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State Representative

BRIAN SIMS

182nd Legislative District



Summer/Fall 2018

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Committees: Game & Fisheries, Human Services, Policy Committee, State Government, Tourism & Recreational Development, Philadelphia County Delegation, PA SAFE Caucus - Vice Chair, Homeless Caucus, LGBT Equality Caucus, Women's Health Caucus

Sims appointed to Governor's LGBTQ Affairs Commission

The Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs is the only statewide commission of its kind in the United States. I'm honored that Gov. Wolf appointed me to serve on it.

The commission will advise the governor on policies, procedures, legislation and regulations that impact LGBTQ people and communities, and serve as a liaison to federal, state and local agencies to ensure that programs affecting LGBTQ people and communities are effectively used and promoted.

But the work of equality also needs to move forward in the legislature. One example of stalled legislation is the Pennsylvania Fairness Act, which would include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in the types

of discrimination banned statewide in the workplace, housing and public accommodations.

The people are ahead of the legislature on this: Polls have shown consistent 70 percent support for this in Pennsylvania for eight years. The Fairness Act has bipartisan support in the legislature, but Republican leadership continues to block a vote on the legislation.



Gov. Wolf Signs Executive Order on Sims' Equal Pay Bill

Our state ranks 29th in the United States for pay equity. For every dollar paid to men in the commonwealth, white women are paid 79 cents, and women of color make considerably less than that.

Every rally, hearing, meeting and event that we have hosted bringing attention to equal pay gets us closer to our goal of equal pay for equal work. And we are finally starting to see some movement to close the gap.

In June, Gov. Wolf signed Executive Order 2018-18-03, based on my equal pay legislation, ending the practice of state agencies requiring job applicants to provide their salary history.

State agencies under the governor's jurisdiction are now required to:

- No longer ask job applicants their salary history during the hiring process;
- Base salaries on job responsibilities, position pay range, and the applicant's job knowledge and skills; and
- Clearly explain the pay range on job postings.

We must ensure that Pennsylvania women receive equal pay for equal work. I have introduced legislation year after year to combat pay inequity in Pennsylvania, and year after year Republican leadership blocks its consideration. Fortunately, Gov. Wolf recognizes the impact pay inequity has on women and families across the commonwealth and through this executive order Pennsylvania takes a needed step towards rectifying this longstanding problem.

Everyone deserves to be paid fairly for their work, no matter their gender. It's time to close this embarrassing chapter in our history.

Budget Update: Done on time, good for Pennsylvanians

The budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year passed the General Assembly before the June 30 deadline for the first time in more than 10 years.

We allocated record high amounts for education:

- \$140 million more for basic, special and early education
- \$60 million block grant program for school and community safety
- \$40 million for career and technical education
- Higher education institutions, including Temple, will see a 3 percent increase in funding

This summer, the state also put a significant amount of dollars on the table to fix the city's childhood lead poisoning crisis. Gov. Wolf announced a \$7.6 million state investment to begin lead, mold and asbestos cleanup in Philadelphia's schools. Those funds will be matched by the Philadelphia School District for a total of \$15.7 million. Working hand-in-hand with the school district, we will be able to impact 59 schools on a combination of issues. For example, in the 182nd District, the Academy at Palumbo and the Franklin Learning Center were both slated to have lead paint stabilization work this summer. Funds need to be continually allocated until we ensure every school is environmentally safe for our children and teachers.

With the 2018-19 budget, we replenished the Rainy Day Fund, which was empty after balances were spent during the past two recessions. This money is an important sign of fiscal responsibility and good health, and it's intended to mitigate the impact of economic downturns on our budget.

The 2018-19 state budget lays a solid foundation to build a better Pennsylvania – a Pennsylvania that welcomes and provides opportunities for all.

In a ceremony at the state Capitol, Gov. Wolf signed an Equal Pay executive order based on aspects of my legislation, H.B. 1243. He highlighted the hard work that advocates have been doing for decades. There's more to be done, but we're one step closer towards rectifying this longstanding problem.



I hosted a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing in Philadelphia to spark discussion on strengthening the Equal Pay Law to provide additional protections for all employees and to ensure wages are based on education, training and experience – not gender.



In April, at a rally in the Capitol, I called on the Republican leadership to put women before special interests and bring H.B. 1243 up for a vote.

Gloria Casarez mural to be saved

Honors advocate for LGBT rights in Philadelphia

Following talks with Midwood Investment and Development and the Philadelphia Mural Arts program, an agreement has been reached to save the mural of Gloria Casarez that adorns the former 12th Street Gym in our district.

Midwood purchased the property at 204 S. 12th St. several months ago, which includes the mural of Gloria Casarez. She was Philadelphia's first director of the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs and passed away in 2014 after battling breast cancer.

While Midwood had not solidified the future development plans for the property, John Usdan, CEO of the company, said it's committed to helping ensure that the costs needed for the mural's relocation are provided.

I greatly appreciate Mr. Usdan's commitment to ensuring the mural lives on in honor of the life and legacy of Gloria Casarez. Midwood has consistently demonstrated it is a valued partner in Philadelphia.

Gloria worked tirelessly for not only the LGBT community, but also the city of Philadelphia as a whole. It is important to memorialize the steadfast work Gloria dedicated to establishing our city's policies that made us one of the most LGBT inclusive cities in the nation.



Sims' Risk Assessment Task Force applauds postponement of new tool vote

The General Assembly mandated the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing to adopt a sentence risk assessment instrument to serve as an aid in the sentencing process in an effort to reduce the prison population. It is intended to provide judges with facts and information to ensure a defendant receives the proper punishment while indicating if they need help, such as a drug treatment program. I formed a task force comprised of lawyers, judges, and experts to study this proposal.

During the public hearing stage of the process, multiple citizens and organizations opposed the proposed risk assessment tool because of its racial implications. I'm also against it. And I, along with my Risk Assessment Task Force, commend the commission for postponing the vote to adopt the proposed tool.

If it can't be shown to be accurate enough for courts to use and if we don't know whether the tool is fair to racial minorities; if it doesn't actually identify candidates for alternative sentencing but only people who might get accused and arrested, we can't move forward – at least not without further information.

We look forward to working with the commission in the future to ensure equal treatment for defendants and develop fair and unbiased instruments. We cannot have a fair criminal justice system within our state if the guidelines we use are imbalanced and unfair.

My office is here to help!

Since I took office in 2013, I have made providing outstanding constituent services to our community a high priority for my office. My staff and I are here to help in any way we can. Over my time as your state representative, we have provided over 32,500 services to constituents!

Here's a list of examples my office can assist you with:

- Unemployment compensation issues
- Disability placards and plates
- Prescription assistance for seniors
- Birth certificate applications
- Unclaimed property
- SNAP benefits (food stamps)
- Applying for Medicaid
- Applying for a Medical Marijuana Card
- LIHEAP applications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program
- and more!

It can be difficult to know where to turn for state services, especially figuring out what department or agency can help with a particular problem. Sometimes the problem may be outside the state's jurisdiction, but give us a call! We'll at the very least point you in the right direction! We're here to be a resource for all residents of the 182nd District.

My staff and I are always here to help! Please don't ever hesitate to contact us.



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Save the Date

SENIOR FAIR

Friday, Oct. 26th, 2018

Noon – 3 p.m.

The Franklin Institute
 222 N. 20th Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19103

Join us and learn about programs for seniors!
 From the state and city government to
 pharmacies, senior centers, SEPTA, health
 centers, and more!



Stay connected to what's happening in Harrisburg and in the community by signing up for my email updates. Just send me a quick email through the form at www.pahouse.com/Sims/ contact to sign up. You can also follow me on social media!

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REGISTER AND VOTE

Important 2018 General Election Deadlines

- **Oct. 9:** Last day to register to vote or update registration due to name or address change
- **Oct. 30 (by 5 p.m.):** Last day to apply for an absentee ballot
- **Nov. 2 (by 5 p.m.):** Last day for county election offices to receive absentee ballots
- **Nov. 6:** General election day

You may vote by absentee ballot if you are unable to make it to the polls because of illness, disability or if you will be out of your municipality on Election Day.

Applications for absentee ballots are available at my district office, through Philadelphia County Voter Services (215-686-1591) or online at www.votespa.com.

Apply now to receive Property Tax/Rent Rebate

The deadline to file a 2017
 Property Tax/Rent Rebate
 Program is **Dec. 31, 2018!**

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. To find out if you qualify or if you need FREE assistance with filling out your application, please call or visit my office.