



State Representative
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194th Legislative District



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Budget impasse hurts human services and jeopardizes education funding

On July 10 and Aug. 4, I held press conferences in the district to highlight the impact of not having a timely budget and needing a budget with sufficient and sustainable revenue. The focus of these events were human services programs and basic-education funding. Video clips are available on my website and Facebook page.

Why should constituents be aware and concerned?

On July 10, representatives from 11 area agencies, including JEVS Human Services, Empowering People in the Community Inc. (EPIC), Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Northern Children Services, SPIN, The Alliance of Community Service Providers, Intercommunity Action Inc., Resources for Human Development (RHD), North Light Community Center and The SHARE Food Program Inc. spoke at the news conference.

These agencies who serve constituents in the 194th Legislative District emphasized how the delayed state budget will impact the delivery of services to those residents who are most vulnerable and in need. Their recurring message was “It is crucial that the legislature negotiate with the governor in earnest and good faith to come to a compromise regarding the budget as soon as possible.”

The past four years in particular have seen very deep cuts to the human services line items in the state budget. As a former four-year member of the House Human Services Committee, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of less than adequate funding.

“Our commitment to serving the children and youth in need will not change, however, [the impasse] will place a significant financial strain on our organization’s ability to meet payroll for 200 employees, which include social workers, case managers and therapists,” said Northern Children Services Chief Development Officer Jacquie Patterson.

On Aug. 4, seven students representing five public schools spoke passionately about their education and what it means to them. One student summarized the impact of inadequate funding by suggesting that no one would expect to collect half a pay check for a day’s work, yet we are potentially asking students to be satisfied with half an education because that is all that the legislature is willing to support.

It is important that constituents advise me of their views on the budget and here is a link to a survey on the budget:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KTWDWSG>



DeLissio holds two press conferences to highlight the impact of the Pennsylvania budget impasse. Eleven human service providers participated, and students from the schools in the 194th Legislative District spoke.

Convenience in Fine Wine and Spirit stores

Liquor privatization is part of the budget discussions. The budget vetoed by Governor Wolf on June 30 anticipated about \$200 million from the sale of the state stores. As a legislator with a strong business background, I have followed the discussion on liquor privatization versus modernization with interest from a policy and business perspective. As far as I can determine, there has been no appraisal of the stores as an asset to be sold and nothing to back up the projections of ongoing revenue to the general fund. By any standard, the PLCB had a strong year financially. Fine Wine & Good Spirits stores generated more than \$2.24 billion in sales, and well over a half a billion dollars was returned to the Pennsylvania Treasury, providing funding for the Pennsylvania State Police, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and other essential programs.

The effort to privatize the Fine Wine and Spirits stores is a long-standing initiative in Pennsylvania. For the first time, in the 2013-2014 session, such a bill passed the House with three votes to spare, and it died in the Senate. This session, it was voted out of the House, then amended and passed in the Senate. The amendment in the Senate changed the legislation in major ways and within three days, the bill was voted out of the Senate. No analysis was done or hearings held to understand the impact of this revision.

One of the biggest changes made in the Senate was that one-time revenue from the sale of the asset was to be spread over 10 years. Given the significance of the impact of privatization on the General Fund, I stand by the governor, who vetoed H.B. 466.

Lost in the discussion is the fact that only beer distributors would be permitted to sell, beer, wine and liquor. In order to do this, beer distributors would have to purchase an additional license to sell wine and an additional license to sell liquor.

From a business and convenience perspective, we should be seeking legislation to permit all state stores to be open on Sundays with longer hours, not just 25 percent of them. We should allow the products to be priced more competitively, allow the direct shipment of wine, and expand the wine stores within the grocery-store model. If that legislation had been enacted and convenience was still not achieved, then evaluating the system further would be an appropriate step.

Farm Fresh at our doorstep

It is that time of year that I frequent local farmers' markets in the 194th Legislative District, and I am always impressed and pleased with the fresh produce and goodies I can find. I love bringing the farm to my table; somehow the food just tastes better, and I know it is better for me. There are five farmer's markets in the 194th and the markets are listed on my website. One of the state programs that helps support farmer's markets is the PA Preferred program.

As a member of the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, I am an enthusiastic supporter of the PA Preferred program. PA Preferred was created to ensure that Pennsylvanians are supporting fellow Pennsylvanians, our neighbors, friends, family. By purchasing products made in Pennsylvania you are making a difference by restoring pride in our homegrown products and helping our economy. Pennsylvania Preferred is a public-private partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and many companies throughout the commonwealth. The program is working with thousands of companies and stores to support and promote Pennsylvania products. Next time you are shopping, whether in a major grocery chain, farmers market, or road-side stand, make sure to look for the PA Preferred logo and purchase products grown or made in Pennsylvania. Remember, purchasing products grown or made in Pennsylvania makes a difference in our economy.

Eligible seniors may receive a Supplemental Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) voucher by contacting their Area Agency on Aging in Philadelphia County at www.pcacares.org (215-765-9040) or at www.montcopa.org/mcaas (610-278-3601) in Montgomery County. These vouchers may be redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables grown in Pennsylvania.

Each eligible recipient receives four \$5 SFMNP checks to redeem at qualified farmers' markets or roadside stands. Vouchers are currently available.



East Falls Farmers Market providing fresh products to the community.

Fair funding formula is essential in restoring education funds

I believe that it is the responsibility of the commonwealth to ensure that every student has access to a quality, basic public education regardless of where they reside. To make that happen, we need to fundamentally change how public schools are funded, and a formula is a large part of that equation.

In June, the Basic Education Funding Commission unanimously recommended a formula to distribute basic education dollars from the state to local school districts. The formula is the product of months of work by this bipartisan commission and marks a major step forward in establishing funding that is responsible, predictable and equitable for all of the commonwealth's students.

The commission held 15 hearings across the commonwealth between 2014 and 2015, and the allocation for basic education was to set a standard of accountability, transparency and predictability.

There is no doubt that the current system is not fair to students or taxpayers. The 194th Legislative District includes both the Philadelphia and Lower Merion School Districts, and the disparity in the student spend numbers between the two districts is exactly why a "fair funding formula" needs to be implemented. The instructional costs per student are \$9,261 and \$15,073 respectively.

However, while the proposed formula is a significant step toward fairly funding our schools, it does not erase the past or solve the immediate problem of insufficient funding. It's also important to restore the previous four years devastating cuts to public education – as proposed in Gov. Tom Wolf's budget for 2015-16.

A combination of restored education funding cuts and the fair funding formula recommended by the Basic Education Funding Commission can provide significant progress in moving our state toward finally meeting that responsibility.

Simply put, restored funding must go hand in hand with a new formula.

Rep. DeLissio witnesses Gov. Tom Wolf sign an executive order banning oil and gas drilling in Pennsylvania state parks in Philadelphia's Benjamin Rush State Park on Jan. 29.



Attending the July 4th parade sponsored by the Neighborhood Club of Bala.



The 4th Annual Voices of the Community hearing on the budget gave many constituents the opportunity to talk about their budget priorities.



Rep. DeLissio was a marshal at the inaugural Mummers' Mardi Gras Parade held on Main Street in Manayunk on Feb. 28.



Rep. DeLissio said it was an honor to participate with GirlGov this year, whose mission is to "achieve equality for women and girls, now and for generations to come." GirlGov, created by teen women for teen women, is designed to provide girls with the opportunity to learn about civics, community involvement, women's history and leadership.

True Medicaid expansion; a welcome development in Pennsylvania

As a longtime supporter of expanding Medicaid in Pennsylvania, I supported Gov. Tom Wolf's directive to fully expand Medicaid under the federal Affordable Care Act by the end of this year.

Withdrawing HealthyPA in exchange for complete Medicaid expansion in Pennsylvania, as Wolf set forth in his first month in office, represents a commitment to the health and well-being of hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians who need health care coverage now.

Thousands of people who were not covered before will receive high-quality, low-cost health insurance for their families through the new marketplace. Full Medicaid expansion is also helping to create thousands of jobs in the health care industry, which helps to grow our state's economy.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in June to uphold the intent of the federal Affordable Care Act bolsters Pennsylvania's choice to fully expand Medicaid and in doing so, chooses the side of millions of Americans and hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians who deserve affordable health care. The court's decision allows Pennsylvania to continue receiving federal subsidies toward the cost of health insurance sold on the federally run exchange, more than 300,000 Pennsylvanians will be able to see a doctor and get the care they need.

Women veterans a priority in Women's Health legislative agenda

Again this session I am an active member of the Women's Health Caucus and spoke at the press conference where its legislative agenda for the current session of the General Assembly was introduced.

This caucus is a bipartisan and bicameral group of legislators seeking to ensure legislation that is supportive of Pennsylvania women is introduced and ultimately passed.

I introduced the legislation that would establish the Women's Veterans' Health Care Task Force. The overall goal of this task force would be to study the health issues facing women veterans and make recommendations to the governor and General Assembly by April 30, 2016.

The 17-member task force would be composed of various individuals, including four women veterans who are commonwealth residents, representatives from the health care provider community, advocates and various state agency secretaries.

It is well documented that women often present differently than men for many issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. It is critical that we understand how and if women veterans' needs are being met in the commonwealth. The federal Veterans Affairs system has come under much scrutiny and if one outcome of the federal reviews is allowing vets to access care through private practice versus the VA system, this task force work allows Pennsylvania to respond quickly.

In my first session in the legislature, this caucus focused only on one or two issues, generally around reproductive health. Since then, the caucus has come to understand that there are a variety of issues that can better women's lives, and the caucus has worked hard to recruit legislators in both chambers and from both parties to introduce and support a package of bills.

The bills are categorized as follows:

- **Family-friendly working conditions:** Reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers; sanitary conditions for nursing mothers; and protecting all employees against sexual harassment.
- **Economic fairness:** Equal pay in the workplace, raising the minimum wage, retirement security; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – increasing the earned income disregard.
- **Ensuring healthy lives:** Ensuring patient trust; setting up a task force on health care for women veterans; and safe access to health care facilities.
- **Domestic violence awareness:** Cell phone contract termination for domestic violence victims; early lease termination for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking; and Pennsylvania safe campuses legislation.

APPRISE Counseling available

My staff and I continue to have an APPRISE counselor available at my district office on the third Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

APPRISE counselors provide reliable, easy-to-understand information about Medicare, Medicaid, Medicare Part D, Medigap and private insurance programs such as those covering long-term care. Open enrollment is Oct. 15 through Dec. 7.

Scheduling an appointment now with the counselor provides you the opportunity to review your health insurance plan to be sure you are getting the best plan for your needs and budget.

Call my office at 215-482-8726 to sign up for a 30-minute free counseling appointment to review your health insurance questions! Upcoming available dates: Sept. 16, Oct. 21 and Nov. 18.

Public pensions remain a front-and-center topic in Harrisburg

As a new member of the House State Government Committee, I have been on the front line of reviewing and debating legislation impacting public pensions. S.B. 1 was recently vetoed by Governor Wolf. S.B. 1 would place new hires – teachers and state employees – into a defined contribution plan versus the current defined benefit plan. The very serious problem with this legislation is that the current unfunded liability would still exist – and that will take a commitment of money to remedy.

In 2010, Act 120 became law and this significant pension reform bill has been in effect for almost five years and was enacted with the goal of reducing the unfunded liability over a 20 to 25 year timeline.

As I listen to my colleagues and testimony from think tanks, business interests and labor unions, I continue to believe that Act 120 has set us on a path to rectify the fact that the state was deficient in its obligations to fund the two state pension plans (SERS and PSERS) over the past 10 to 15 years. The hearings also demonstrated that there may be some additional willingness to further adjust what was accomplished in 2010. S.B. 1 was not an adjustment to Act 120.

This is a complex issue and the fact that Senate Bill 1, a 410-page bill, was introduced and voted on final passage in the Senate within a five-day window begs the question of how this was a thoughtful and deliberative process to address such a weighty matter. I believe that to put in place a plan that does not address the unfunded liability is not the correct way to approach this matter.

Even though the House State Government Committee held two hearings, given the additional information I have heard from experts who were not called to testify, I will advocate that S.B. 1 deserved to be vetoed.

State government reform needs your participation!

As a charter member of the Government Reform Caucus, which convened in March 2013, I would like to share why I am an ardent supporter of state government reform and an active member in the caucus. We are a committed group of senators and representatives from both parties, but as we tackle issues of statewide concern, we need a groundswell of citizens across the commonwealth to tell leadership in Harrisburg that reform legislation is important to you too. The legislative calendar is controlled by Speaker Turzai at 717-772-9943, or email him at mturzai@pahousegop.com and Majority Leader Reed at 717-705-7173, or email him at dreed@pahousegop.com and we need Minority Leader Dermody at 717-787-3566, or email him at RepDermody@pahouse.com to advocate also.

In particular, our caucus has worked hard on the language of H.B. 43, Gift Transparency and Limitations Act, which would better govern the gifts and hospitality that legislators may receive. It is our goal to get at least one sensible piece of legislation enacted into law. Arriving at agreement, even among somewhat like-minded reformers has been a challenge, but we think we are there. We are working hard to inform leadership in all four caucuses that this is important legislation and that we have the votes to pass it out of committee and get it to the floor.

Briefly, H.B. 43 would prohibit the acceptance of any gifts related to transportation, lodging, hospitality or anything of economic value. Excluded from the list of prohibited items are those items that have a nominal economic value (i.e. a greeting card, a plaque, or a pen). The bill also prohibits the soliciting or acceptance of meals intended for the consumption by a specific individual. However, the legislation would allow for light food or refreshments, such as hors d'oeuvres, meant for mass consumption in a group setting. The caucus has attempted to strike a fair balance between what is meaningful, practical, and passable on this issue.

Other government reform topics that I advocate for are the formation of a non-partisan redistricting commission, which would correct the practice of gerrymandering and election reform to include early voting and online voter registration. All of these are meaningful changes that could produce a very different atmosphere in Harrisburg.

It's your right and your privilege to vote

On May 19, a primary election took place and of total of 1,532,756 ballots were cast statewide out of the 8,032,363 registered voters in Pennsylvania. That comes out to a 19.08 percent turnout rate. So less than one in five registered voters showed up to the polls.

Our representative form of government is truly a gift and I remain concerned that many citizens do not carry out their civic responsibility to vote. One challenge is that Pennsylvania does not make it easy to vote. On election day, there is a 13-hour window to get to the polls, and if something happens and you are not able to get to the polls, your voice cannot be heard. In 33 states and the District of Columbia, any qualified voter may cast a ballot in person during a designated period before Election Day. This is referred to as early voting. The average starting time for early voting across all 33 states is 22 days before the election.

In Pennsylvania, the state only permits an absentee ballot for certain reasons. Pennsylvania does not use a "no-excuse" absentee ballot system. Absentee ballots must be requested for each election.

Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia permit any qualified voter to vote absentee without offering an excuse. Some states offer a permanent absentee ballot list: once a voter asks to be added to the list, he or she will automatically receive an absentee ballot for all future elections.

Please know: I remain committed to advocating for changes needed which will make it easier for constituents to engage in the electoral process. Until then, please circle Nov. 3, 2015 and plan to vote in the General Election.



State Representative

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Why You Should Come to the District Office!

- PROPERTY TAX AND RENT REBATE APPLICATIONS
 - LIHEAP APPLICATIONS
 - UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION ISSUES
 - DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ASSISTANCE
 - PENNDOT FORMS SUCH AS: Vehicle registration forms, disability parking placards, driver's license applications, non-driver's photo ID card applications
 - FREE NOTARY SERVICE OF PENNSYLVANIA DOCUMENTS
 - BIRTH and DEATH CERTIFICATE APPLICATIONS
 - VOTER REGISTRATION and ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATIONS
 - APPRISE COUNSELING
 - PENNSYLVANIA STATE TAX FORMS
- GREAT, FRIENDLY STAFF!***



**Stay
updated**

Please go to my website at **www.pahouse.com/DeLissio** for additional information on how I vote, video clips of interviews and remarks, announcements pertaining to upcoming events such as Town Hall Meetings, other happenings, and many other legislative news items that you may find helpful.

YOU CAN ALSO SIGN UP FOR IMPORTANT EMAIL ALERTS!

Save the dates

AUGUST 27 – Town Hall Meeting

Bala Cynwyd Library, 131 Old Lancaster Road
Bala Cynwyd 19004 • **6:30 p.m.**

SEPTEMBER 17 – Town Hall Meeting

Cathedral Hall, Cathedral Village, 600 E. Cathedral Road,
Philadelphia 19128 • **7 p.m.**

SEPTEMBER 19 – Shredding Event

Roxborough Municipal Lot, 514 Dupont Street,
Philadelphia 19128 • **9 a.m. – 11 a.m.**

OCTOBER 1 – Senior Expo

Wolcott Auditorium, Roxborough Memorial Hospital
5800 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia 19128 • **8 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

OCTOBER 22 – Town Hall Meeting

Wolcott Auditorium, Roxborough Memorial Hospital
5800 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia 19128 • **7 p.m.**

NOVEMBER 5 – Achieving Financial Wellness

Wolcott Auditorium, Roxborough Memorial Hospital
5800 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia 19128 • **7 p.m.**

NOVEMBER 19 – Town Hall Meeting

Falls Ridge Community Room, Falls Ridge Senior Housing
4349 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia 19129 • **10 a.m.**

DECEMBER 3 – Living Wills and Estate Matters Workshop

Wolcott Auditorium, Roxborough Memorial Hospital
5800 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia 19128 • **7 p.m.**

DECEMBER 10 – Open House

District Office, 6511 Ridge Avenue
Philadelphia 19128 • **3:00 p.m. – 7 p.m.**