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What's happening with gun safety reform in Pa.

The movement for meaningful gun safety reforms, spearheaded by student advocates and leaders, produced incredible action around the country including the passage of 50 laws in 25 states.

But none of those have been in Pennsylvania.

While gun safety advocates accurately identified where reform can happen – in Harrisburg – momentum keeps getting blocked.

Although we haven't succeeded in passing any laws yet, we've gotten further with legislation than has occurred in decades. Legislation sought by gun safety advocates and anti-violence groups to keep victims of domestic violence safe by restricting an abuser's access to firearms passed the Senate, but has stalled in the House.



Rep. Frankel, co-chair of the PA SAFE Caucus, has spoken at several gun reform events in recent months, including a Moms Demand Action rally in Market Square in June.

Key Pa. gun reform bills include:

- H.B. 1872, which would ban devices such as “bump stocks” that assist in rapid firing.
- H.B. 2060, which would ensure that domestic abusers be required to relinquish weapons to an appropriate authority.
- H.B. 2227, which would allow concerned family members and law enforcement to file for extreme risk protective orders to prohibit firearm possession by individuals who are at risk of causing harm to themselves or others.
- H.B. 273, which would allow people with mental or physical health concerns to voluntarily surrender their firearms.
- H.B. 2266 and H.B. 2267, which would require expedited reporting of mental health records to state police.

All of the above bills were voted out of the House Judiciary Committee in June.

- H.B. 1400, which would require universal background checks for gun purchases, fell one vote short and remains in the Judiciary Committee.

Extremist organizations, like the NRA, have worked for decades to influence members of the Pennsylvania legislature. As it stands, special interest groups have made tackling gun safety reform an untouchable “third rail” politically. As co-chair of the PA SAFE Caucus, I'll continue to work to flip that sentiment, to make *not* enacting gun reform a third rail.

On page 3 of this newsletter, take a look at how Pennsylvania compares with our neighboring states when it comes to gun reform. It shows that change is realistic.

Women's Health Caucus fighting Trump on family planning funding

As co-chair of the Women's Health Caucus, I'm committed to protecting women's access to basic health care in the Commonwealth, particularly in the face of erosion of those rights at the federal level. Most recently, I led the effort for the Women's Health Caucus to decry proposed new rules that would place a gag order on medical staff that provide contraceptive care.

The rules, resurrected from more than 30 years ago, stop providers from even talking about the fact that abortion exists as a legal option for women. Additionally, it also directs money to anti-choice clinics that don't even provide effective family planning services. That's not a good use of tax dollars, and it's an abomination for Pennsylvania women and families.



Rep. Frankel was honored to receive a Women's Health Transformation Award from Adagio Health in March, and to meet a longtime champion for women's health and reproductive rights, former U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, at the event.

Legislative Highlights

Budget

This year's budget emphasized a major priority for the commonwealth – education. Over the past four years, education funding has continued to increase, with more funds for basic education, special education and early childhood education. Career and technical education has received a major boost, up 48.4 percent, reflecting our understanding of employers and job-seekers.

Pre-K-12 Education Investments under Gov. Wolf	Increase in 2018-19		Increase over 4 years	
	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent
Basic Education Funding	\$118 million	1.9%	\$633 million	11%
Special Education Funding	\$15 million	1.3%	\$90 million	8.6%
Early Childhood Education	\$25 million	11%	\$115 million	84.3%
Early Intervention	\$22 million	8.2%	\$48 million	20.2%
Career and Technical Education	\$30 million	48.4%	\$30 million	48.4%

While the budget got passed ahead of the deadline for the first time in several years, that could happen only by exhausting one-time revenue sources, a technique that's simply not sustainable. Pennsylvania needs recurring revenue to guard against future shortfalls. One obvious source would be a severance tax on energy corporations who extract natural resources from our state. I also continue to support making the minimum wage a family-sustaining wage. People want to be able to work and earn enough to care for their families, and a stronger income base for all Pennsylvanians means a stronger economy and tax base for the commonwealth overall.

Pa. medical marijuana research advances

Pennsylvania's medical marijuana program has been warmly welcomed by patients, families, doctors and legislators from both sides of the aisle. Advocates continue to emphasize the importance of medical marijuana research as breakthrough treatments emerge around the country.

At the federal level, a non-psychoactive, marijuana-derived medication was recently approved to reduce seizures in epilepsy patients. In addition to reducing the frequency and severity of seizures, physicians and scientists have discovered other medicinal benefits of the substance, including weight management, chronic pain relief and cancer treatment.

After a brief, court-ordered pause, medical marijuana research is moving forward in Pennsylvania due to the passage of Act 43 of 2018 (H.B. 2477), which amends the Medical Marijuana Act of 2016. I am a strong supporter of scientific research and medical marijuana, and was pleased to vote for the new law as well. This legislation received bipartisan approval in the General Assembly and was signed into law by Governor Wolf.

The new law clarifies the duties of clinical registrants, or companies in partnership with medical research centers. Clinical registrants are selected by participating universities, and are subsequently licensed as growers, processors, and dispensaries under the advisement of medical professionals and researchers. Supporters of the legislation are confident that patients will benefit from the research relationships between clinical registrants and medical centers.

Several Pennsylvania universities have been approved to study the medical uses of marijuana, including the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Pennsylvania, and Drexel University. Eight medical schools in total are tasked with researching the potential benefits of marijuana, and developing cutting-edge treatments to support patients across the Commonwealth.



Pa. grants many returning citizens a Clean Slate

I was delighted to co-sponsor Clean Slate, a landmark criminal justice reform bill that received overwhelming bipartisan support. Recently signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf, this legislation seals low-level offenses from public access. I believe Clean Slate will reduce recidivism and benefit workers by improving housing, employment, and educational opportunities.

Some criminal records, including older second- and third-degree misdemeanors and arrests that didn't result in a conviction, will be automatically sealed beginning June 2020. To learn more about your eligibility under this new law, contact the county court where your case was heard and ask whether you owe any outstanding fees.

If you wish to seal a conviction that occurred within the past 10 years, you may file a petition with the corresponding court starting in January 2019. You can contact the court to learn more about the filing process.

Many vulnerable populations suffer far-reaching consequences for committing small misdemeanors, long after they have served their sentences. I am confident that Clean Slate will yield positive results for residents disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system, such as those battling addiction and low-income individuals. By providing second chances, we can break harmful cycles, strengthen families, and restore harmony to our communities.

I received a 100 percent rating from Conservation PA for my votes on environmental issues.

Helping neighborhoods in our district & the region

Since the 1970s, the Neighborhood Assistance Program has helped nonprofits, businesses, and neighborhoods. This program allows up to \$18 million in tax credits that businesses can access if they contribute to neighborhood organizations or nonprofits. Since the program's inception, the cap has remained \$18 million, despite annual inflation; H.B. 645 would increase that cap to \$36 million.

The bill passed the House 188-7 and awaits action in the Senate. NAP has helped locally in Oakland and Wilksburg by helping with job training, creating affordable housing and cleaning up vacant store fronts.

Increasing tax credits in the face of annual budget shortfalls is not something I would typically support, but some estimates report a statewide economic impact of \$138.1 million. I'd like to see neighborhoods revitalized and sustained primarily through jobs and increased wages, but NAP is also a useful tool that can help businesses and communities work together.

How does Pa. compare on gun reform?

Policy	Pennsylvania	New York	Maryland	Ohio	New Jersey	West Virginia	Delaware
Universal background checks on all gun sales	X	✓	X	X	X	X	✓
Comprehensive gun restrictions for abusers with PFA orders**	P*	P*	P*	X	✓	✓	✓
Assault weapons ban	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Bump-stocks/rapid firing devices ban	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Child Access Prevention law	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓
High capacity magazine ban	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Lost/Stolen Gun Reporting	X	✓	P*	✓	✓	X	✓
Silencer Ban	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓

P* = Partial Law ✓ = Existing law **X** = No Law

Strongest > Weakest – New Jersey, Maryland, New York, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio

Source: Giffords Law Center Gun Scorecard

Another take on curbing assault rifles

Several gun safety bills have been introduced this year to limit access to weapons and make our communities safe. We must use any leverage we have to send a message that our communities demand responsibility – from individuals and also from corporations and government. That’s why I introduced H.B. 2480, which would bar the state’s retirement systems from investing in assault-rifle manufacturers.

I believe that Pennsylvania taxpayers’ and employees’ contributions for retirement should not be funding manufacturers of assault weapons, large-capacity ammunition clips or gun accessories that may end up being used for violence against our communities and ourselves.

Protecting 5 million in Pa. who have pre-existing health conditions

Republicans in Washington are still looking at repealing the Affordable Care Act’s protection for people with pre-existing conditions, and the Trump Justice Department has refused to defend that protection in court. So I’m co-sponsoring legislation (H.B. 2552) to keep that protection in place for an estimated 5 million Pennsylvanians.



Rep. Frankel always enjoys talking with seniors at the Jewish Community Center. If you’d like to invite him to speak with your organization or group, please call the office at (412) 422-1774 or email RepFrankel@pahouse.net.

Rep. Frankel listens during a July hearing in Wilksburg on improving police-community relations.

The hearing was held jointly by the House and Senate Democratic Policy Committees.



INSIDE:

- New law grants many returning citizens a clean slate
- How does Pa. compare on gun reform?
- Fighting Trump on family planning funding

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Important voting deadline

Know someone who's not registered to vote or recently moved or changed their name? **Oct. 9** is the deadline to register or change registration in time to vote in the Nov. 6 election, when candidates for U.S. senator, U.S. representative, governor, and many other offices will be on the ballot. Pennsylvania now has online registration at www.votespa.com.

For more information, call the Allegheny County Elections Division at 412-350-4500.



Major I-376 roadwork on the horizon

The Commercial Street Bridge provides a critical link between the city of Pittsburgh and eastern suburbs by carrying nearly 86,000 vehicles per day along Interstate 376 within the city.

The 67-year-old structure that spans 860 linear feet received a \$123 million commitment from the Wolf administration in the fall of 2017 to begin the design process.

A feasibility study is currently being performed by HDR Inc. and their team of sub-consultants to investigate the current condition of the bridge and to evaluate whether rehabilitation or replacement is warranted.

The traveling public may see bridge inspection staff taking detailed measurements and photos of the Commercial Street Bridge's current condition, as well as concrete cores being obtained to analyze the strength of the existing concrete.

A public meeting for the Commercial Street Bridge is anticipated to be held in the fall of 2019 to present the inspection findings and receive project feedback from the community.



Frankel announces up to \$1.67 million in funding for Riverview Towers rehab

In April, I was pleased to announce the awarding of up to \$1.67 million in tax credits for the rehabilitation of the Riverview Towers senior housing complex, 52 Garetta St.

I was proud to support funding for this very worthwhile project. Riverview Towers provides affordable housing and dinner every day to seniors and enables them to age with dignity.

The Low Income Housing Tax Credits, awarded through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, will help fund the rehabilitation of the two nine-story buildings, which have a total of 191 units for people 62 or older. They include 42 fully accessible units; 99 units with Section 8 project-based assistance. The buildings have four elevators and include 76 efficiency, 108 one-bedroom, and seven two-bedroom units.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate

There's still time to file for a rent or property tax rebate for the 2017 tax year. 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 Pennsylvania's 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.

Help for opioid addiction

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