

State Representative | 192nd Legislative District

# MORGAN CEPHAS



Summer  
2020

**District Office:**

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Dear Neighbor,

2020 has certainly been a challenging year thus far, but as your state representative, I could not be prouder of how our communities have responded by coming together, taking action and making major strides in our fight to combat the COVID-19 coronavirus and end systemic racism.

With a pandemic, civil unrest and an economic downturn all cascading at once, as we move forward to create a new normal, we will be required to work together to rebuild our communities from the ground up.

Your dedication to putting our health first has helped save lives and flatten the curve, allowing us to reopen our district office safely on a modified schedule.

Your passion to stand up for Black and Brown communities by marching peacefully and demanding change has gotten the attention of lawmakers in Harrisburg and Washington.

From virtual town hall meetings and phone calls to emails and social media, my staff and I have worked tirelessly to adapt to our new normal and not let these unprecedented times stop us from continuing to connect you to key services.

In this newsletter, you'll read about the progress we created to move Pennsylvania forward, how my legislation would provide critical COVID-19 relief to those who need it most and learn about the resources available to help you, your family and our commercial corridors rebound and succeed past this public health crisis.

Sincerely,

Rep. Morgan Cephas

## House unanimously passes critical police reform legislation

Your voices are being heard in Harrisburg! I proudly joined the House in unanimously passing bills aimed at helping police departments ensure accountability and transparency from within while strengthening their relationship with the community they serve.

The Senate passed this legislation less than a week later and sent those bills to Gov. Tom Wolf for his signature.

As a member of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, I will continue working to enact real reforms that our communities need now more than ever.

**PA HOUSE DEMOCRATS**

### Police Reforms Pass PA House + Senate UNANIMOUSLY

**MANDATORY** sharing of employment records for law enforcement so municipalities can make fully-informed hiring decisions

**MANDATORY** training for police in:

- Recognizing + reporting child abuse
- Interacting with people of diverse racial, ethnic + economic backgrounds
- Use of force
- De-escalation and harm reduction techniques
- Instruction in community + cultural awareness
- Implicit bias
- Procedural justice + reconciliation techniques
- Trauma-informed care + recognizing PTSD

**MANDATORY** evaluation of police for PTSD within 30 days of use of lethal force or if recommended by supervisor or chief



I proudly joined fellow members of the Pa. Legislative Black Caucus to protest on the speaker's rostrum, demanding a vote on police reform legislation, which happened just days later.

# Fighting to enact change

In June, I marched with Aliyah Stokes (pictured below) and other young people around St. Joseph's University to join the rest of the country in protesting police brutality.

As a member of the House Democratic Police Reform Working Group, I am taking our fight to Harrisburg and

working with state and local elected officials from across the commonwealth to lay out plans to help stop our communities of color from being constant victims of targeted violence at the hands of police.

Our proposals include: outlawing the use of chokeholds or any other

action that constricts an airway by law enforcement; ending stop and frisk policies that disproportionately target Black and Brown communities; and creating a deputy inspector general at the state level to root out misconduct, brutality, waste, fraud and abuse within law enforcement agencies, which Gov. Wolf supports.



I joined District Attorney Larry Krasner, elected officials and community leaders to launch a new collaborative effort involving the DA's office and local police to address gun violence in the city and help protect our neighborhoods from further bloodshed.

# Fighting to provide Pennsylvanians with COVID-19 relief



I am forever grateful for the 5,000 pieces of PPE donated to our communities in May by the American Chinese United Association to go toward protecting our first responders and most vulnerable neighbors from COVID-19.

As a member of the state House COVID-19 labor and industry working group, I am focused on prioritizing legislation in the General Assembly that will help to relieve Pennsylvanians of the impacts caused by the coronavirus.

This means fighting to pass my proposals aimed at assisting everyone in getting back on track during and after this health crisis that would:

- Bridge the digital divide and provide low-income students access to online learning devices and services to help them learn while schools are closed.
- Waive interest for student loan and home borrowers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Allow college students to terminate housing leases without penalties and payment of the remainder of their rent during COVID-19 if their school cancels on-campus classes.
- Ensure individuals facing debt are able to receive unemployment compensation.
- Strengthen the safety of childcare facilities by requiring personal protective equipment be worn by workers and proper hygiene methods be used.
- Protect small businesses by placing a moratorium on all commercial property evictions until Dec. 31.
- Offer landlords economic assistance to help prevent them from losing their properties and renters from losing their homes.
- Close gaps in healthcare access while allowing providers to focus on treating coronavirus patients.

# Protecting ourselves from COVID-19 means masking up, reopening safely

Thanks to your commitment and sacrifice, Philadelphia has made major progress in flattening the curve and stopping the spread of the coronavirus.

Gov. Wolf moved Philly into the Green Phase of his COVID-19 reopening plan, but our communities are following the city's Reopening with Care strategy to minimize risk and maximize safety in the Philly area.

To help prevent a resurgence of cases, Mayor Jim Kenney signed a Mandatory Mask Order in June, requiring masks be worn in any indoor public spaces and outdoors if there is less than six feet between people from different households. Exceptions have been made for children under eight years old and those with a medical condition.

Gov. Wolf announced a similar order announcing masks must be worn whenever anyone leaves home.



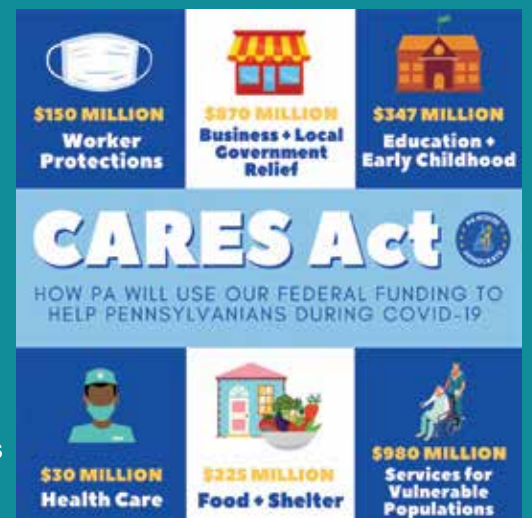
Pa. Dept. of Health reports a decline in COVID-19 cases since April

# Pa. receives \$2.6 Billion in CARES Act funding

As part of this year's 2020-21 state budget, Pennsylvania received \$2.6 billion from the federal government provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, known as the CARES Act.

The commonwealth is using these resources to help our most vulnerable populations during this health crisis.

The graph to the right shows how some of the funds have been distributed.



# Teaming up to donate more than 12,000 meals to families during COVID-19



Throughout the summer, I partnered with Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson and the leadership of the Wynnefield Residents Association to distribute additional ShareFood fruits and vegetable boxes to community residents.

## Total Meals Distributed

March – 500 meals

April – 2,000 meals

May – 7,500 meals

June – 5,500+ meals



The COVID-19 global pandemic has affected millions and presented many challenges to our communities – including exacerbating the reality of limited access to food.

I had an opportunity to partner with Share Food Program, Overbrook West Neighbors (OWN), Wynnefield Residents Association (WRA) and Overbrook Park Civic Association (OPCA) to conduct a stop-and-go food distribution while following CDC and Department of Health safety guidelines.

Together, we've donated over 12,000 meals, ensuring families have access to fresh produce and non-perishable foods within the 192nd Legislative District.

In addition, we offered drop-off services to our less mobile community members, including senior centers, on a weekly basis to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Food distribution sites are available throughout the summer. My staff and I are here to help connect you to locations nearest you.



I commend Share Food's Director George Matysik, seen here with me, for his dedication to providing families in the 192nd with meals during the COVID-19 health crisis.

# Pandemic can't stop us from serving you and your family



We're not letting a global pandemic stop us from serving you and your family.

Even when our office was closed, my dedicated staff and I adapted to these unprecedented circumstances by working from home to continue answering your questions, addressing your concerns, connecting you with critical resources and hosting virtual town hall meetings and events.

I hope you'll join us for our next two upcoming live discussions on my Facebook page to help prepare you for the upcoming presidential election in November.

*Continue to page 6 for details about the virtual events.*



In my ongoing commitment to our business corridors, I spent time cleaning up and assessing the damage left behind to mom and pop shops and other local businesses impacted by civil unrest and COVID-19. I will continue to work to support businesses in the area and bring business resources to the district.

# Changes to fruit/ veggie voucher program for low- income seniors



While we still work to help keep our most vulnerable communities safe from the spread of the coronavirus, **there are changes this year to the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program, which provides low-income seniors with access to local produce.**

If you have collected fruit and/or vegetable vouchers through this program in the last two years, you should receive a letter in the mail from the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA).

You must then sign and mail the letter back to PCA in order to receive your vouchers in the mail.

**If you haven't received vouchers in the last two years, or if this is your first time applying, you can call PCA's help line at (215) 765-9040 or contact our office.**

## Get free assistance with your Property Tax/Rent Rebate

Forms for Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for the 2019 tax year are available – and my office staff is ready to help you file yours for free!



The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. Half of Social Security income is excluded, and the maximum standard rebate is \$650.

Spouses, personal representatives or estates may file rebate claims on behalf of deceased claimants who lived at least one day in 2019 and meet all other eligibility criteria.

Thanks to a new state law, the Department of Revenue started distributing rebates earlier this year. So, the sooner you file, the sooner you can receive your money.

You have until Dec. 31, 2020 to apply. Contact my office if you need help.

Scan with your phone to watch a step-by-step video of how to fill out your Property Tax/Rent Rebate application.



## PECO electrical substation update

PECO is building a new electrical substation at 59th Street & Upland Way to replace the 75-year-old substation on 62nd Street. The project is slated to be completed in 2022. Here's what you can expect to see next:

### Starting week of 6/29 - ending mid-August

- Upland Way and Woodbine Avenue duct bank and manhole removal and replacement

### Late September

- Underground and aerial cable installation with possible temporary lane closures (no digging needed)
- Street and sidewalk restoration and repaving on Woodbine Avenue

### Continuing Activity

- Foundation installation of the new substation structure within the site
- Installation of transmission poles and lines on SEPTA property near railroad tracks on Lancaster Avenue side
- Occasional weekend work
- Occasional loud construction activity
- Continuous site and perimeter cleanup

Stay tuned for more information about how you can be engaged and offer input to the final renderings of the project design. Together, we'll power through this! Thank you for your patience and cooperation as PECO works to provide reliable, affordable energy to your neighborhood! For more information, you can contact the PECO Philadelphia Projects Helpline at (215) 841-5750 or [pecophilaprojects@exeloncorp.com](mailto:pecophilaprojects@exeloncorp.com) or contact PECO's External Affairs Manager, Jose Aguirre, at (215) 731-3235.



Photo displays proposed conditions. \*Please note, proposed conditions may change and are not final.



State Representative  
**MORGAN CEPHAS**

5921 Lancaster Ave.  
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**My office can also help you apply for/connect you with:**

- Traditional unemployment benefits
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)
- Rent/Mortgage assistance
- Free food distribution sites
- COVID-19 DHS benefits/services

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## Virtual Town Hall

*Making your voice count*

Join us on **LIVE**

[Facebook.com/RepCephas](https://www.facebook.com/RepCephas)

### Increasing Voter Engagement

Tuesday, July 28 | 6-7p.m.

### Gearing up for November: What You Need to Know

Tuesday, August 25 | 6-7p.m.

### Please submit questions in advance to:

[RepCephas@PaHouse.net](mailto:RepCephas@PaHouse.net)

(215) 879-6625

# OUR OFFICE IS NOW OPEN

## MONDAY - THURSDAY

**8:30 AM - 3 PM**

(Please call ahead to schedule an appointment)

## CURBSIDE SERVICES

**TUESDAY & THURSDAY**

**9 AM - 11 AM**

Includes basic services like document pick-up/drop-off, rent/property tax rebate, car registration  
(Canceled during in climate weather)

**CALL DONNA TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT**

**(215) 879-6625**

## OFFICE COVID-19

### ETIQUETTE:

- **Constituents must wear PPE (mask and gloves) upon entry of office.**
- **Unable to wear a mask? Please call for service.**
- **Must maintain 6ft from staff + guests to meet social distancing guidelines.**
- **Bring ALL required documents for service in one envelope.**
- **Only service to constituent in need, no family or friends unless assisting them.**

Constituent Service Director, Rodesha Washington sits with a constituent to complete a speedy curbside services appointment. Call to make your appointment for assistance with state services.

