



LEGISLATIVE

Year in Review

159th Legislative District

REP. BRIAN KIRKLAND

Winter 2018



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Dear Neighbor,

As 2018 draws to a close, I wanted to reach out and share with you what we've accomplished in Harrisburg and here in the 159th District this year.

This year, we adopted an on-time budget that made important investments in education and our fight to curb the opioid epidemic. The budget included \$100 million more for basic education funding, \$25 million more for early childhood education, maintained funding for drug and alcohol programs, and \$4.5 million in new funding to provide home visiting services to families affected by substance abuse disorder.

We made those investments without raising your taxes, and Gov. Tom Wolf was even able to make a deposit in our rainy day fund.

That's part of how my House Democratic colleagues and I are working in Harrisburg to put your needs first. In this newsletter, you can read more about efforts to ensure we have safe schools that provide a quality education and to create more jobs that offer family-sustaining wages and benefits.

You'll also find information on grants and other good news from around the 159th District. You can follow me on **Facebook.com/RepBrianK** to hear more throughout the year.

Please feel free to reach out to my office if we can help with any state-related issue. It's a privilege to serve as your state representative.

Sincerely,

Rep. Brian Kirkland

Policy committee discusses jobs and economic development in Chester

In October, I hosted state legislators from around the commonwealth in Chester for a House Democratic Policy Committee public hearing to discuss the importance of creating more jobs that offer good pay and benefits while boosting local economic development.

We were joined by local experts Drake Nakaishi, executive director of the Chester Economic Development Authority, and John Daly, executive director of the Delaware County Workforce Development Board, as well as Carol Kilko, deputy secretary for business financing with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and Eileen Cipriani, deputy secretary for workforce development with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.

We had a great discussion on what more we can do to connect Pennsylvania's hard workers to the jobs that businesses need to fill. We need to invest in projects that create good jobs and continue to fight for workers so that we can strengthen the middle class.

Creating more jobs that offer good pay and benefits, while boosting local economic development, is part of the House Democrats' Plan4PA. You can find video and more from this hearing on my website, www.pahouse.com/Kirkland.



Connecting local residents with employers

I hosted a Job, Career and Education Fair at St. Luke's Church in June to help connect local workers with employers.

A variety of employers and schools participated, and job seekers were able to obtain help with their resumes as well. Complimentary interview suiting was available for 30 participants.

Good jobs that offer family-sustaining pay and benefits are key to strengthening the middle class and creating an economy that works for everyone. I'm happy to do my part to help connect our hard-working residents with the jobs that are out there.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program deadline approaches

The application deadline for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is Dec. 31. This program provides a rebate on 2017 property taxes or rent to eligible residents who are 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older. To be eligible, your household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter.

When applying, you only have to count half of your Social Security or federal railroad retirement Tier I benefits toward your total income.

You can obtain an application in my office or download the form by going to www.revenue.pa.gov, clicking on "Forms for Individuals" under the

"Forms and Publications" button on the top of the page. My office can help you apply.



Investor seminar promotes economic development in Chester



Along with the Chester Economic Development Agency, I hosted more than 20 investors and developers to discuss the potential and advantages of investing in Chester.

Widener University, Harrah's Casino, Crozer-Chester Medical Center and the Philadelphia Union helped us show what our city has to offer.

Widener's Katie Herschede discussed new development around the university and its role as a community partner. Michael Curran, president of Crozer-Chester Medical Center, provided a tour of its campus and explained future expansion plans.

Working to stop gun violence: legislation would require ID for firearm ammunition purchases

Protecting our communities from the horrific impact of gun violence is extremely important to me. We too often grieve the loss of precious life taken by those who should not have access to firearms and ammunition.

Sadly, young people, especially African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans, face significantly higher-than-average risks of becoming a victim of gun-related homicide. We can – and we must – do everything in our power to curtail this epidemic.

In the fall, I introduced a bill that would require people purchasing firearm ammunition to present an official form of photo identification.

Currently, ammunition cannot be sold to anyone who sellers reasonably believe to be under the minimum age. However, sellers are not required to check a buyer's ID to verify age.

My bill would require that identification be presented every time ammunition is purchased, helping to eliminate illegal sales.

Photo ID is required to purchase alcohol, allergy medicine, lottery tickets and other items, so it is reasonable to require identification for purchasing the element that makes a firearm lethal. Several states, including New Jersey, already require individuals to present identification when purchasing firearm ammunition.

My legislation would serve as reasonable reform to save lives without infringing on law-abiding citizens' rights to own and use guns. I'll be reintroducing this legislation in the next session.



Celebrating the reopening of Chester's Washington Park

In September, I joined Chester Mayor Thaddeus Kirkland and the Chester Department of Parks and Recreation to reopen Washington Park.

The park was revitalized after a 2015 storm caused significant damage. Now, the 6,425-square foot park is divided into two smaller parks – one for children ages 2 to 5 and the other for ages 5 to 12. The renovation project included new playground equipment, accessibility upgrades, additional benches and a small pavilion.

I helped secure a Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program grant to help complete the more than \$250,000 project, and I was happy to see the end results.

Parks and playgrounds offer much-needed recreational opportunities and gathering places in our communities. I hope that we can continue to upgrade other parks throughout the 159th District.

Mickey Vernon Park awarded grant funding

Mickey Vernon Park was recently awarded an \$85,600 grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to help expand its playground area.

The Keystone Fund grant will help with improvements including a large playground tower with slides, new swings and spins, ADA-accessible ramps and paths, as well as placing a fence between a ball field and the playground and installing a new backstop on the softball field.

Mickey Vernon Park is named for Marcus Hook-born and raised baseball star James Barton "Mickey" Vernon, who played for the Washington Senators for the majority of his career.



Making schools safer: grants to enhance security programs

I'm proud to say that we took steps in the past year to make our schools safer.

Along with the 2018-19 budget package, I voted for a bill to include \$60 million for a new school safety and security grant program.

During the first round of funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, the Chester Upland, Chichester and Ridley school districts were each awarded a \$25,000 school safety grant.

I'm glad that our local districts took advantage of this opportunity to enhance their security programs. More competitive grants are expected to be released later in the fiscal year.

Additionally, several local school and police agencies were awarded Safe Schools grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The funding included grants for schools to establish programs to prevent and reduce violence; equipment grants to help schools procure security or safety equipment; and grants for the training and compensation of school resources officers, employed by law enforcement agencies and assigned to schools, and school police officers employed directly by school districts.

Local grants were awarded as follows:

- Chichester School District, Equipment Grant, \$22,465
- Chester-Upland School District, Program Grant, \$19,998
- Upland Borough Police Department, School Resource Officer Grant, Year 1, \$60,000
- Chester Community Charter School, School Police Officer Grant, Year 1, \$40,000

Keeping our children safe is the greatest responsibility we have. These grants will help ensure schools have what they need to better protect students, and I will continue looking for ways we can help our schools.

REVIVING THE ICONIC ACROSS COLORS CULTURAL FESTIVAL



I was happy to revive the Across Colors Cultural Festival over the summer.

Chester Park was abuzz with activity – musical acts including gospel, jazz and R&B, games and children's activities, cultural performances and more. My staff and I also were on hand to connect residents with the state services they might need.

It was a great day spent celebrating the music and cultures in our area!



Congratulations!

During the festival, I was proud to present \$1,000 scholarships to two college-bound students, Nkoya Kabbah and Mahki Little.

Financial assistance for home heating

The 2018-2019 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program – LIHEAP – is accepting applications for heating assistance grants.

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 up to \$600 for households in immediate danger of being without heat. Remember: these are grants and do not have to be repaid.

This season's income guidelines for both LIHEAP cash and

crisis grants are \$18,210 for an individual, \$24,690 for couples and increases for each additional person in the household.

Please consider visiting my office if you need help filing a LIHEAP application. You also can call the LIHEAP Client Helpline at 1-866-857-7095 or PA Relay at 711 for the hearing impaired, or apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us.



Family fun draws a crowd in Trainer

In June, my Family Fun Day drew many new and familiar faces to Henry Johnson Park in Trainer. We offered state services as well as plenty of family fun – games, musical entertainment, face painting, children's activities and more.



We were joined by local emergency responders, elected officials and community members.

I love hosting these events to help neighbors get to know one another in a friendly environment!



Bringing state funding for local projects

I'm always proud to support state funding for local projects that will improve our community. Here's a look at some of the state funding directed to the 159th in the past year.

\$21,863 - Senior Community Services' Chester Senior Center

This grant, awarded in April, will help with renovations and improvements. The center was one of 41 senior centers throughout the commonwealth to receive a Department of Aging 2017-18 Senior Community Center Grant.

Chester Senior Center's selection for this competitive grant reflects highly on its skilled management.

\$385,884 - Chester-Upland School District

In August, the Chester-Upland School District was awarded \$385,884 in Pennsylvania Department of Education grants to improve schools.

The grants came from the department's comprehensive System for District and School Improvement. I was pleased to see Chester-Upland awarded this competitive funding, and I will continue to fight for schools in the 159th District so that our children receive a quality education.

\$240,000 - City of Chester

In the spring, the City of Chester was awarded a \$240,000 grant for the Chester Security Initiative project.

The Keystone Communities Program grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development was designated to purchase and install surveillance cameras, along with other associated costs.

Enhancing safety and security in our community can give residents better peace of mind and help improve the quality of life in Chester. I was happy to support this initiative.

\$5.6 million loan - Chester City Stormwater Authority

This fall, the Chester City Stormwater Authority was awarded a \$5.6 million low-interest loan for a stormwater management project through the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority.

The project will address an area subject to flooding and overflows from excessive runoff volume and lack of capacity in the conveyance and storage systems. The funds will be used to retrofit about 125 catch basins, remove impervious roadway and install stormwater controls for a recreational trail at Crozer Park.

This project is going to help reduce sediment to the Ridley and Chester creeks, reduce flooding and improve the stormwater system that serves 10,000 low-income households in the area. In addition, the work will create 50 construction jobs for Pennsylvania residents.



STATE REP. BRIAN KIRKLAND

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Seniors ride for free with SEPTA Key

Seniors 65 and older are now eligible to travel for free on all SEPTA service lines within Pennsylvania. A half fare discount for travel to and from New Jersey and Delaware remains in effect.

Seniors must now obtain a SEPTA Key Senior ID Card to ride for free. However, valid PA driver's licenses and non-driver ID cards issued before July 2017 will still be accepted until they need to be renewed.

My district office can process applications and take photos for SEPTA Key Senior ID Cards. Applicants must present a form of identification with a date of birth on it, such as a Pennsylvania driver's license or non-driver ID, U.S. Passport, or birth certificate.

SEPTA Key Senior ID Cards also can be obtained while you wait on weekdays at SEPTA Headquarters at 1234 Market St. from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the SEPTA Accessible Travel Center at Suburban Station in Center City from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

More information about the SEPTA Key Senior ID Card is available at <http://www.septa.org/fares/discount/seniors-ride-free-info.html>.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: **Community resource fairs**

Join me at either of these upcoming events to learn more about state services and community resources that are available to you!

SEPTA will be on hand with information on Key Cards, and a variety of community organizations will be participating. You also can learn more about senior discounts, LIHEAP home heating help, and more. We'll have light refreshments.

Jan. 10, 2019

5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Ezekiel Baptist Church

5701 Grays Ave.

Philadelphia, PA 19143

In partnership with Rep. Joanna McCClinton, D-Philadelphia/
Delaware, and Chester Community Charter School

Jan. 23, 2019

5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Chester Community Charter School gym

214 E. 5th St., Chester, PA 19013

In partnership with Chester Community Charter School