

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Morgan Cephas

192ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Winter 2018

5921 Lancaster Ave. • Philadelphia, PA 19151 • (215) 879-6625 • Fax: (215) 879-8566
103-A East Wing • P.O. Box 202192 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2192 • (717) 783-2192 • Fax: (717) 787-2960
pahouse.com/Cephas • [f /RepCephas](https://www.facebook.com/RepCephas) • [@RepCephas](https://twitter.com/RepCephas)

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

Dear Neighbor,

My first year in office is officially in the books. During this past year, we saw a budget stalemate in Harrisburg that put Pennsylvanians at risk, watched Washington, D.C. make every effort to put families in jeopardy by threatening their health care and heard from women who fought back against the tyranny of sexual harassment through the #MeToo movement.

Given this challenging environment, I have worked and will remain committed throughout my second year to fight for the best interest of our families.

Over this past year together, we have made substantial strides in leading the 192nd District in a positive direction. With the district consisting of a series of "Middle Neighborhoods," I worked tirelessly to ensure policies enacted addressed our quality-of-life concerns, and pursued investments from the state and local level to improve our public spaces.

As a team, we sounded the alarm about the dangers of "stop-and-gos," and contributed to the birth of a new law aimed at helping the state crack down on these nuisance establishments. Given the ongoing outcry regarding vacant properties, I co-sponsored legislation with my colleagues that would provide our local police district the authority to remove illegal trespassers, known as "squatters," from unoccupied homes. Together we are working through the Women and Girls of Color Subcommittee to ensure there is a voice for minority-owned businesses, women behind bars, our girls interested in going into the trades and those workers experiencing sexual harassment beyond the political, health care, and entertainment industries.

Lastly, hearing your concerns within the community, we secured over \$1 million in state funding to go towards revitalizing our public spaces to ensure we have equity across all neighborhoods.



Since moving into our new office, my staff has been working around the clock, assisting residents with issues and connecting them with useful state resources. Over the past year, we have provided more than 3,000 constituents with critical services, connected close to 2,000 people to outreach events and assisted over 500 seniors with SEPTA IDs, Property Tax/Rent Rebates, and fruits and vegetables vouchers.

Now, it's time we look towards the future. Moving forward, you can count on me to echo our Plan for PA that demands putting people first by fighting for good-paying jobs, equity across all public spaces, quality education for our youth and a fair tax system that helps economic growth across the commonwealth.

Over the next several months, my office will be hosting a series of events that will continue connecting residents to critical services, information and state resources. Read on to learn about my actions in Harrisburg to save you money, how we are driving state funding into the district, and where you can find me and my staff as we continue making progress in our neighborhoods.

Morgan Cephas

2017-18 budget recap



The 2017-18 budget is set, and as a member of the Philadelphia Delegation, I'm proud of the victories we contributed to the plan, including:

- Increasing funding for the Philadelphia School District and funding necessary for our state-related universities, like Penn State and Temple, to avoid tuition increases for in-state students;
- A fix to the Actual Value Initiative (AVI) that helped even out property tax bills after the city's reassessment; and
- Passing legislation to provide resources to youth who have incarcerated parents.

Standing together we were also able to defeat bad ideas that would have had a negative impact on Philadelphians.

We fought back against a Republican proposal to nearly double the state's hotel tax from 6 to 11 percent, which would have resulted in Philadelphia having one of the highest combined state and city hotel taxes in the country. This would have been detrimental to tourism and ended up costing you money. We spoke out against GOP members wanting to end

a longtime sales tax exemption for commercial storage that would have discouraged businesses from investing in the state.

We helped put the brakes on video gaming terminals from being installed in local "stop and gos." We knew not doing so would be a recipe for disaster by promoting gambling, attracting crime and ultimately putting your life at risk.

There are safer and smarter ways to bring in consistent revenue for the state that I will continue fighting for in 2018, including raising the minimum wage and enacting a tax on natural gas drillers, also known as a severance tax.

Moving forward, we need to change the way we do budget business in Harrisburg. No longer can we solely pass a plan specifying how we want to spend and not have a way to pay for it. One of the consequences is a credit downgrade for the commonwealth, where taxpayers end up being the victims.

Working Pennsylvanians and their families deserve better. As your state representative, I'm committed to making decisions in Harrisburg that put you first.

Cephas joins Gov. Tom Wolf's historic signing of stop-and-go legislation

My fight against so-called "stop-and-gos" is far from over. Our efforts to combat these nuisance establishments is receiving a big boost in 2018 after Gov. Tom Wolf signed legislation allowing the state to better crack down on these dangerous businesses.

Under the new law, if the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board finds that a licensed establishment does not meet the seating, square footage, food or health requirements under the state Liquor Code, the PLCB can suspend the license immediately.

Before, the PLCB inspections happened when an establishment applied for a liquor license or during the license renewal process every two years. Now, the PLCB will have the authority to do an inspection if the Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement, a county health department or other government employee finds that a licensee does not meet the requirements of the Liquor Code.

Stop-and-gos are not only notorious for attracting crime, loitering and gun violence, they are also detrimental to our middle neighborhoods. They continuously scare off future businesses, which prevents our great community from growing both economically and residentially.



We are moving in the right direction. This year, as a member of the House Liquor Control Committee, I will make sure we stay on course by following through with our promise to hold these nuisance establishments accountable, and no longer allow them to put you and your family in harm's way.

PLBC's Women and Girls of Color Subcommittee launches listening tour, visits Pa. correctional facility

Since becoming Chair of the Women and Girls of Color Subcommittee (WGOC) for the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus (PLBC), I have worked alongside my colleagues and a dynamic group of stakeholders to launch a listening tour to ensure a voice is given to the voiceless. As a group, we are focusing on several issues, including education attainment and workforce development in male-dominated or non-traditional industries, economic prosperity, health and wellness, navigating the criminal justice system, and women's empowerment and development.



Over the past several months, the subcommittee has taken multiple tours with area labor union training centers and hosted a female minority-business owner's roundtable. In November, we partnered with the House Democratic Policy Committee and the PLBC for a tour of the State Correctional Institution at Muncy. Joined by inmates, along with advocacy and community-based organizations, we discussed policy initiatives aimed at reducing incarceration rates, ending the school-to-prison pipeline for young girls, and improving conditions for incarcerated women.

As a result, this spring, our group will propose a bill, mirrored after U.S. Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Cory Booker's "Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act," which focuses on reforming the prison system to ensure proper living conditions.

The legislative package aims to:

- Provide free feminine products;
- Allow inmates who are primary caretakers a free weekly phone call;
- Permit alternative sentencing for inmates who have given birth while incarcerated;
- Require the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to have a subcommittee for Women and Girls of Color; and
- Require incarcerated parents who are primary caretakers and serving a decade or less, to take parenting classes.

With more than a million women behind bars or under the control of the criminal justice system, they remain the fastest-growing segment of the prison population, nearly doubling the rate of men since 1985.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, Women and Girls of Color are significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system, with African American women representing 30 percent and Hispanic women representing 16 percent of all incarcerated females in the U.S.

Given these startling statistics, it remains critical that over the next several months we continue our efforts to ensure Women and Girls of Color are a priority for policy, legislation, and budgetary requests.

Cephas works across the aisle to curtail squatter issues in Pa.

Several neighborhoods across Pennsylvania have experienced an uptick in trespassers breaking into unoccupied homes, insisting they are the rightful tenants. These incidents have forced property owners, neighbors, and area law enforcement to intervene in often times unruly and contentious stand-offs with "squatters," which ends up costing the owner and taxpayers. Given the impact this has on our middle neighborhoods, I am committed to fighting back.

This past year, I joined my colleagues in co-sponsoring H.B. 1931, which would clear up confusion about the current law regarding trespassers, help police enforce it, and make it easier for property owners to fight back.

Under this bill, if a police officer has probable cause that a person is trespassing, along with a search warrant, he/she would have the authority to remove the person from the premises. This credible evidence would be based on an affidavit submitted by the officer. However, the officer would first have to give the accused an opportunity to defend him- or herself and provide proof that he/she is legally residing on the property.

Over the next several months, I will work with my colleagues and area stakeholders to ensure we pass legislation geared towards cracking down on illegal trespassers.

In the near future, I will host a public policy hearing to give you a chance to voice your thoughts and concerns. Advocacy groups will also be on hand to discuss ways to protect parties on all sides of the issue.

If you are interested in participating, please contact my office at 215-879-6625 or email me at RepCephas@pahouse.net.

Gun locks with Captain Stanford and the 19th Police District



We distributed over 100 gun locks to area residents with the 19th Police District, Councilman Curtis Jones Jr. and Jeff Brown of Brown's Family Shoprite to provide gun safety to our communities.

Don't miss out! Opt in to stay informed

If you're not signed up for my email updates, go to www.pahouse.com/Cephas/contact and send me a message to sign up!

If you are already signed up, starting in mid-March, due to a House rule relating to elections, I will be unable to email you updates until May 16 UNLESS you have specifically opted in to keep receiving them. To keep receiving updates about important services, news about the state budget and more, please click the opt-in link in your email from me if you haven't done so already.

Cephas locks in \$300K state grant to improve Granahan Park

I am always eager to find new ways to improve and provide equity to our community, which is why I am thrilled to have secured a \$300,000 state grant to revitalize Granahan Park. Working with the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department, we were able to secure grant dollars from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The funds will go towards a spray pad, new play equipment with the required safety surfacing and fencing, landscaping, lighting and signage, among other things.

I couldn't have done this alone. I want to send a special thank you to the late Kesho Watson, who was an avid supporter and advocate for transforming this play space into a multi-generational destination for families. I'm inspired by her dedication and commitment to the success of our neighborhood, which involved organizing a park clean-up day and helping to complete grant applications.

Well-kept parks and recreation centers are key building blocks in a successful community because they help attract new neighbors who are looking for a place to live and work, as well as a safe area for their kids to play. Making these kinds of commonsense investments will assist in growing our local economy.

Housing Seminar with the Barristers



Special thank you to the Barristers' Association of Philadelphia, Inc. for hosting a Free Housing Legal Clinic for area residents and neighbors.

Cephas announces critical funding for Overbrook Library in the Overbrook Park Community

In 2015, the Overbrook Park community was forced to see its library doors close for several months, due to the need for serious repairs. As a result, mobile library services were offered during inconvenient times throughout the fall months.

Over the years, the Overbrook library has provided the Overbrook Park community with a safe space to create strong bonds for the neighborhood. It continues to serve as a location for after-school programs, meeting space and a location for seniors and area residents to receive critical services. Given the role the library plays in building our community, it is with great pleasure that we secured a \$1.25 million grant from the state Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) for the Philadelphia libraries, which will benefit the Overbrook Park Library.

The library will receive renovations and repairs as part of the Free Library of Philadelphia's 21st Century Libraries Initiative, which is the plan to renovate and modernize the network of neighborhood libraries located throughout Philadelphia.

The RACP funding will be used for interior renovations, exterior repairs, technology upgrades, new furniture, fixtures, and equipment and mechanical upgrades. RACP is administered by the Office of the Budget for the acquisition and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and historical improvement projects. I am looking forward to ensuring these dollars continue to flow through the 192nd so we can continue to build on our assets.

Season of Giving in the 192nd

Overbrook Park Toy Give-Away



Happy to join the Overbrook Park Civic Association, Overbrook Park Town Watch, Haverford Ave. Business Association, the 19th Police District, and Fire Department's Engine 41 area businesses during their Toys for Tots Give-Away at Overbrook Park Church of Christ.

Turkey Give-Away



Teaming up with the Men of Tustin and Wynnefield's 58th Street residents to distribute over 100 turkey baskets for the holiday season.

Book Bag Give-Away with Barry Elementary School



Congratulations to the families of the John Barry Elementary School for being selected by the Kids in Need Foundation to receive more than 400 book bags and school supplies for the new school semester.

Fall Shredding Events



Partnering with the Overbrook Park Civic Association's Fall Cleanup at Rose Playground by providing a shredding truck and recycling bins.



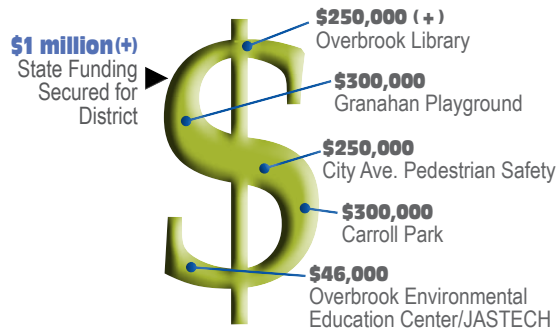
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MORGAN CEPHAS

P.O. Box 202192
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2192

INSIDE:

- Stop & Go recap
- Fighting to stop squatters
- \$1M+ awarded for local projects

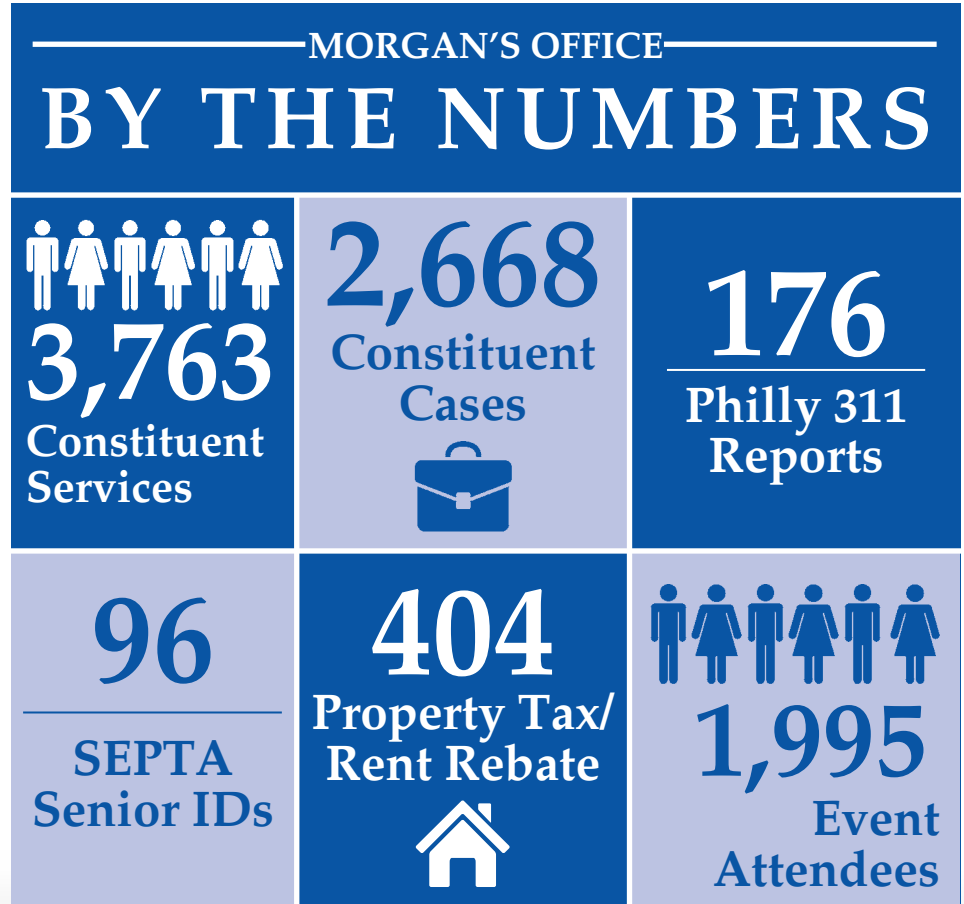
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Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars!

- **State of the 192nd Town Hall**
Thursday, Feb. 15, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Overbrook Park Church of Christ
7630 Woodbine Ave.
Please call Dawn to RSVP 215-879-6625
- **Treasure Hunt in the 192nd (Find Unclaimed Property)**
Saturday, March 10, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Wynnefield Branch Library, 5325 Overbrook Ave.
Please call Dawn to RSVP 215-879-6625
- **Spring Cleanup & Shredding Event**
Saturday, April 21, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rose Playground, 1300 N. 75th St.
Please call Dawn to RSVP 215-879-6625



Data is from Dec. 1, 2016 through Nov. 30, 2017.