



State Representative  23rd Legislative District

# Dan Frankel

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## Honoring Tree of Life Victims

November was a month of mourning in our city, as we remembered those murdered and injured in the tragedy at the Tree of Life Synagogue. Our entire community feels newly vulnerable due to the unspeakable violence inflicted by one individual.

After attending too, too many funerals, I returned to Harrisburg after the election to speak in the House chamber to honor the victims of that shooting. I also presented my colleagues with a gift – a shirt featuring the symbol declaring Pittsburgh “Stronger than Hate” including a Steelers symbol with one of the hypocycloids replaced with a star. Many call this six-pointed star the Star of David. In Hebrew it’s called “Magen David,” which actually translates as the “Shield of David.” Not a star, a shield. Perhaps a beacon, but also a protection.

We are strong; but we also must be shields for each other. That is the community spirit I witnessed after the Tree of Life massacre.

The first responders, the police officers, who came to Tree of Life that morning exhibited enormous courage and bravery rushing into the synagogue, confronting the anti-Semitic gunman, and stopping further death in the synagogue and in the surrounding area. People throughout Pittsburgh convened that evening, and flooded the corner of Forbes and Murray by the thousands, to be with my neighbors and our friends, and the families that suffered such grievous loss.

And while the Nazis forced Jews to wear the Magen David to identify them, it is used by Jews today – now proudly – to

represent our identity and to be the symbol of the state of Israel. I am so grateful for the outpouring of support that I and my community have received from all members of the Pennsylvania legislature. Many went to Shabbat services to be with their Jewish constituents and neighbors across Pennsylvania.

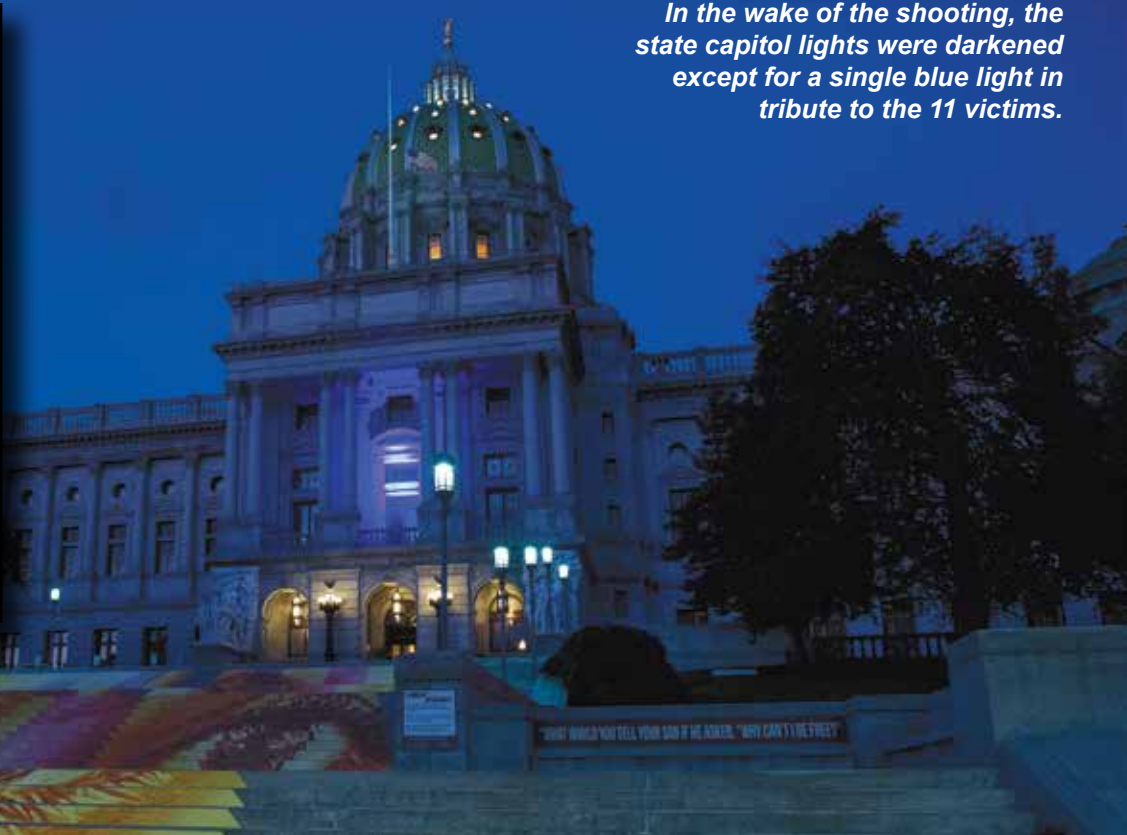


During the 2019-20 session, we’ll convene again and pass an official resolution to honor the victims and invite their families to witness lawmakers say Pennsylvania is stronger than hate.

When mass shootings target a specific people – whether it’s the African Methodist Episcopal church in Charleston, S.C.; the Sikh temple in Wisconsin; or the Pulse nightclub attack, which targeted LGBTQ people in Orlando, Fla. – these are crimes of hate. We know we must work together to stop this violence, and the feeling of fear it creates. The traditional month of mourning ended on Nov. 27 with a Community Shloshim. I am prepared to begin the policy work necessary to prevent such massacres from occurring again.



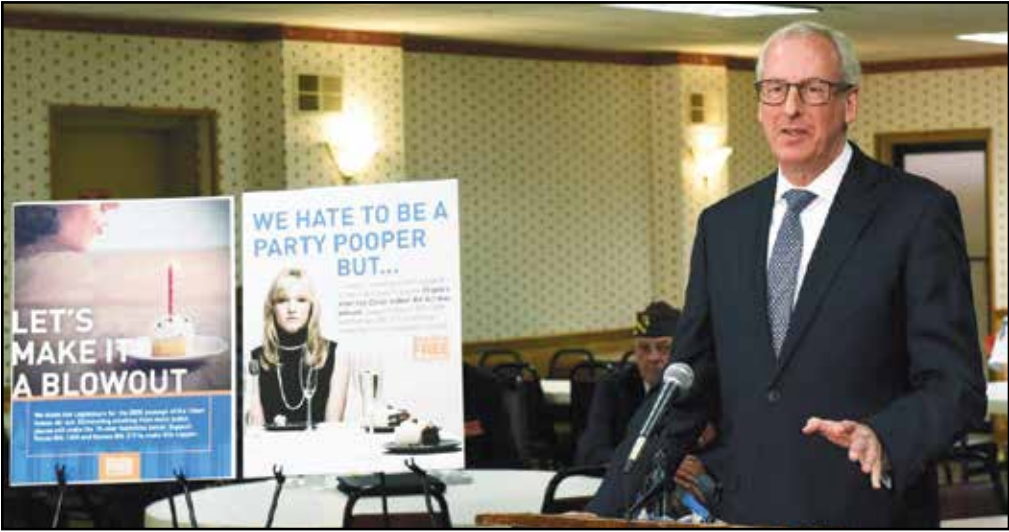
*In the wake of the shooting, the state capitol lights were darkened except for a single blue light in tribute to the 11 victims.*





# Strengthening the Clean Indoor Air Act

September marked 10 years since passage of the Clean Indoor Air Act, the law that protects workers – and patrons – from the dangers of indoor smoking in most establishments in Pennsylvania. To mark the occasion, advocates for clean air met at the VFW in Morningside. Private clubs, like VFW posts, are exempt from the law. But because of the health benefits, several private clubs are taking proactive steps and implementing their own smoking bans. I'm supporting legislation that would end all loopholes so we can have a truly comprehensive clean indoor air law and level the playing field. Since the press gathering in Morningside, the American Legion in Monroeville also decided to ban smoking indoors.



*In September, I joined legislators and community leaders at the VFW in Morningside to mark the 10th anniversary of the Clean Indoor Air Act and to support legislation that would extend the act's protections to all workers.*



## Streetscape Improvements for Murray Avenue

Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition was awarded \$75,000 from the state to improve O'Connor's Corner. This will allow SHUC to revitalize the parklet by adding trees, seating, and an improved bus shelter. Creating a place where visitors and neighbors want to spend time will improve public health and invite more people to participate in the lower Murray Avenue economy. Tree pits and other green infrastructure will help mitigate stormwater runoff. This project is a partnership among SHUC, the state, Allegheny County, and the Colcom Foundation. This project should break ground in 2019.

## PWSA Improvements

The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority released its 12-year vision. This plan includes how it will maintain strong financial health, achieve goals for necessary infrastructure improvements, and responsibly keep clean water available 24/7/365.

Gov. Tom Wolf awarded PWSA nearly \$50 million in Pennvest funding, which will help the utility's lead line replacement program. State oversight requires that PWSA replace 855 public lead service lines between July 1, 2018 and Dec. 31, 2018. As of mid-November, PWSA has replaced 1,075 public lines and 678 private lead lines. In October, I attended a news conference with local leaders and DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell to celebrate this new state funding that will help lead line replacement go faster.

The state's Public Utility Commission was brought in earlier this year to provide extra oversight. In years and decades past, the utility has fallen short of meeting its mission. But with a new executive director, professional support staff, long-term vision, and strong financial footing, I'm encouraged that they'll be able to provide safe, affordable, and reliable water



*I had the opportunity to discuss the importance of replacing lead water lines at an announcement that PWSA was receiving state funds to help it address this issue.*

to residents. My office is keeping an eye on PWSA's improvements to its storm water initiatives, too. Sustainable run-off mitigation projects, such as improvements in Schenley Park at Four Mile Run, will help reduce combined sewer overflow into our rivers.

# Still Time to Apply for Environmental Education Grants

The Department of Environmental Protection offers grant money to local communities that want to educate people about a wide variety of environmental issues. This could be a neighborhood event, a class activity, or a public awareness campaign.

With effects of climate change becoming more pronounced with wildfires, hill slides, and severe storms, now more than ever it's imperative that we become more attuned to the environment. This grant program is a great way for community leaders to think of ways to make an impact locally.

According to DEP, subjects like climate change, water, air quality, environmental justice and more are all fair game. The kinds of organizations eligible for this funding include public and private schools, colleges and universities, county conservation districts, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. General grants of up to \$25,000 will be awarded to larger, one-year, regional or statewide initiatives. Mini-grants of up to \$3,000 will be awarded to one-year projects of any size.

The Environmental Education Grant Program was established by the Environmental Education Act of 1993, which mandates that 5 percent of all pollution fines and penalties collected annually by DEP be set aside for environmental education.

The application deadline is Jan. 11, 2019, at 11:59 p.m. More information can be found at [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov).



# Helping Residents get Health Care

The Trump administration has consistently sought to reduce public education about health insurance available through the Affordable Care Act by cutting funds for advertising, and narrowing the window for buying coverage. That means states must step up to lead.

To help spread the word about open enrollment, state Sen. Jay Costa and I held open enrollment information sessions in the district. We wanted residents to know the ACA is still here and affordable plans exist. The ACA ensures plans must include comprehensive coverage, such as: preventive care, maternity care and birth control, prescription drug benefits, mental health, and substance abuse treatment.

Thanks to the ACA, our state's uninsured rate is at a record low. More than 1 million Pennsylvanians have health care thanks to the ACA, and almost half of the children in Pennsylvania receive public health insurance through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program. Health care is one of my legislative priorities, and I'll continue to fight for state-level health care protections for Pennsylvanians.

# Looking Ahead to the 2019-20 Session

After the fall election, the Democratic Caucus will welcome 24 new members to the fold. Though the caucus will not be in the majority, the split between Democrats and Republicans will be narrower, at 110-93. I'm excited to welcome three new members to the Allegheny County Democratic Delegation: Sara Innamorato, Summer Lee, and Brandon Markosek.

Women played a key role in this year's elections. According to the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University, the number of women will increase from 42 to 53 members in the state House (a 24% increase) and from seven to 12 members in the state Senate (a 71% increase). I hope to see this trend continue for years to come.

We'll be tackling serious issues in the session ahead.

Education continues to be a priority. Gov. Tom Wolf has advocated for more funding each year of his first term, and proudly supports increasing education funding even more. Universal pre-K and early childhood education is one of the biggest investments the commonwealth can make to shore up its quality of life for generations to come. Funding will be necessary, and another thing Gov. Wolf proudly supports is a severance tax on energy corporations that profit off our natural resources.

Pennsylvania is operating below its economic potential, and that's because everyday people don't have the financial security or workplace benefits to truly thrive. The minimum wage is shockingly too low at \$7.25 an hour, and as years go by the value of a \$7.25 wage gets lower due to inflation.

Workers, whether part time or full time, often don't have paid sick days, paid family leave, or quality health care. When unions thrived, many could count on benefits such as these being won thanks to contract negotiations. Though unions play an important role in setting the standard for what folks should expect in terms of benefits, we can't rely on industry or private businesses to provide them. That's why we need to codify these kinds of standards so people in this state can experience quality and fulfilling lives.



*I am looking forward to working with Rep.-elect Sara Innamorato and the entire Allegheny delegation in the coming year to continue to improve the lives of Pennsylvanians.*



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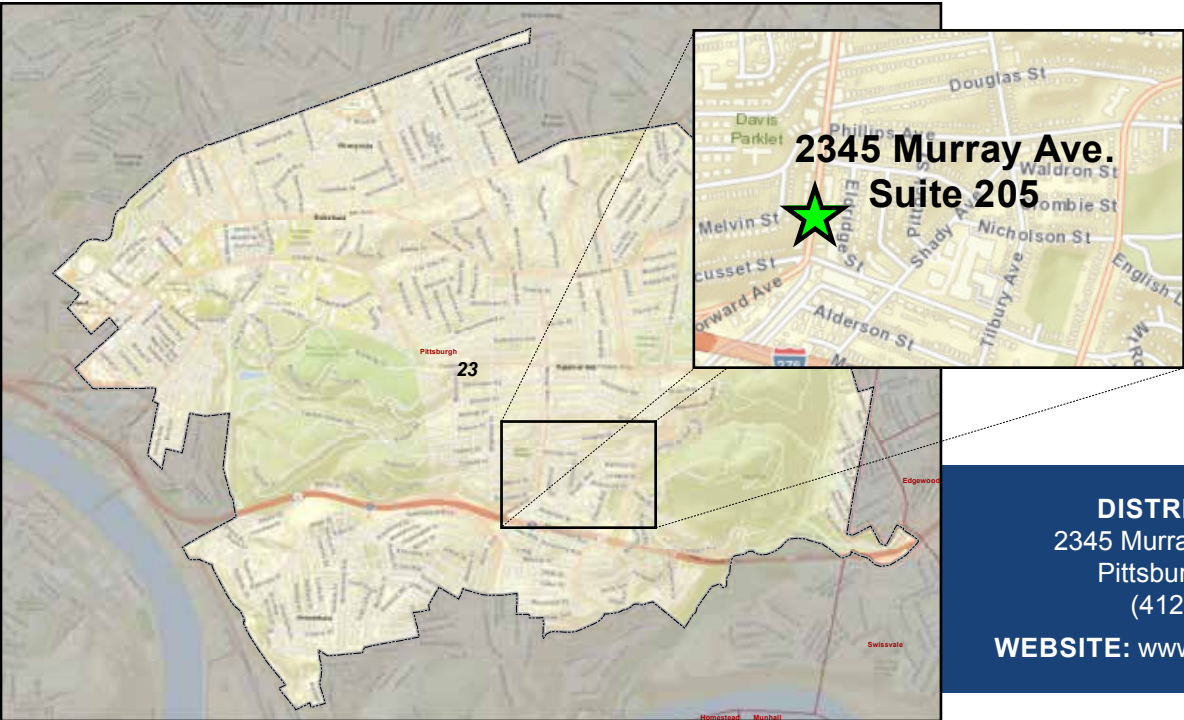
**Winter Heating Assistance  
Available**

Pennsylvania's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program – LIHEAP – is accepting applications until April 12.

LIHEAP provides grants to pay a portion of heating bills, or crisis grants for households facing furnace failure, utility shut off, or being low on heating fuel. LIHEAP grants range from \$200 to \$1,000, while the maximum crisis grant is \$600. This season's income limit for LIHEAP cash and crisis grants \$18,210 for an individual and increases by \$6,480 for each additional person in the household.

Residents who received a LIHEAP grant last season and are still residing at the same address already should have received a green postcard or a 2018-19 LIHEAP application with a registration number.

Those who did not receive LIHEAP last season may obtain an application from my office, calling LIHEAP directly at 1-866-857-7095, or applying online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).



If you have any questions about any state government-related matter, or need help accessing or applying for government programs or benefits, please visit my district office.

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