

JOE WEBSTER

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



As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I participated in multiple weeks of budget hearings with my colleagues and the Governor's administration.



I attended numerous hearings and committee meetings in recent months for the five committees on which I serve.



On Memorial Day, I was honored to again be invited to speak at the Trappe-Collegeville Memorial Day Service.

Dear Neighbor,

I hope this letter finds you well. As fall is right around the corner, I wanted to provide you with an update from my office on what is happening in our district and in Harrisburg. In July, we wrapped up the 2024-25 budget by passing a historic, comprehensive spending plan that will invest millions of dollars in education, human services, health, environmental protections, and economic development. These investments will strengthen our communities not just in District 150, but across the commonwealth.

Last year, the Commonwealth Court ruled that Pennsylvania fails to fund public education adequately. This year in the PA budget, we added an over \$1 billion increase for Pre-K to 12 education funding. Moreover, investments have been made toward school safety, improved school facilities, and better special needs education. Important priorities were acknowledged with subsidized child care services, increased public transportation efforts, and protection toward our homes and businesses.

I'm proud of the work we have accomplished so far in 2024 and throughout my third term. I look forward to what we will produce moving forward.

In this newsletter, you will find budget recaps, updates on legislation, plus explanations on bills that are at one of the following stages: being introduced, currently discussed in committee, in debate in the General Assembly, or have been signed into law by the Governor. I also discuss education wins, upcoming events hosted by my office, and news on my Perkiomen Watershed project.

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,

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

BUDGET WINS

In July the Pennsylvania state budget passed in both the PA House and PA Senate, and Governor Josh Shapiro signed it into law. It marks a historic investment for the future of our commonwealth. While there are many benefits to this year's budget, I am especially proud of the contributions to education funding for public K-12 schools and special education, as well as for vocational training/apprenticeships and collegiate learning. It ensures that students' basic needs are met nutritionally through universal free breakfast and physically through free menstrual products. It also includes support for healthcare workers, improvements in environmental oversight, and other needed improvements in funding the programs and policies that matter to our community. And for our family and friends in need of mental health care or disability support, the increases agreed upon might be life-changing.

This budget takes steps to move Pennsylvania forward, and I continue to work with my colleagues to secure gains for working families, for seniors, and for young adults in our great commonwealth.



EMPLOYMENT

PA Budget

- \$30 million increase for Career and Technical Education
- \$20 million for student teacher stipends
- \$7 million for Workforce Development

Creation of the State Board of Higher Education which ensures institutions meet PA's workforce needs



HUMAN SERVICES

PA Budget

- \$223 million increase in MA Community HealthChoices
- \$281 million increase for Intellectual Disabilities Community Waiver Program
- \$71 million increase towards marital health services
- \$55 million increase towards Youth Development Institutions
- \$26 million increase for subsidized child care services



BUSINESS

PA Budget

- \$500 million in industrial site development
- \$20 million to continue the work of the Historically Disadvantaged Business Program
- \$20 million towards the Main Street Matters program
- \$15 million towards tourism marketing



EDUCATION

PA Budget

- \$1.3 billion investment statewide in public education
- \$100 million in additional funds for special needs education
- \$100 million for school safety
- \$100 million to improve school facilities
- \$80 million back to taxpayers due to new accountability reimbursements



On Saturday, July 13th Rep. Matt Bradford and I held our annual joint shred event at Norristown Area High School.



Thank you, neighboring Skippack Township, for including me again this year in your 4th of July parade!



On April 8th, the House welcomed the award-winning Norristown Robotics Team to Harrisburg.



One of my favorite days of the year is Trout Stocking Day with the Fish & Boat Commission!

My Bills that Passed this Session

HB 269 – Veterans' Records of Discharge, Passed the House 203-0, Now in the Senate

Ensures DD-214s are inaccessible to anyone other than a veteran or an immediate family member for 85 years to prevent fraudulent access to records.

HB 2433 – Stopping Foreign Influence in Elections, Passed the House 126-76, Now in the Senate

Prohibits substantially foreign-owned corporations from making expenditures and contributions in support of the success or defeat of a candidate or ballot question.

HR 185 – Geothermal Energy Projects in Communities Near Abandoned Mines, Adopted by the House 199-4

Studies the usage of geothermal energy in abandoned mining locations to create energy which effectively recycles a hazard into an energy source.

HB 1963 – Veteran's Death Certificates, Passed the House 202-0, Now in the Senate

Makes explicit that spouses of veterans are entitled to receive veteran's preference death certificates to reinstate a long-standing practice with funeral homes.

HB 2153 – Prohibiting Split Rates & Providing for Custom Fabrication on Public Works Projects, Passed 125-77, Now in the Senate

Ensures workers on public works projects are paid the same rate for one job and custom fabrication done away from site will receive prevailing wage.

HR 125 – Veterans Week of Service, Adopted by the House 201-1

Designates the week of November 4-11, 2023, as "Veterans Week of Service" which recognizes the work of veterans who continue to lead and serve the commonwealth.

Some Additional Bills I Have Introduced this Session

HB 1275 – Riparian Buffers, Referred to House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Places buffers along each side of a surface body of water to provide clean drinking water as well as reduce erosion and flooding.

HB 1240 – Transportation Electrification Planning, Referred to House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee

Creates a comprehensive planning process for charging infrastructure deployment and transportation electrification plans by bringing state agencies together.

HB 275 – Ensuring Fully Staffed Polling Places, Referred to House State Government Committee

Provides county boards of elections with the option to recruit qualified individuals for poll worker service to increase civic engagement and participation in the democratic processes.

HB 1817 – Streamlining the Name Change Process, Referred to House Judiciary Committee

Replaces judicial name change process with a single office and more streamlined process to minimize challenges and provide protection to vulnerable individuals.

HB 1241 – Regulations for Massage Businesses to Prevent Human Trafficking, Referred to House Professional Licensure Committee

Enacts statewide regulation of massage businesses to curb illegitimate activity and provides better protections to victims of human trafficking.

HB 1940 – Incentives to Build Affordable Homes, Referred to House Housing and Community Development Committee

Creates a low-interest loan program to incentivize builders to construct new homes for sale to increase Pennsylvania's affordable housing stock and homeownership.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LICENSE PLATE RESTORATION **SEPT. 5**

PERK. INITIATIVE PUBLIC MEETING **NOV. 12**

VETERAN'S BREAKFAST **NOV. 22**

WINTER ACCESSORY DRIVE **OCT. NOV. DEC.**

VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

DOCUMENTARY SCREENING **SEPT. 24**

WITTING TREE DEDICATION **SEPT. 26**

Legislation I Co-sponsored Passed by the House/Senate

HB 1140 - Expanding Access to Contraceptives, Passed the House 133-69, Rep. Krueger (D-Delaware County)

Reduces barriers to women's health care by not permitting employers' objections to what medical care/coverage their employee has the right to receive.

HB 2137 - Establishing the Maternal and Newborn Supply Kit Program, Passed the House 123-79, Rep. Mayes (D-Allegheny County)

Brings the program to the Department of Health with the option of deciding how to distribute kits for infant and postpartum care to ease stress on new parents.

HB 1632 - Covering Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries Under Workers Compensation for First Responders, Passed the House 154-46, Rep. O'Mara (D-Delaware County)

Removes a roadblock that prevents first responder PTSIs from being recognized as eligible claims for worker's compensation to help protect their livelihoods and continue community service.

SB 37 - Enhanced Driver Responsibility, Passed the Senate 37-13, House 126-74, Enacted into law, Sen. Brown (R-District Lackawanna, Monroe, and Wayne Counties)

Prohibits the use of hand-held interactive wireless communications devices while operating a motor vehicle in the commonwealth to limit using technology while driving.

HB 98 - Equal Pay, Passed the House 102-99, Rep. Bullock (D-Philadelphia County)

Prohibits and penalizes employers from discriminating and paying workers less because of their gender, race, or ethnicity to stop disadvantage in the workplace.

HB 847 - Help Counties Provide Quicker Election Returns, Passed the House 102-99, Rep. Conklin (D-Centre County)

Allows counties to pre-canvass mail ballots to expedite election results and give time to address the volume of ballots to be cast in future elections.

HB 2104 / HB 2105 - Strengthening Protections Against Workplace Discrimination, Passed the House 102-99, Rep. Madden (D-Monroe County) and Rep. Scott (D-Montgomery County)

Strengthens the Human Relations Act by expanding protections to more workers and ensures employers have policies in place to curb workplace discrimination.

HB 1472 - Transparency Around Dark Money, Passed the House 127-74, Rep. Solomon (D-Philadelphia County)

Amends Pennsylvania Election Code to require campaign finance reports from civic leagues and 501(c)(4) tax-exempt organizations that advocate for or against a candidate.

SB 1111 - Strengthening Megan's Law, Passed the Senate 49-0, House 200-0, Sen. Baker (R-District 20 [Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties])

Requires convicted human traffickers to register under SORNA and requires those individuals to undergo the sexually violent predator assessment.

HB 777 - Banning Ghost Gun Parts, Passed the House 104-97, Rep. Cephas (D-Philadelphia County)

Closes existing loopholes that allow proliferation of untraceable gun and gun parts by prohibiting the purchase, sale, and production of those parts.



HB 1842 - Community Solar Legislation, Passed the House 111-90, Rep. Schweyer (D-Leigh County)

Sets a framework for communities to reap the benefits of solar energy, but not on the backs of ratepayers who do not opt in.

HB 1665 - Increasing Student Success with more school counselor support, Passed the House 102-99, Rep. Steele (D-Allegheny)

Requires schools to develop a robust and comprehensive school counseling plan to ensure academic, career, social, and emotional learning plans.



I enjoyed a tour of Variety Club in neighboring Worcester Township with my colleagues to learn about the job support and training they provide to their participants.

Perkiomen Flood Mitigation Project – 2024 Update

On February 16, Montgomery County Commissioners and I held a press conference on the banks of the Perkiomen Creek announcing the Perkiomen Mapping and Flood Mitigation grant. Also in attendance were Dr. Robyn Hannigan, President of Ursinus College, and Lower Providence Supervisors Dr. Janine Darby and Peter MacFarland. The grant of \$1 million would be used to study flooding throughout the 362-square-mile watershed and determine what techniques would best mitigate dangerous, severe storms and help reduce the damage and loss caused by big storms like Hurricane Ida in 2021. I secured the funding as part of the FY 2022/23 Pennsylvania state budget.



On March 22, I welcomed PA Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Jessica Shirley and staff to tour parts of the lower Perkiomen Creek and hear about the devastating impacts of Hurricane Ida's flooding. We stopped in Collegetown and noted several buildings that would be demolished with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds. Other stops included Central Perkiomen Park, where the historic Mill House was lost to flooding, the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy and other locations in Schwenksville, and the Graterford "Lake" that forms along the prison access road during heavy rains. The goal of the tour was to share the types and extent of flooding issues facing the Perkiomen Creek watershed.



On July 18, the Montgomery County Commissioners approved a contract with Herbert, Rowland, and Grubic Inc. to conduct the analysis of flooding incidents throughout the Perkiomen Creek watershed and propose mitigation projects to reduce the threat of loss of life, property damage, and disruption of essential services. The study will be completed by the end of summer 2025 and will suggest mitigation strategies throughout the watershed. The first public meeting to share details is planned for November 12, 2024, at the Upper Providence Township Building beginning at 6 PM. Additional public meetings are being planned for the Upper Perkiomen and East Branch areas as well.



In honor of Clean Water Day I spoke about my Riparian Buffer Bill, HB 1275, in Harrisburg with PennFuture, Choose Clean Water Coalition, and the Coalition for the Delaware River.



In March, I was glad to meet with the Montgomery County Commissioners and my fellow Montco House Delegation members to discuss how our offices can collaborate and govern effectively.



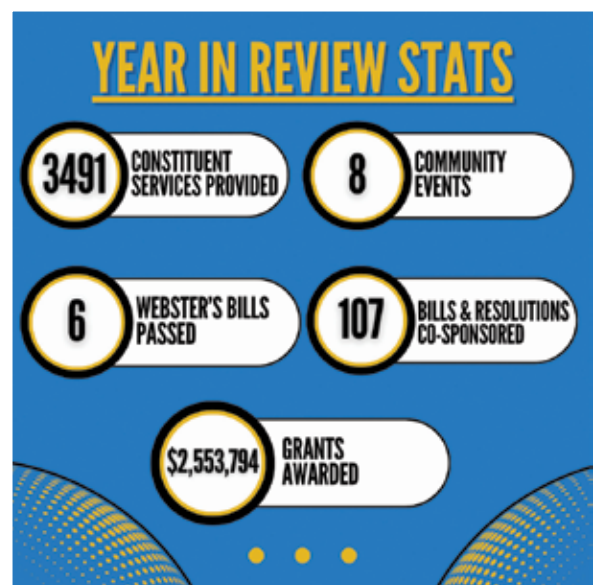
In April, I was proud to stand alongside Montgomery County Coroner Dr. Janine Darby to raise the Gift of Life Donor Flag for the first time at a PA coroner's office.



Thank you to all who attended my annual Senior Fair at the Greater Valley Forge Expo Center in Oaks! This year almost 300 attendees received information on services and programs in our region.



Sen. Cappelletti's annual Kids' Fair at the Elmwood Park Zoo is always a fun-filled event. Animals, live performances, community resources, and free snacks and swag for the kids!





STATEREPRESENTATIVE

JOE WEBSTER

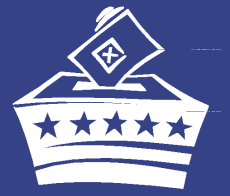
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What's Inside?

- ✓ PA Budget Highlights
- ✓ Session 2023-2024 Recap
- ✓ Upcoming District Events
- ✓ Watershed News & More!

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General Election Key Dates



Last Day to
Register to Vote



Last Day to
Apply for Mail-In/
Absentee Ballot



Election Day

vote.pa.gov