



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Leanne Krueger-Braneky

161ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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SUMMER 2017

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Message for Constituents

I have had a busy spring and summer in Harrisburg and back home in the district, working to serve local residents and fighting for our community in the state House. I continue to be grateful and honored for the opportunity to serve you.

Since the last newsletter, my district office hosted a PennDOT town hall on local traffic concerns, held a policy hearing in Folsom on the home care industry and the needs of seniors, and I visited a lot of social service and medical providers to see state programs at work. At the state Capitol, we strengthened animal abuse laws, made progress on bringing Pennsylvania into Real ID compliance, and I repeatedly fought for clean air and clean water for all Pennsylvanians.

So far this session, the legislature has passed some helpful bills and a few that I'm very concerned about. I was proud to co-sponsor House Bill 1238, popularly known as Libre's Law. Signed into law by the governor earlier this summer, Pennsylvania finally joined 47 other states in making animal abuse a felony. I applaud the advocates who worked tirelessly on this issue to keep animals safe.

In June, the House overwhelmingly passed the budget spending bill for 2017-18. I supported this bill because it invests in public education and other issues that matter to our district and reversed the deep and hurtful cuts to county human services programs that were part of the first budget bill that passed the House in April in a party-line vote. A more detailed update on the budget can be found on Page 2.

The House also debated two bills that I had concerns about, House Bills 671 and 1071. H.B. 1071 would prevent Pennsylvania communities from protecting land and water from pollution caused by plastic bags by permanently prohibiting them and other local authorities from banning or applying a surcharge on the use of plastic bags. Gov. Wolf elected to veto this bill before it could become law. H.B. 671 would endanger the ability of local governments to pass commonsense gun safety measures. H.B. 671 currently awaits a vote in the Senate.

I strongly opposed both pieces of legislation, which were backed by out-of-state special interests, because they would make it harder for local elected officials and residents to decide for themselves how best to fight gun violence and litter in their own communities.

Additionally, the Speaker of the House forced a vote on legislation that included a surprise attack on Medicaid and our commonwealth's children, seniors and folks with disabilities. House Bill 59 started as a code bill that initially sought to allow an adoptive family to appeal the amount of an adoption subsidy but was amended to limit access to Medicaid for some Pennsylvanians, establish new work requirements (with no clarity on who would be affected), and could cut "nonessential" benefits such as vision and transportation to chemo appointments.

I have heard firsthand how some hardworking families in our district rely on Medicaid to provide life-saving support for autistic children, and the majority of seniors in nursing homes depend on it, too. I believe we have a moral responsibility to stand up for those in need. Sadly, the measure won House approval 102-91 and the Senate just passed it 35-15.

You can stay up to date on these and other issues by following me on Twitter, @RepLeanne, and facebook.com/RepLeanne.



My son Wendell came to visit me in Harrisburg while he's on summer break. He had a lot of questions about how things work!

Pa. should sign onto the U.S. Climate Alliance

The president's decision to withdraw our country from the historic Paris Climate Agreement has put the health, safety and economy of Pennsylvania and the United States in peril. Climate change affects all things, from industries such as agriculture and tourism to the health and mortality of infants and children.

As a mom, business leader and legislator, I cannot just stand by while this decision puts the health and economic future of our children at risk. In the absence of leadership at the federal level, state and local governments must lead the effort to protect the future of our communities, the commonwealth and our country.

That is why I introduced H.R. 421, urging Pennsylvania to join the 1,200 local officials, businesses – including Apple, Facebook, Google, Target and Walmart – and educational institutions across the nation who have committed to upholding elements of the Paris Agreement by signing onto the U.S. Climate Alliance. Many Pennsylvanians have already joined the effort: the signers include nine Pennsylvania mayors and the leaders of 15 Pennsylvania colleges and universities, including the presidents of Allegheny College, Bryn Mawr College, Chatham University, Drexel University, Elizabethtown College, Gettysburg

University, Lebanon Valley College, Lehigh University, Millersville University, Penn State University and Villanova University.

Formed in response to the president's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, members of the U.S. Climate Alliance are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28 percent from 2005 levels and meeting or exceeding the goals of the federal Clean Power Plan. By committing to clear benchmarks, we can start to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change – such as rising temperatures, extreme weather, increased smog and more – while creating family-sustaining jobs in Pennsylvania.

According to a report released last year, 5,400 direct and indirect jobs would be created every year if the U.S. meets its goals to reduce methane emissions by the oil and gas industry. Many of the jobs created in the clean energy sector pay well and provide long-term security. The median hourly wage for workers in the methane mitigation industry is \$30.88, for example, compared with \$19.60 for all U.S. jobs.

Joining the Climate Alliance is a step toward fulfilling our moral obligation

to provide the next generation with an environment in better shape than the one we inherited. If we don't commit ourselves to taking action, we hand our children a world of increased food insecurity, higher rates of respiratory diseases like asthma, and increased transmission of some infectious diseases, which are just some of the negative effects of climate change.

I'm grateful to the 39 co-sponsors who came together in a bipartisan show of support for this resolution. It has been referred to the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, where it awaits a committee vote.



In June members of Moms Clean Air Force and Send the Lorax joined me for a news conference announcing my resolution urging Pa. to join the Climate Alliance.

Responsible revenue plan needed to pay for budget

On June 30, I joined the majority of representatives and senators in voting for a \$32 billion state budget bill for 2017-18. This bill was the product of bipartisan negotiations and restores much of the dangerous cuts contained in the earlier version of the proposal.

I supported this budget because it preserves much of the line-item funding for education and other areas that I was concerned about, including \$150 million in increases for basic and special education and Pre-K Counts.

Despite bipartisan agreement on what and how much to spend, Republican House leadership has failed to put forth a responsible revenue plan to pay for the budget. Negotiations have continued, but Speaker Turzai has blocked several fair and sustainable solutions, such as a severance tax on natural gas, from coming up for a vote – even when these proposals have bipartisan support.

Not having a reliable revenue plan in place puts our commonwealth in a dangerous and unsustainable financial position. Without new revenue, we will be operating essentially on a credit card for eight months of the year, costing us even more money in borrowing and placing our state's credit rating in further jeopardy.

The Senate just passed a package of budget-related bills and sent them over to the House for consideration. We're waiting for the Speaker to call us back to Harrisburg. I am ready to go back at any time to find a responsible approach to funding our budget that makes government more efficient, closes corporate loopholes that increase the burden on the middle class, and ensures everyone pays their fair share, including out-of-state corporations.



Temporary halt to Mariner East 2 Construction

Many residents have reached out to my office with concerns about the safety of the Mariner East 2 pipeline since the Department of Environmental Protection first issued a notice of violation for a drilling fluid spill in the Chester Creek in Brookhaven back in May. Unfortunately it was not an isolated incident: there have been 61 similar spills and leaks by Sunoco Logistics on this project since April. For that reason, I joined a bipartisan group of legislators from Delaware and Chester counties to call for an immediate moratorium on construction of the Mariner East 2 pipeline until the state Department of Environmental Protection can ensure proper safeguards are in place to protect safety and property of local residents.

On July 25, the Environmental Hearing Board heard the concerns of local residents and ordered a two-week halt to all drilling activities.

The 1,500-gallon spill of bentonite drilling fluid in Middletown Township on July 17 is just the latest in a series of pipeline and drilling-related incidents damaging local streams and water supplies. What happened in July was worse than a spill: at least one aquifer was impacted and potentially, a private drinking well in the area. In nearby Chester County, at least 14 homeowners lost their private wells because Sunoco Logistics drilled into their groundwater. Because drinking water has been affected, the responsible thing to do is halt drilling activities until steps are taken to protect residents, their property, and our water supply from future accidents.

The state Department of Environmental Protection does not have the authority to oversee private water wells. In most other counties, the local Health Department has jurisdiction in this area to keep people safe. However, what makes a bad situation worse is that Delaware County is the largest county in the commonwealth without a health department. Therefore, our residents lack the added protection many of our neighboring counties enjoy when it comes to protecting their drinking water.

The repeated, preventable spills illustrate why we need stricter

safety standards for pipelines and more timely communication about pipeline activities for homeowners and communities affected by their construction and operation. Lacking an agency with the authority to conduct a safety review on siting for projects such as the Mariner East 2 pipeline is a glaring threat to public safety. We're witnessing what happens when a pipeline is constructed through a densely populated area without any regulatory agency having to sign off on its path.

That is why I have asked DEP to conduct independent water testing of all potentially impacted private wells, as well as the Chester Creek, so that residents have independent confirmation that their water is safe. DEP has agreed to do so. I am also working with other legislators on a package of bills to address siting safety and other regulatory gaps.

My top priority as a legislator is the safety of the people I represent and the protection of their private property. With bipartisan and community support already in place for improved pipeline safety, I am hopeful we will be successful in these efforts.



Closer to Real ID compliance

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recently granted Pennsylvania a Real ID enforcement extension through Oct. 10, 2017. Without this extension, you would not be able to use your Pennsylvania driver's license or state ID to enter federal facilities, military bases or nuclear power plants due to our state's noncompliance with the federal Real ID Act of 2005. The 2005 law was passed after the 9/11 terrorist attacks to improve security.

This spring, the legislature passed and Gov. Tom Wolf approved a measure clearing the way for appropriate changes to PA's licenses and ID cards in order to comply with federal Real ID requirements.

The state Transportation Department estimates that Real ID-compliant driver's licenses and identification cards will be available as an option in 2019. This will allow residents

to obtain one before the final DHS effective date of Oct. 1, 2020.

The latest extension, however, does not change the Jan. 22, 2018 date when the federal Transportation Security Administration will require Real ID-compliant driver's licenses and ID cards to board domestic commercial flights. PennDOT will continue to seek additional extensions to ensure a smooth transition.

No one will be forced to obtain the Real ID-compliant version; however, a non-compliant ID would not be sufficient for entering federal facilities or for air travel when Pennsylvania's extensions run out.

A U.S. passport qualifies as valid ID under Real ID rules regardless of Pennsylvania enforcement extensions.

Supporting Education in Delaware County and Beyond

Being a voice and advocate for our children and families remains a top priority for me as both a mom and legislator. This spring and summer I'm proud to report that we have made progress in Harrisburg and in the district toward expanding access to quality education opportunities and recognizing successful efforts of local schools.

One of the biggest reasons I supported the \$32 billion spending package for 2017-18 is because it invests in public education:

- \$100 million increase for basic education
- \$25 million increase for special education
- \$25 million increase for Pre-K Counts

Coeburn Elementary wins National Award



It was an honor to welcome students, teachers, and Principal Kuminka from Coeburn Elementary School in June as they were recognized by the Department of Education, Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as one of Pennsylvania's 2017 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools.

Coeburn Elementary School was one of only two Pennsylvania schools or districts recognized for their commitment to sustainability education through classroom lessons, school-wide announcements, and professional development. Coeburn's Green Committee established monthly green activities for the entire school community, and students get hands-on experience through participation in service projects and groups such as the Compost Club.

Congratulations, your efforts make our district proud!

State awards grants to two Delco municipalities

Two Delaware County municipalities in the 161st District have been awarded grants from the PA Small Water and Sewer Fund, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), to reline and rehabilitate sewer lines.

Rutledge Borough will receive \$212,500 to rehabilitate a portion of its sewer system, and Nether Providence Township will receive \$147,721 for relining sewer lines.

Rutledge Borough will use its award toward rehabilitating its sanitary sewer system along Linden and Morton avenues, including relining 135 linear feet of 10-inch pipe, 4,471 linear feet of 8-inch pipe and rehabilitating 56 lateral lines and 15 manholes.

These awards are important investments in Delaware County's infrastructure. The funds awarded to Rutledge Borough will go a long way toward rehabilitating part of their sanitary sewer system that has begun to crack and see root infiltration.

The funds awarded to Nether Providence Township will be used to reline nearly 2,300 linear feet of sewer line along Beatty Run and 150 feet of sewer line along Creekside Lane, which have been subject to sanitary sewer overflow and will ensure the township is in compliance with DEP's consent order and prevent future overflow problems along Beatty Run and Creekside Lane.



Photos from Harrisburg and around the district



A little rain couldn't stop over 250 people from participating in our free document shredding event held in April in honor of Earth Day. In fact, so many people came – we had to bring over a second truck!



Congrats to Ridley Township resident Emily Apakian for earning her Gold Award! The Gold Award is the highest achievement a Girl Scout can earn. Emily is a member of Troup 53541 and she's an inspiration for other young women!



It was an honor to officially welcome the HEADstrong Foundation to Swarthmore Borough in July as it held a ground-breaking ceremony for its new Nick's House. The property is being renovated to support patients and families coping with cancer, including a free place to stay during cancer treatment.



Jennifer Kaplinsky of Rose Valley demonstrates how she affixes ribbons to military medals, explaining her job during a May 12 tour I took to learn more about Elwyn's Bridgewater occupational training center. Jennifer is one of 140 individuals who work at the Elwyn center in Aston.



In June I visited Handi-Crafters in Thorndale at the invitation of Kathy Cronin and her son Zach, who live in Brookhaven. Handi-Crafters provides meaningful work opportunities that empower people with disabilities. Programs such as these have been threatened by recent changes at the federal level, and I'm fighting to make sure all families have the support they need.



I kicked off Memorial Day weekend in Brookhaven Borough at a ceremony organized by American Legion Post 94, where I talked about the importance of honoring our veterans, past and present, and the WWI resolution we introduced in the House chamber. The morning ended with a beautiful flag ceremony led by volunteers from Saving Hallowed Ground.



I was grateful to continue celebrating the spirit of Memorial Day in Aston Township with American Legion Post 926. It was a privilege to march in the parade and speak at this important community event as we paused to remember the servicemen and women who fought so hard for our democracy.



State Representative

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Don't miss these upcoming events around the 161st District!

Small Business Breakfast

Thursday, Aug. 24

8:30 a.m.

Neumann University

Small-business owners are invited to join me for my third Small Business Breakfast where we will focus our discussion on marketing and social media. This event is free and open to any small-business owner in the 161st District.



Senior Expo

Thursday, Sept. 21

11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Brookhaven Municipal Center
2 Cambridge Road
Brookhaven, PA 19015**

Join exhibitors from local, state and federal agencies for valuable information about how you can live a healthier life and take advantage of programs just for seniors. I will be at this event to provide information on state services you could qualify for.

Shred Event

Saturday, Oct. 21

9 a.m. – noon

Location to be confirmed

Please call my office or visit my website for location information.



Call 610-534-6880 for more information or to register to attend one of these events.

Stay in touch!

Stay up to date with all the latest news from Harrisburg and the 161st Legislative District by following me on social media. You can also sign up for email updates about breaking news and legislative updates by visiting www.pahouse.com/KruegerBraneky/EmailSignup.

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