



State Representative  23rd Legislative District

Dan Frankel

Democratic Caucus Chairman

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Getting neighbors and family health coverage



Last fall, the Trump administration slashed the federal advertising budget for promoting open enrollment for Affordable Care Act coverage and shrank the enrollment period from three months to only six weeks. So I worked to help get the word out.

I held a news conference at the Squirrel Hill Health Center with health advocates, patients and experts to encourage people to sign up. Additionally, people in my office helped spread the word in the community.

Thanks to the ACA, the uninsured rate is at record lows. According to the state Insurance Department, 310 Pennsylvania deaths were prevented in 2016 because of the ACA's Medicaid expansion. That's a positive trajectory. We shouldn't turn back – and I'll continue advocating that we work to fix problems with the law.

Celebrating the Children's Health Insurance Program

The Children's Health Insurance Program (affectionately referred to as CHIP) recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. It's a public policy triumph and wonderful program to celebrate. It began here in Pennsylvania under then-Gov. Casey and served as a model for taking the program nationwide under then-President Clinton.

To honor CHIP and the millions of children who benefited from it over the years, I spoke on the House floor in celebration.

Through a combination of Medicaid, which serves our sickest children and our low-income children, and CHIP, which provides coverage to all families that don't qualify for Medicaid, Pennsylvania can proudly state that we have the lowest percentage of uninsured children in the commonwealth's history.

Currently, only a little more than 4 percent of Pennsylvania's children lack health insurance, and while there's still more work to do, that's something we can be proud of.

Pennsylvania legislators don't always agree on all things. When it comes to children's health insurance, we've always understood the urgency and made sure coverage was available.

Across the state, 180,000 children and families benefit from CHIP.

The evidence is clear: investing in children early by ensuring they have the health care they need is a long-term investment in our community.



Rep. Frankel speaks at a news conference with U.S. Sen. Bob Casey where they called on Republicans in Congress to work with Democrats to renew funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program. After a several-month struggle, the funding was renewed.



Rep. Frankel marches with local students in support of reproductive rights on the Jan. 22 anniversary of the landmark Roe v. Wade decision.

Rep. Frankel works to protect the environment

Researching Lead

As co-chair of the Health and Human Services Committee for the Institute of Politics, I'll be delving deep into the issue of lead to try and determine best steps to protect our children from the harmful impacts of lead poisoning. The committee will be investigating both the prevalence of lead poisoning, as measured by blood-level tests, and the primary sources. Ultimately, our goal will be to identify policy solutions that benefit our community overall, build trust in our institutions, and ensure that children are protected.

Alternative Energy and Protecting the Environment

President Trump weakened the solar industry by instituting a 30 percent tariff on imported solar panels. It's reported that this was at the request of U.S. solar manufacturers. I favor domestic production of solar panels, but there are several ways to invest in this form of alternative energy without stunting the market.

Companies that install solar systems say the tariff could lead to increased costs and reduce demand. The potential for solar in Pennsylvania is underutilized and I've always supported increasing requirements that utilities generate a certain portion of energy from renewable sources. Tax credits are another great way to stimulate growth in this industry.

I'm supportive of another policy proposal that helps people who have solar panels and generate surplus energy. Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) can be sold off to utility companies so they can meet their current alternative energy requirements. Right now, the way the SREC marketplace is set up, utilities can buy cheaper credits from out of state. I support ending a loophole that allows utilities to buy cheap credits from out of state – that way we can raise the value of credits generated in Pennsylvania. Helping boost the value of SRECs will help boost interest among people who want to invest in installing solar panels.

The legislature passed and Governor Tom Wolf signed Act 40 last year to fix this SREC problem. Currently the Public Utility Commission (PUC) is in the process of implementing it. I wrote a letter to regulators asking to implement this law to its fullest intent.

Protecting Water Supplies

- I'm supporting legislation (H.B. 1427) that would require fracking companies to add a safe tracing fluid to their operations. That way, if there's a leak, we could identify who is responsible for leaks contaminating water supplies.

Serving as Democratic Caucus Chair

I serve as caucus chair, third-ranking in the House Democratic leadership. This means I preside over meetings of our caucus, which is comprised of all 81 members. In those meetings, we decide how we will vote on the House floor, finalize what amendments we'll offer, and work out differences among ourselves so we can present a unified front. This also means I have a seat at the table when it comes to the kind of legislation we generate and promote. As a progressive, I always strive to push policy that promotes good health and equal opportunity and to help the city of Pittsburgh.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault

METOO

The #metoo movement spurred a national and Pennsylvania conversation about the pervasive and corrosive effects of sexual harassment and assault. Following news about cases regarding Pennsylvania legislators, I convened the Women's Health Caucus with key women's advocates to determine the best course of action.

I'm supporting legislation that follows the recommendations laid out by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Women's Law Project that prioritizes victim-centered policy approaches to improve the climate for women in Harrisburg and Pennsylvania.

It's on Us PA: ending campus sexual assault

The district I represent encompasses Chatham University, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of Pittsburgh. That means our community is enlivened with a considerable student population through most of the year.

While our region benefits culturally, economically, and intellectually we need to make sure students can learn in a safe environment.

Campus sexual assault affects 1 in 4 or 1 in 5 women, depending on the study. But sadly, it is also one of the most underreported crimes. This makes sense. It takes a lot of courage for a victim to come forward and share the worst moment of her life and trust that she will be believed.

That's why I plan to introduce legislation designed to help make reporting sexual assault easier. This proposal would require postsecondary institutions in Pennsylvania to offer online and anonymous reporting options for students and employees.

This isn't a partisan issue – it's a cultural issue. The more we talk about sexual violence, the more we can't ignore it, and this will lead to change. While no one policy will cause the end of campus rape and sexual assault, we firmly believe the culmination of passing these proposals would get us closer to that end.



Rep. Frankel speaks at a news conference with Gov. Tom Wolf about the It's on Us PA initiative.



Rep. Frankel, co-chair of the Women's Health Caucus, speaks at a bipartisan news conference held to unveil the PA Agenda for Women's Health.

Women's Health Caucus

I founded the Women's Health Caucus more than a decade ago to convene legislators supportive of advancing the status of women in the commonwealth. This year, we

unveiled our Agenda for Women's Health. I'm proud that the Patient Trust Act, a bill I introduced, is a key priority for the advocates seeking to advance women's health.

Agenda for Women's Health

Safety & Dignity

Women should have the right to feel safe wherever they are. We support legislation that advances women's safety, protects their privacy rights and respects their individual dignity.

Protections of personal privacy and dignity

- Expanding intimate images statute
- Addressing the issue of "sextortion"
- Fighting "street harassment"
- Ensuring reasonable accommodations for women incarcerated during pregnancy
- Strengthening protections against sexual harassment in the workplace

Protection for victims of intimate partner violence

- Eliminating cellphone policies that hamper victims' efforts to escape
- Rental protections for victims of domestic violence
- Giving public housing victims of stalking or domestic or sexual violence a right to relocate to other public housing

Governor Wolf's "It's on Us" campaign against campus sexual violence

- Ensuring online/anonymous reporting
- Removing disincentives to reporting, e.g. providing institutional amnesty for reporting
- Sexual education and affirmative consent
- Comprehensive anti-violence policy

Economic Security

Women deserve a fair opportunity to work and to earn a living wage to care for themselves and their families.

Fair Wages & Income

- Raising the minimum wage
- Closing Pennsylvania's wage pay gap
- Applying the minimum wage to tipped workers
- Retirement security for widows

Eliminate Obstacles to Work

- Ensuring paid family and medical leave for working families
- Helping lift working families out of poverty
- Establishing a Women Veterans Task Force
- Ensuring reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers and nursing mothers
- Promoting access to affordable child care

Access to Health Services across the Lifespan

Women have unique health care needs and are often the primary care providers in most households. They must be able to grow and build healthy families, when and if they choose to do so, with access to family planning, maternal and neo-natal health care.

Protecting access to reproductive health care

- Protecting broad access to the most effective family planning services
- Ensuring the availability of accurate, scientific information and medical independence in the patient/provider relationship

Maternal/neo-natal health

- Call for consumer protections in health insurance so all Pennsylvanians have coverage for essential care like maternity care, mental health services, and dental and vision care for children
- Encourage screening and treatment for post-partum depression
- Support access to doulas and midwives to reduce rates of infant and maternal mortality

Support care for diseases disproportionately impacting women

- Protecting state funds dedicated to breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment
- Promote respite care for caregivers



Rep. Frankel, who voted for and strongly supported Pennsylvania's medical marijuana law, tours the dispensary that recently opened in Squirrel Hill.

INSIDE:

- Fighting sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Working to protect women's health and the environment
- Help with heating and water bills

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Town hall meeting March 28

Please join me for a legislative town hall from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 28 in Levinson Hall at the Jewish Community Center, 5738 Forbes Ave. We'll talk about major issues like the next state budget, education, health care and gun safety reform. Child care will be provided.

If you can't attend, I routinely speak with neighborhood groups and meet one-on-one with constituents. If you'd like to set up a meeting with me, just call my office at 412-422-1774 or email RepFrankel@pahouse.net.



Rep. Frankel speaks with seniors and answers questions at a recent community meeting.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program applications for the 2017 tax year are now available at my office – and **my staff is ready to help you file yours for free!**

Applications also are available online at www.revenue.pa.gov or by calling 1-888-222-9190.

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.

LIHEAP can help with heating bills

The 2017-18 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program – LIHEAP – is open and accepting applications for heating assistance grants. April 6 is the deadline to apply.

LIHEAP offers cash grants of \$200 to \$1,000 that are sent directly to the utility company to defray heating costs for eligible households, and crisis benefits of \$25 to \$500 for households in immediate danger of being without heat, from such emergency situations as broken heating equipment or leaking lines, lack of fuel or utility service termination.

We have LIHEAP applications available at my office. We also can help you file the application!

Besides my offices, LIHEAP information is available by:

- Contacting a county assistance office by phone or in person;
- Calling the LIHEAP Client Helpline at 1-866-857-7095; or
- Applying online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

This season's income guidelines for both LIHEAP cash and crisis grants are \$18,090 for an individual and \$24,360 for couples, and increases \$6,270 for each additional person in the household.



PWSA offers help with water bills

To help ease the burden of the water rate increase, the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority adopted the "Bill Discount Program," a customer assistance program designed to provide customers with financial relief if they are having difficulty paying their water bill.

Customers are eligible if they are at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The program is managed by Dollar Energy Fund, and they will work with PWSA customers to determine eligibility.

You can learn more about the income limits at www.pgh2o.com/CAP.

Help for Opioid Addiction

There's no community immune to the opioid epidemic. If you or you know someone suffering from a prescription drug or heroin problem, this federal helpline can help them get treatment: 1-800-662-HELP (4357).