

# JOE WEBSTER

Serving Collegeville, Upper and Lower Providence, West Norriton, and Trappe



## Dear Neighbor,

I hope this letter finds you well! My staff and I have had a busy few months in Harrisburg and in our community where we hosted a successful Veterans' Breakfast, a Vaccine Clinic and a Winter Collection Drive. In the Pennsylvania House we've passed important legislation that increases worker protections, ensures access to reproductive health-care, and protects vulnerable populations from discrimination. We've introduced bills to preserve clean air and clean water, strengthen election integrity, and keep people safe with gun reforms. And in the budget, we invested in mental healthcare programs, universal free breakfast for every student, and child care tax credits for working families.

I'm proud of the work we accomplished in 2023, and I look forward to what we will produce moving forward.

In this newsletter, you will find updates on my legislation, plus newly introduced bills, as well as legislation that has passed the House and has been signed by the Governor. I also discuss my budget priorities for 2024/25, upcoming events hosted by my office, and news on my flood mitigation study.

As always, if you need any state-related assistance from birth certificates to PennDOT services and even unemployment claim issues, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Joe Webster.

Rep. Joe Webster, Ph.D., Colonel, USAF (retired)



## 2024/25 Budget Priorities



On February 6th, Governor Josh Shapiro kicked-off the 2024-25 state budget process by addressing the Pennsylvania General Assembly in a joint session to announce his budget proposals. Budget discussions and hearings will commence in the House through February and early March. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I will participate in these conversations to include policy initiatives that will not only benefit our community but all of Pennsylvania as well.

Last year the Commonwealth Court ruled that Pennsylvania fails to adequately fund public education and directed the General Assembly to establish a new methodology. The Basic Education Funding Commission was established in 2023 to review and recommend a new formula for the funding of Pennsylvania's 500 school districts. It released its recommendations this past January. The results were not surprising to me: the state budget needs to take on more responsibility so that every student in each school district has access to a proper education. The House Majority produced a report to provide guidelines based on the recommendations of the commission. You can read that report by going to [www.basiceducationfundingcommission.com](http://www.basiceducationfundingcommission.com).

To improve education in some districts and to maintain the current standard in others, it will require a new budgeting procedure that provides avenues for facility improvements, staff and faculty retention, and student mental health supports. Programs like universal Pre-K and Kindergarten, career and technical training, public libraries, school safety measures, and the use of technology are also critical. Finally, current charter school funding and needs for

reform must be part of any conversation. All Pennsylvanians want our students to be successful learners in reading, math, science and social studies, as well as for efficient specialized education programs to be supported. The General Assembly must commit to improving how we budget for and how we fund public schools if we want to provide our students with a quality education. I will work closely with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to produce a funding plan that gives our students what they require for scholastic success.

In the 24/25 budget I'd also like to see investments that build on our previous successes of child care tax credits and universal free breakfast by meeting the needs of our students no matter what age they are. Additionally, I hope to see efforts that expand healthcare services to our seniors, veterans, and disabled persons. We also need serious investments that revitalize our aging roads, bridges, and infrastructure, and investments that reduce the likelihood of flooding to protect our homes and businesses from disaster.

I realize that I've listed a lot of pressing issues and initiatives that need a lot of money. These priorities are just that: priorities. To fund education and child care, to support our nurses, first responders, teachers, and librarians, and to strengthen our infrastructure state-wide, we will need to move money out of some very old and dusty budget lines. It does not have to cost more to fund a better future for Pennsylvania!



# Webster Legislation

In this term, I have introduced 62 bills and resolutions to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Below are just some of my legislative priorities that I am working to move through our House Committees and to the House floor for passage.

## HB 1240

Launches PA on the path to expanding our electric infrastructure and directs utility providers and key stakeholders to work together to build out a plan for a renewable energy future.

## HB 1940

Establishes a low-interest loan program that will incentivize builders to construct affordable homes for low- and moderate-income families.

## HR 32

Reviews current utilization of poll workers, polling places, and voting machines and recommends changes to minimize the time it takes to vote.

## HB 1241

Establishes human trafficking prevention methods in massage businesses and increases protections for the victims.

## HR 230

Explores "Housing First" policies as a less-expensive and more-successful alternative measure to reduce homelessness.

## HB 271

Prohibits third-party organizations from sending ballot applications to voters.

## HB 699

Requires counties to prepare and implement a stormwater management plan to address current runoff issues, reduce localized flooding, and keep the public informed.

## HB 1239

Creates a new program to provide veterans with training and job opportunities to successfully enter the growing sustainability sector.

## HR 48

Requires all in-person and virtual meetings held between a legislator and a non-constituent to be published on the member's official state website to increase transparency.

## HB 1275

Establishes protected buffer zones along the sides of waterways in PA to reduce flooding, protect our waters, and halt erosion.

## HB 1587

Requires all high schools in our state to employ a classroom-to-workplace coordinator for students with disabilities.

## HB 1817

Repeals the judicial name change process and institutes a simple administrative name change process.



Veterans' Breakfast, November 2023



Panel Discussion on Human Trafficking, January 2024



Touring Martha's Choice, September 2023

**JOE**  **150**  
**WEBSTER**  
PENNSYLVANIA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

If you have any questions about the legislation listed, please call my office at (484) 200-8263 or send an email to RepWebster@PAHouse.net and either myself or a staff member will get back to you!

## Webster Legislation Passed

### HR 185 (199-4) ADOPTED

A study will examine the usage and successfulness of geothermal energy in abandoned mining locations to create renewable energy for communities across PA.

### HR 125 (201-1) ADOPTED

Designated and acknowledged the week of November 4-11, 2023 as "Veterans Week of Service" to recognize the veterans who continue to lead and serve their community.

### HB 269 (203-0)

Now in the Senate Protects veteran's records from fraud by ensuring DD-214s are secure for 85 years and only available to the veteran and their family.



# 2023/24 House Legislation

During this legislative session, the House has passed over 300 bills and resolutions that aim to improve the lives of Pennsylvanians, grow our business sector, and bring new opportunities to our Commonwealth. Listed below are just some of the bills we have passed that are now waiting for Senate deliberation and approval.

## HB 106

*Rep. Mehaffie*

Establishes safe patient limits under the care of nurses in Pennsylvania's hospitals.

## HB 1018

*Rep. O'Mara*

Creates Extreme Risk Protection Orders in Pennsylvania for individuals in crisis and to reduce suicide.

## HB 1474

*Rep. Ciresi*

Makes Electric Vehicle Charging Projects eligible for grant funding under the C-PACE program to ensure PA keeps up with Electric Infrastructure.

## HB 300

*Rep. Kenyatta*

Prohibits discrimination in housing, employment and education based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

## HB 1249

*Rep. Munroe*

Establishes a tax credit for newly certified nurses, teachers, and police officers that live and work in PA.

## HB 1500

*Rep. Dawkins*

Increases the minimum wage gradually until it's \$15 per hour in 2026. Thereafter it will adjust to inflation. Also increases tipped minimum wage to 60% of the minimum wage.

## HB 714

*Rep. Warren*

Requires a background check on all firearms, regardless of barrel length or place of sale.

## HB 1394

*Rep. Mayes*

Prohibits discrimination based on a person's hair type, hair texture or hairstyle.

## HB 1786

*Rep. Daley*

Protects in-state and out-of-state individuals who seek reproductive healthcare services in Pennsylvania.

## HB 950

*Rep. Fiedler*

Amends the PA Constitution to enshrine workers' rights to collectively bargain and organize.

## HB 1416

*Rep. Malagari*

Provides a cost of living adjustment (COLA) to the State Employee Retirement System (SERS) and the Public School Employee Retirement System (PSERS) to combat the rise of inflation.

I'm proud to have voted for these bills and I look forward for their passage in the Senate.

# Legislation Passed & Signed by the Governor

This year's General Assembly, with a Democratic-led House and a Republican-led Senate, has worked together on numerous legislative initiatives and has brought good bills before the Governor to sign.

## HB 507

*Rep. Fiedler*

Medical schools and teaching hospitals must now receive explicit patient consent before a pelvic exam is performed.

## HB 735

*Rep. Warren*

A Task Force will now review flood mitigation efforts and flood insurance policies in Pennsylvania to recommend changes to protect more homes from flood damage.

## HB 804

*Rep. Burns*

Military families are now guaranteed in-state tuition as soon as they submit the enrollment deposit even if their military parent is reassigned to another state.

## HB 900

*Rep. Cephas*

Requires a number of best practices to be instituted for incarcerated women, pregnant people, and family members to ensure we treat them with dignity.



## HB 1100

*Rep. Samuelson*

Increases the income limits for the Property Tax / Rent Rebate Program and includes a cost of living adjustment to keep up with inflation.

## SB 414

*Sen. Vogel*

Increases access to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and to the quality care they can provide to victims of sexual assault.

## SB 44

*Sen. Dush*

Removes barriers from classifying minors as victims of human trafficking so they can access much-needed services.

## SB 843

*Sen. Argall*

Pennsylvania has now joined the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, allowing certified teachers to easily relocate to Pennsylvania and continue their teaching career.





A healthy riparian buffer on the Perkiomen Creek in our district.

## Perkiomen Watershed Initiative

In the past decade, our region has seen dozens of large-scale flooding events that have caused extensive damage to homes, businesses, and public and private infrastructure, costing millions of dollars to repair and reopen. Last year I began a project to create a comprehensive analysis of flooding along the Perkiomen Creek and consider mitigations that would reduce flooding and its costly impacts to communities throughout the Perkiomen Watershed.

I'm truly excited to announce that my Perkiomen Watershed Initiative will begin in earnest this year as Montgomery County and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection recently signed an agreement to begin the study. The analysis will take place throughout the four counties in the watershed, Montgomery, Bucks, Berks and Lehigh, and will comprehensively examine stormwater conditions throughout the watershed based on the cumulative effects of development in our region and the current, real-life levels of rainfall we are receiving. The study will identify practical and implementable projects to mitigate run-off from large and extreme storms.

Public input, as well as involvement from county officials, municipal governments and non-profit organizations, will be important to establish an accurate picture of the watershed and where the biggest concerns of current and future flooding are located.

If you have questions about this project or would like to get involved, please feel free to contact my office.

## UPCOMING *Events*

April

25

### Senior Fair

Looking for assistance with senior programs? Stop by my Senior Fair on April 25th at the Philadelphia Expo Center to learn about what federal, state, and county programs are available to seniors and caregivers in Pennsylvania!

July

13

### Shred Event

The third annual shred event with Rep. Matt Bradford's office is scheduled for July 13th! Avoid identity theft and safely dispose of personal documents. Two boxes per household, ONLY PAPER, no trash, starts at 9AM.

## 2023 *in Review*

6

Community  
Events

296

Bills & Resolutions  
Co-Sponsored

3897

Constituent Services  
Provided





STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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## What's Inside?

- **Legislation Proposed & Passed**
- **Budget Priorities for 2024/25**
- **Watershed Study Updates**
- **Upcoming Events & More!**

## 2024 Election *Save the Dates!*

### Primary Election

Last Day to Register to Vote ..... April 8

Last Day to Apply for a Mail-In Ballot ..... April 16

Election Day ..... April 23

### General Election

Last Day to Register to Vote ..... October 21

Last Day to Apply for a Mail-In Ballot ..... October 29

Election Day ..... November 5

