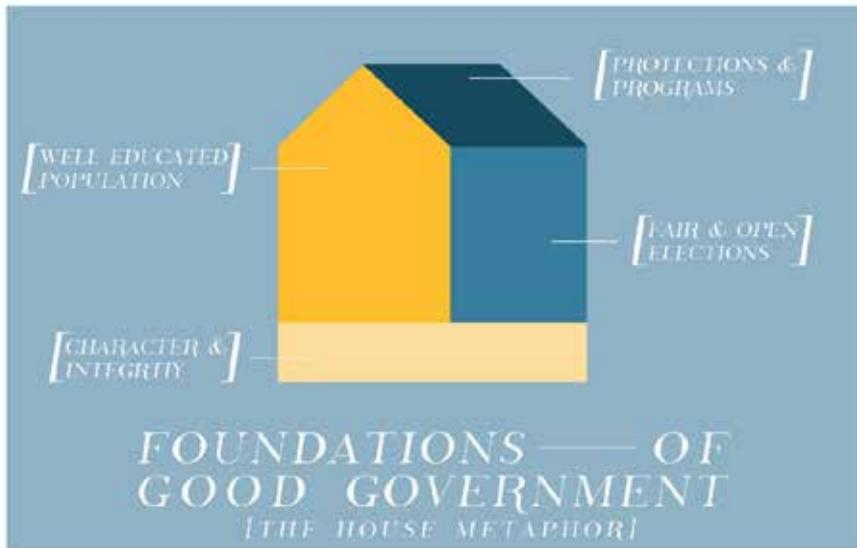
Respond online now at [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov) or by calling 844-330-2020!



## Constituent Meetings During COVID-19

Even though COVID-19 may be disrupting in-person operations, I still want to hear from you! Request to schedule a virtual constituent meeting or phone call with me by contacting my office at (484) 200-8263 or by emailing [repwebster@pahouse.net](mailto:repwebster@pahouse.net)!

# Foundations of Good Government



We have had to endure many challenges and threats to our freedoms in the first half of this year. And many of us have had to make sacrifices that we never imagined. But the startling lack of preparation and execution to maintain and control the spread of COVID-19 by some states and the federal government is alarming. Now more than ever, good government is invaluable for the safety and well-being of our beautiful Commonwealth. The foundations of good government are simple: begin with character and integrity. If these two characteristics are held by every elected official, we would become statesmen instead of politicians, putting people above partisan disagreements.

On that foundation, we need to put fair and open elections. Gerrymandering would cease and all districts would be drawn without partisan considerations and once we are secure in the fact of our unalienable rights of equal representation, granted by the Constitution, we would be one step closer to our united goals. Lastly, we desperately need a well-educated population in this country, for our present economic health and to ensure we can seize future opportunities. The United States continues to remain in the middle of the pack when it comes to math, science and reading. Pennsylvania's education ranking does not even place us in the top 25 out of 50 states. Even more concerning, we are dead last when it comes to achieving higher education. Fixing this must be our top priority.

Once we are successful in these three areas, we will have no problem obtaining the protections and programs we deserve. This pandemic has highlighted many flaws in our government programs and systems that need to be addressed.

From employment to health care, we need sustainable, well-functioning departments that put the needs of the people before political gain. With character and integrity, fair and open elections, and a well-educated population, we can invest in our communities to ensure the survival and health of the Commonwealth and nation.

## Real ID Enforcement Deadline Extended

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has postponed the enforcement date for Real ID by one year to October 1, 2021, in response to COVID-19 and the national emergency declaration.

PennDOT temporarily paused the issuance of Real IDs due to COVID-19, but pre-verified customers can still apply for Real ID online. Find more on how COVID-19 has affected PennDOT operations at [www.pennDOT.gov](http://www.pennDOT.gov).

Information about Real ID can be found on PennDOT's website, under the Real ID section: [www.pennDOT.gov/REALID](http://www.pennDOT.gov/REALID). Please contact my office at 484-200-8263 with any questions or concerns.

### Bill to Waive Marriage License Fee:

Though the deadline for Real ID enforcement has been extended, it's important that we ensure an equitable application process. I have introduced legislation to do just that.

One of the documents required to obtain a Real ID is proof of any legal name changes. Most frequently, that requirement applies to married women who must provide a copy of their marriage license.

The cost of obtaining a copy of a marriage license varies from county to county, and sometimes it can be quite significant.

My bill would set a uniform fee limit throughout the state for marriage license copies, and it would waive the fee for individuals who request a copy of their marriage license for the purpose of obtaining state-issued ID such as the Real ID.

I want to make sure we are working to reduce the burden for applicants who are preparing for Real ID enforcement to begin October 2021. I'm grateful that a community member brought this disparity to my attention. My bill would make the cost of obtaining a Real ID more equitable and make the process a little easier for many Pennsylvania residents.

# What Joe's doing around the 150th



On February 25<sup>th</sup>, I was pleased to host a town hall in Skippack! It was a night filled with thoughtful dialogue on how to address many of the issues we're experiencing today.



In February, I joined Rep. Joe Ciresi to present a \$35,000 grant to Perkiomen Valley School District to boost participation in computer science and STEM.



Early this year, my staff and I dropped off 300 pounds of food to the Daily Bread Community Food Pantry thanks to your generosity in my holiday food drive!



I was pleased to join volunteers in distributing meals to families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic!



To highlight the challenges facing many commuters in our community, Rep. Joe Ciresi and I joined many of you on the commute to Philadelphia earlier this year. We are working on public transportation systems and infrastructure solutions to ease congestion on the roads.



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## SUMMER 2020 HOUSE REPORT

### Stay in touch!

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us in different ways, changed how many state services are provided, and resulted in new deadlines for many programs. If you need help with any state-related issue, please contact my office. My team and I are here to serve you.

YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

484-200-8263

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