



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Leanne Krueger-Braneky

161ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

WEBSITE: www.pahouse.com/Krueger-Braneky • EMAIL: RepKrueger-Braneky@pahouse.net

WINTER 2018

CAPITOL OFFICE: 115B East Wing • P.O. Box 202161 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2161 • (717) 705-2567 • Fax: (717) 705-7000

DISTRICT OFFICE: 701 E. MacDade Blvd. • Folsom, PA 19033 • (610) 534-6880 • Fax: (610) 534-6881

SATELLITE OFFICE: Brookhaven Borough Bldg. • 2 Cambridge Road • Brookhaven, PA 19015 • (610) 447-3297 • Fax: (610) 447-3378

Important Work Ahead in 2018

I hope you have had a happy and healthy start to the new year!

The last several months of 2017 were eventful, both in Harrisburg and in the 161st District, and we're preparing for a busy 2018.

Since our last newsletter, we spent a great deal of time wrapping up the 2017-18 state budget — a process that we finished four months after the deadline. Just a few months later, we are starting the 2018-19 budget process. The Governor gave his budget address on Feb. 6 and Appropriations hearings started on Feb. 20.

The completed budget for 2017-2018 had some positives: a significant increase in education funding and additional money to fight the opioid crisis. But the final product relied heavily on borrowing and one-time sources of revenue, and it didn't include what we really need — fair and responsible revenue to put Pennsylvania on stable financial footing.

We can't fix our budget problems without good policy. Closing corporate loopholes for out-of-state multinational corporations, raising the minimum wage, and finally imposing a severance tax on gas drillers are all sensible measures that we should pass this year. Because we keep passing

unbalanced budgets, Pennsylvania saw another credit downgrade last year — which makes it even more expensive for us to do business — and we can't afford to continue down that path.

Fairer taxes, good jobs and quality schools are all part of our Plan for PA, which we launched last fall. We must put the needs of hard-working Pennsylvanians and families first.

I'm ready to keep fighting for these issues and many others — such as the responsible use of taxpayer dollars, women's rights, and clean air and water — in this new session year. I also am working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to introduce new legislation, which you can read about in this newsletter.

My staff and I are planning events in the district to better connect you with the resources you need. We'll continue the events that have been most popular in our community, including a Veterans' Lunch, Senior Expo, small-business breakfasts, and free shredding events.

I love attending community events throughout the district because they are a great way for me to get to know you better. Please call my office if there

are any events coming up that you would like to see me attend!

You can find photos from some of those events in this newsletter. You can also stay up to date on issues and events by following me on social media: On Twitter [@RepLeanne](https://twitter.com/RepLeanne) and at Facebook.com/RepLeanne.



In December, I joined my colleagues to help announce our Plan for PA.



I've fought to save unemployment compensation and protect workers while serving on the House Labor and Industry Committee.

#MeToo at the State Capitol: Protecting Victims, Protecting Taxpayers



In December, I stood with women of the Pennsylvania House and Senate to call attention to the fact that we must stop sweeping complaints of sexual harassment under the rug and allowing members of the legislature who harass staff to hide behind taxpayer-funded secret settlement agreements

The #MeToo movement that took hold across our country last year showed that we need a change in our culture, and that the state Capitol is no exception.

After working on this issue for three months and going through seven drafts of my bill to make sure we got the language right, in January I formally introduced House Bill 1965 — the #MeToo PA General Assembly Member and Employee Training and Oversight Act — which would define sexual harassment in state statute, ban non-disclosure agreements that hide the names of General Assembly members who sexually harass staff, require General Assembly members to personally repay any taxpayer funds used for settlement costs, and provide for other reforms.

I am currently up to 58 bipartisan co-sponsors and am continuing to build support for this bill. It was referred to the Labor and Industry Committee, a committee I serve on, and where both chairmen have signed on as co-sponsors. I've also urged House leadership to move quickly on this legislation because we need to ensure that we are protecting the rights of victims and holding harassers accountable.

Highlighting Women's Equality Work

My House Resolution 606, adopted unanimously in December, recognized Vision 2020's Campaign for Women's Equality and Women 100, the National 19th Amendment Centennial Celebration.

Vision 2020, a national coalition of organizations working to achieve equality for women, will lead the national commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote. The commemoration will take place in Philadelphia in 2020.

This coalition is doing important work to accelerate the pace of women's progress, and I was pleased to be able to recognize their work on the House floor, where I was joined by Vision 2020 staff member Kathleen McFadden.



Negotiating a Fix to Unemployment Compensation Call Centers

In December, Gov. Tom Wolf signed H.B. 1915, now Act 60 of 2017, which represents a compromise agreement to keep the Unemployment Compensation Call Centers open.

This law will provide a total of \$85 million in funding over a four-year period to operate Pennsylvania's Unemployment Compensation Program. It will help us address some of the challenges that we faced in late 2016, when political games forced the state to close call centers and lay off almost 500 workers right before Christmas.

The impact was widespread on laid-off workers who were on the phone for days trying to get the benefits they'd paid into and on small business owners who were sidetracked when the system didn't work.

As a lead negotiator on this bill and the Democratic secretary of the House Labor and Industry Committee, I am proud that I was able to work with the Majority Chairman and the Governor's office to negotiate a bipartisan solution – even as we work to continue to improve the system.

Pushing for a Commonsense Severance Tax Bill

In December, we finally saw the beginnings of floor debate on a severance tax, and I hope that the Speaker will allow us to continue debate in 2018.

This measure is long overdue. Pennsylvania is the only major gas-producing state without a severance tax on natural gas drilling. A reasonable severance tax has bipartisan support and will go a long way toward putting Pennsylvania on better financial footing.

Unfortunately, House members beholden to the oil and gas companies filed over 400 amendments to H.B. 1401, including many attacks on public health and clean air and water.

One of the most troublesome amendments: steps to speed up the permitting process for oil and gas companies with little oversight, forcing Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection to "deem approved" any permit if the DEP is not able to fully review the application within 45 days. Given the problems we've seen with construction of the Mariner East 2 Pipeline and the fact that almost 800 DEP staff positions have been cut over the past decade, we don't currently have enough inspectors to do the job right, and I opposed these amendments. We need to put safety first in our permit review process.

We badly need a severance tax, but not at the cost of clean air and water. I will continue to fight against detrimental amendments and push for a clean bill, one that will help reduce the tax burden on working people and middle-class taxpayers – without jeopardizing health and safety.



Mariner East 2 Construction Permits Suspended, then Resumed

On Jan. 3, after numerous accidents and months of complaints from residents, the state Department of Environmental Protection announced it was suspending construction permits associated with the Mariner East 2 pipeline project. Construction halted for just over a month. Then, on Feb. 8, the DEP announced that it issued a \$12.6 million civil penalty to Sunoco Pipeline for permit violations related to the construction of the Mariner East 2. The DEP and Sunoco entered into a consent order and agreement memorializing the penalty. As a result of the strict consent order and agreement, which includes a historic civil penalty and a stringent compliance review, DEP lifted the order suspending DEP-permitted operations, and construction resumed.

From the beginning of construction, I have heard the concerns of residents across the Commonwealth about the safety of the Mariner East 2 pipeline project. A year and over 100 spills later, it made sense for the Governor to halt construction until Sunoco complied with safety regulations in a proactive manner. Construction on the Mariner East 2 pipeline across Pennsylvania — but especially in Delaware and Chester counties — has impacted drinking water and wreaked havoc on private property. Sunoco has shown a blatant disregard for these things that we hold dear and are protected by our state constitution.

The DEP's action was the result of nearby neighbors and concerned Pennsylvanians who were relentless

in advocating for the health and safety of their communities, their children and the environment we all share. As elected officials, our first and foremost duty is to keep our citizens safe — particularly from the greed and excesses of multinational corporations who spend lavishly to influence government to their favor. Sunoco Logistics is a \$20 billion company that can afford to build the Mariner East 2 pipeline safely and in cooperation with our laws and communities. Corporate executives' impatience and greed led to these issues – and the men and women who go to work every day on this project to provide for their families should not be punished for that. Sunoco Logistics alone is responsible for this situation.

Protecting Access to Birth Control in PA

After the Trump administration announced that it would roll back contraceptive coverage requirements in the Affordable Care Act, I joined my colleagues to take steps to protect access to birth control through health insurance in Pennsylvania. Protecting and expanding access to birth control is the No. 1 evidence-based solution to keep abortion rates as low as possible, a goal I share with many of my colleagues in the legislature.

Along with state Reps. Kevin Boyle and Tina Davis, we plan to introduce legislation that would require all state-regulated insurance plans in Pennsylvania to cover contraceptives.

This legislation also would require that plans provide coverage for a prescription or non-prescription method of birth control approved by the FDA; eliminate most copayments for birth control and vasectomies; enable

women to receive 12 months of birth control at one time; and lift pre-authorizations on intrauterine devices (IUDs).

Contraception is health care, and access to health care is a fundamental human right that is inextricably tied to economic mobility and freedom. Making basic preventive care such as the pill a costly luxury sidelines women — whether they are students, hourly wage workers, young professionals or already moms.



REAL ID Update

Pennsylvania received a REAL ID enforcement extension until Oct. 10, 2018, which means that you will be able to use your Pennsylvania ID to enter federal facilities or board domestic commercial flights through that date.

The REAL ID Act is a federal law establishing minimum federal standards for state-issued driver's licenses and ID cards to be accepted for certain federal purposes, such as entering a federal building or boarding a domestic flight.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation anticipates that REAL ID-compliant licenses will be available as an option for customers in the spring of 2019.

PennDOT provided a reminder to customers about proactive steps they can take to prepare if they would like a REAL ID. If a customer decides that they want a REAL ID, federal regulations require that PennDOT must verify the following documents:

- Proof of identity
(original or certified copy of a birth certificate with a raised seal or valid U.S. Passport)
- Proof of Social Security Number *(Social Security card)*
- Proof of all legal name changes
(marriage license or court order issued by your county's family court)
- Two proofs of current, physical PA address
(current, unexpired PA license or ID and a no-more-than-90-day-old bank statement or utility bill with the same name and address)

PennDOT has advised customers to begin gathering the required documents as soon as possible, especially if they will need to obtain replacement documents.

Learn more about this subject at www.penndot.gov.

Grants Awarded to Aston Township & Neumann University

I was pleased to announce in December that Neumann University in Aston Township was awarded a state Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant.

The university was awarded \$1.5 million for the infrastructure, construction and other costs for the addition of the Student Life and Health Sciences Center on campus.

Earlier, in November, two Aston Township improvement projects were awarded a total of \$700,000 in grants through the Commonwealth Financing Agency.

The township was awarded \$500,000 through the Multimodal Transportation Fund to complete its multi-year project to upgrade pedestrian and streetscape facilities along Pennell Road, and \$200,000 in Watershed Restoration Protection funds to restore and enhance four township-owned stormwater basins.

Around the 161st District



In August, I held my third Small Business Breakfast, focused on 'Reigniting your Passion.' We heard from Brookhaven resident Seta Babayan-MacCrory, who shared her small-business success story.



My Veterans' Lunch in October connected local veterans and their families with valuable state, local and federal resources. We were honored to hear Ken Dawes tell us about PA Honor Flight and its work taking our heroes to visit national memorials in Washington, D.C., and we honored Bill Pfeiffer on his 80th birthday!



Over 500 guests joined us at our Senior Expo in September, where seniors could get on-the-spot access to a host of great services – including flu shots! We also honored seniors reaching milestone birthdays.



It was wonderful to see many community members at my Annual Open House in December. My staff and I also were appreciative of residents' generosity to our toy drive for Toys for Tots!



In September, I joined Destination Delco and Saving Hallowed Ground for a World War I remembrance event in Brookhaven. It was a great way to commemorate history and reflect on our many freedoms.



State Representative

Leanne T. Krueger-Braneky

701 E. MacDade Blvd.
Folsom, PA 19033

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

Unclaimed Property 'Treasure Hunt' March 14 & 15 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

701 E. MacDade Blvd.
Folsom, PA 19033

The state wants to return \$3.2 billion in unclaimed property to its rightful owners. Stop by my District Office and my staff can help you search.

Tele-Town Hall Wednesday, March 14 7 p.m.

Participate in a live Town Hall meeting from the comfort of your home. You'll receive a phone call to your home at the start of the meeting. Stay on the line to attend. Residents with cell phones who wish to participate must register beforehand at my website: www.pahouse.com/krueger-braneky.

Free Shred Event Saturday, May 5 9:30 a.m. to noon

Strath Haven High School
Rear Parking Lot

205 S. Providence Rd.
Wallingford, PA 19086

(Enter from Brookhaven Road.)

Get rid of old documents and protect your identity!

Limit five boxes per vehicle.

Small Business Breakfast – Small business owners are invited to my next networking breakfast in **May 2018** in Aston. Call 610-534-6880 or email RepKrueger-Braneky@pahouse.net to be added to the invitation list.

Senior Breakfasts – Seniors are invited to learn more about state services and legislation. We will be hosting events for the following areas over the next few months. **Brookhaven (March 22)**, **Rutledge/Ridley (April 13)**, **Wallingford/Swarthmore (April 23)**, **Aston (May 10)**. For details and to RSVP call 610-534-6880.

Veterans Van – The PA Veterans Mobile Outreach Van will be in the district on **Thursday, March 15, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at my district office, 701 E. MacDade Blvd., Folsom, and on **Thursday, May 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at Village Green Mobile Home Community, 1000 Park Ave., Media, PA 19063.

Call 610-534-6880 for more information about 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/Krueger-Braneky/EmailSignup.

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