

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Morgan Cephas

192ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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FALL 2017

COMMITTEES: Aging & Older Adult Services, Agriculture & Rural Affairs, Gaming Oversight, Labor & Industry, Liquor Control, Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, Philadelphia County Delegation

Dear Neighbor,

Since being sworn into office to represent you, I have made it my mission to be vocal and proactive about addressing the issues affecting our district throughout the past legislative and budget season. Nationally, our country has been experiencing a series of threats including potential changes in our healthcare system, separating families through domestic policy and slashing the federal budget that decreases funding for education, social services, housing, etc. These challenges will require government officials to protect our most vulnerable populations by being innovative and working across the aisle to build partnerships and common ground on issues that provide stability and prosperity for all Pennsylvanians. With a district consisting of a series of 'Middle Neighborhoods' – communities that are on the edge of growth and/or decline – it is imperative that I continue to work and ensure we identify and target strategic investments from the state and local level to move our district in the right direction.

Over the past several months, we joined with strategic partners to improve the quality of life of our communities. It is vital to ensure every neighborhood offers opportunities and access to housing, health care, education, employment and an overall neighborhood that allows residents to live, work and play safely. Collectively, we have attracted new affordable housing, established a community school in the area, fought against opening and established nuisance businesses, served and connected with more than 10,000 residents, hosted a series of resource events, requested nearly \$10 million worth of recreation and commercial corridor investment during this budget season, brought the governor and members of his staff to visit the district, and advanced legislation that would provide much-needed funding for senior services in Pennsylvania.

With the progress we are making throughout the district, I realize we still have a ways to go to make certain everyone in the 192nd has access to become academically and economically successful. I look forward to representing you

and hearing your thoughts about how we can work together towards that goal.

Over the next several months I will be hosting 'Block by Block Tea Talks' – a listening tour with residents, so I can hear concerns and ideas on how we can improve the conditions of our district. If you are interested in participating, please do not hesitate to contact my office to schedule a time for me to come meet with you and your block.

Thank you for entrusting me to lead this new chapter for the 192nd. Please read on to learn about what has been going on in Harrisburg and in our district. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'MCP' or similar initials.

Morgan Cephas



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Finish the budget, pay the bills, and fix the deficit

Before closing out the spring session, I proudly announced that the state legislature took positive steps towards the financial health of our commonwealth by passing an on-time \$32 billion spending plan that reflected investments in public education, support for our senior citizens, and human services. For Philadelphia, this boost in education means an extra \$34 million for basic and special education within a year.

However, a complete budget means that a spending plan and a revenue bill have passed. Unfortunately, we only voted for a spending plan, with no clue on how to pay for it. Without coming to any agreement, the House Republicans sent us home without fulfilling our constitutional requirement as state legislators. As we move close to three months into the fiscal year, the legislature still needs to pass a revenue bill that closes a \$2 billion gap in order to balance.

In July, the Senate came back to session and passed their



own revenue bill which includes \$1.3 billion in borrowing, a tax on Marcellus Shale drilling, and a couple hundred

million dollars in tax increases on energy and utilities. While I acknowledge the Senate's efforts to get this done, there are significant concerns with their plan to increase taxes on working families.

Democrats have offered responsible options for collecting a stable income for the state: a severance tax on natural gas production, like every other natural gas-producing state collects; eliminating tax loopholes so corporations cannot avoid their fair share and force your family or small business to pay more; and raising the minimum wage so that workers earn more and state tax revenues can grow with those higher incomes – but without a tax increase.

State Treasurer Joe Torsella already warned that Pennsylvania has exhausted a \$750 million loan Treasury issued in August to keep the General Fund above a zero balance – a direct result of House Republican leaders not coming to the table to agree to the revenues necessary to complete the state budget. He said that, once the general fund gets to zero, he can't constitutionally write checks because we don't have the money to pay for them.

I hope we can come together and put the people we represent first. Working Pennsylvanians and families need a bigger say in our government, not powerful corporations and their lobbyists. As we come to an end of the summer months, it's time to get back to work on our fiscal obligations.

Cephas bill to boost senior programs by up to \$2 million per year advances to full House

According to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, our commonwealth has the third highest percentage of elderly residents in the United States with nearly 2 million residents over the age of 65. More importantly is the fact that the fastest-growing segment of Pennsylvania's elderly population are those who are 85 years of age or older. If the House Republican majority continues denying the possibility of sustainable revenue sources, potential budget cuts will put this population at risk. That's why I started working on alternatives to support senior programs across the state.

In May, the House Gaming Oversight Committee voted out my bill, House Bill 1162, that would provide an additional \$1.5 million to \$2 million per year to senior programs. The bill would redirect unclaimed gambling winnings to the Lottery Fund to be used for programs for older Pennsylvanians, such as the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. Currently, after five years, unclaimed winnings are sent to the Department of the

Treasury as unclaimed property. Under my proposal, people would have up to two years to claim their winnings before waiving rights to them and having those winnings transferred to the state Lottery Fund.

I also introduced House Bill 1339 to increase the oversight and protection of our seniors from those who would cheat, deceive, or abuse older Pennsylvanians. The legislation would add a definition to the state's Older Adults Protective Services Act for "financial abuse" to address situations where intentional acts of deception involving financial transactions such as lottery, email, and mail schemes occur. The bill has been referred to the Aging and Older Adult Services Committee.

As the bills move to the full House, I will continue to work tirelessly to improve senior programs, protections and rights to help create a better quality of life for our loved ones.

Significant movement on 'Stop and go' legislation

In my first 100 days, I launched the 192nd Liquor Enforcement Task Force that consists of various community stakeholders, local and state enforcement agencies and area business owners. Its purpose is to identify and report illegal behavior within businesses with restaurant and liquor licenses across the 192nd District. As a task force, we held a community public meeting and identified the top 10 bad actors: those who serve alcohol to minors, don't have the proper square footage or a health license.

In an effort to strengthen our laws, I co-sponsored House Bill 1547 which would allow the state Liquor Control Board to designate saturated nuisance market areas, where violation would be subject to enhanced penalties, fines and suspensions, and allow the board to remove licenses from those areas.

Additionally, I applaud our senators from the Philadelphia Delegation for successfully inserting stop-and-go language into a proposed budget bill. The proposal would allow the Liquor Control Board to immediately suspend the license of those establishments that do not meet requirements under the Liquor Code. After inspection, those license holders who do not meet license requirements (minimum seating, square footage, food, and health license certificates) upon inspection



by the liquor board, would have their licenses suspended until they can show proof to the LCB that they have addressed all issues and are eligible to be licensed.

Most of the issues that impact our communities – such as crime, loitering and even gun violence – are centered around these establishments. They serve as a deterrent to businesses that want to invest in our communities and discourage new neighbors from moving in. Working alongside my colleagues from the Philadelphia Delegation, together we've been able to advance solutions for this issue.

Cephas appointed Chair of Women and Girls of Color Subcommittee for the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus

In March 2017, the PA General Assembly's Black Caucus established a committee on women and girls of color. The primary focus of the subcommittee is to ensure the needs and aspirations of women and girls of color in Pennsylvania are realized through public policy, funding, and the legislative process within this governing body.

Over the years, we have statistically made strides in areas of education attainment, business ownership and within the workplace by moving into upper management across various industries. Although these achievements are notable, women and girls of color still lag in standardized testing performance, face higher rates of poverty, and receive lower wages than their white female counterparts. These are clear indicators that we still have a lot of work to do.

As the chair of the subcommittee, my plan is to work together with other legislators to solicit bipartisan input among our colleagues, and to introduce and support legislation that would shift policies within our government and make funding recommendations during the budget season that can impact change on issues that disproportionately impact women and girls of color. Some of the issues I hope we can focus on include education attainment and workforce development



in male-dominated or non-traditional industries, economic security, health and wellness, navigating the criminal and juvenile justice system and women's empowerment and development.

I am hoping we can again identify legislation, policies and funding priorities that can get bipartisan support from my colleagues and get to the governor's desk. Given these dynamics and the diverse needs of this constituency, in the upcoming months the subcommittee will launch a listening tour to ensure the agenda and the advocacy efforts set for the group truly reflect the priorities of our women and girls of color in Pennsylvania.

NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

Cephas advocates to designate Samuel Gompers Elementary School a community school

I am excited to announce that Gompers Elementary School in Wynnefield has been selected to become a community school. Community schools are public schools with a full-time coordinator who works with the entire school community to identify and meet the needs of the whole child. Community schools meet these needs by identifying resources that help address out-of-school factors and connect home, school, and community in ways that allow students to reach their full potential.

With institutions like St. Joseph University and Science Leadership Academy High School in the immediate area, this opportunity has the potential to create a pipeline for our

students to achieve academic success. Investments and strategic alignments like these are instrumental to improving the quality of our neighborhoods and finally give our students the education they deserve.

Thank you to Principal DeLuca, Mayor Jim Kenney and the Mayor's Office of Education for making a continued investment in our students. I was proud to assist Gompers Elementary School in applying to become a community school. This is a major victory for our community. I am confident that the community school approach will drastically improve the quality of the school.



Jade Ryan awarded with PLBC Scholarship

I congratulate Jade Ryan, a student from the 192nd Legislative District, who was awarded with a Black Caucus scholarship. Jade will be attending Millersville University.

This year's round of scholarship applicants was particularly competitive with many outstanding candidates. Each applicant possessed outstanding academic achievements and leadership abilities. The scholarship committee enjoyed reading each application and learning more about the students we represent.

The scholarship is intended to assist students with their college financial obligation and to foster a relationship between students and PLBC members. Recipients received a \$1,000 scholarship to attend an accredited two- or four-year college or university in Pennsylvania.

Cephas partners with area organizations to distribute over 500 book bags

As we send our children back to school for another productive year, I want to make sure they have the appropriate tools to thrive this year. Over the past several weeks I partnered with the Wynnefield Overbrook Revitalization Corporation, ACHIEVEability, local artists Rahim, King Salaadeen and Saint Joseph's University to provide kids and parents book bags and school supplies during a series of events held in Wynnefield, Overbrook and Haddington. So far, my office along with partners have distributed more than 500 book bags.



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Stay connected to what's happening in Harrisburg and in the community by signing up for my email updates. Go to www.pahouse.com/Cephas to sign up. You can also follow me on social media!



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192ND SUMMER RECAP

Constituent District Day

Over 1,000 neighbors attended my first Constituent District Day on Saturday, Aug. 19 at the Tustin Recreation Center. The

event featured state resources, activities for the entire family, a basketball tournament, live music and entertainment, games, raffles, giveaways, food and refreshments.



60th Street Health and Wellness Summer Jam



It was my honor to host the 60th Street Summer Jam with my colleague Rep. Joanna McClinton. We provided health screenings and resources for our constituents but more importantly, we united our communities even more; communities where back in the days neighbors were not allowed to cross from one side to another. This event proves that peace is possible and that communities can come together, grow and thrive.

Pop Up Produce Series



I will continue to host my Pop Up Produce Series to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables within our community. Call my office for dates and locations.

192nd Block Captain Highlights



The block captain of the 200 block of Horton Street gathered residents to clean up neighborhood pocket park. I donated book bags and clean-up tools for the youth and neighbors.



Residents of the 700 block of Marlyn Road gather with the block captain to discuss neighborhood issues and upcoming give back events. I took the opportunity to discuss with the residents the importance of working together to make change.



Sound the Alarm, Save a Life

In August, I partnered with the American Red Cross and community volunteers to host the "Sound the Alarm, Save a Life" campaign. We installed smoke alarms and provided fire safety tips to residents of the 192nd Legislative District in west Philadelphia.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars!

Fall Cleanup & Shredding Event
Saturday, Sept. 23

9 a.m. – noon
Carroll Park • 5800 Girard Ave.

Senior Chat N' Chew
Thursday, Sept. 28

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Prayer & Faith Temple
1541 N. 61st St.

Housing Seminar
Saturday, Oct. 21

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Wynne Senior Residences
2001 N. 54th St.



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INSIDE:

- Budget Update
- Stop & Go Progress
- Neighborhood News

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Economic Development Tour around the 192nd Legislative District

Over the past several months, I coordinated and participated in a series of economic development walking tours with Governor Tom Wolf in an effort to ensure your concerns are being addressed through strategic investments. We had the opportunity to walk with the governor and other members of his administration. We celebrated the opening of the new Wynne Senior Residence, highlighting 51 new affordable apartment units.

We also toured:

- Market-Frankford SEPTA station to discuss revitalization efforts.
- 59th Street Bridge to discuss traffic congestion along Lancaster Avenue and Upland Way.
- Overbrook section in Lancaster Avenue to strategize on how to bring better businesses to the corridor.

As I continue my efforts in Harrisburg, these tours will serve as the foundation and framework for my advocacy as we finalize budget negotiations and prepare for the upcoming legislative session.



Talks with PECO Continue

At the top of the year, I and members of the Wynnefield Residents Association (WRA), learned of PECO's 2014 acquisition of the old Pierce-Phelps site and new interest in building an electrical substation which will include three transformers containing 70 MVAs to cover 14,000 to 28,000 area homes and businesses. Immediately after learning this information, Philadelphia's 4th District Councilman Curtis Jones Jr. and I met with representatives from PECO and community leaders to urge them to halt all demolition and construction plans until the community was notified properly about their plans and the community expressed their concerns.

We have worked together with WRA and the Public Interest Law Center to challenge PECO before License and Inspections regarding their permits, forced the company to halt demolition and construction for over six months and proposed legislative changes on the local and state level to require the company to appear before the area residents before any expansion of their infrastructure.

Given the significant wins we've achieved, it still remains critical for us as a community to stand together and hold PECO accountable to the issues and concerns raised by our neighbors regarding this project. As we hear and strategize about next steps, my office will be sure to continue and expand our levels of communication with residents to ensure those who are interested and want to get involved have more of an opportunity to have their voices heard.