



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JOSEPH G. WEBSTER, PhD

SERVING THE 150TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY.



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Fighting to hold the line on property taxes in our community

When I'm speaking with my neighbors in their homes, my district offices and at Little League games, one subject is brought up in nearly every conversation: property taxes. It's no secret that property taxes are overburdening many residents, particularly our senior citizens.

Seniors should never be forced to leave their homes during their retirement years because of ever-increasing property tax burdens.

A fairer tax system – where special interests and big business pay their fair share – and greater state level investment in our public schools are both needed to help address this problem.

I love our beautiful state and I'm proud to live here, but one thing that I find frustrating is that Pennsylvania ranks 47th in the nation in terms of state support for local schools.

We can and must do better as we look toward our future.

In the 1970-71 school year, the state funded 54% of the cost of basic education. In 2017-18, we are down to funding 33% of basic education at the state level.

These drastic state level cuts to education funding have resulted in the property tax hikes that we have been experiencing in our local communities.

There has been progress in recent years in fixing this situation; a portion of the funding that was cut by previous administrations has been restored, and the state has begun distributing some funding through a fair funding formula.

I'm committed to advancing the excellence of our schools while working towards a funding formula in which the state pays its fair share in order to help address the rising cost in property taxes.



But this is only a first step, and we can and must do more.

I have already co-sponsored bills that would create property tax relief for seniors, and I plan to introduce more. Freezes on rates for seniors, expansion of rebates and simplified applications will help guarantee that we can support our schools while ensuring no senior is burdened by owning their home.

I am working to ease the property tax burden on seniors and working families in our communities.



I'm proud to be part of the Plan for PA, designed to put people first. We're fighting for:

**Good Jobs • Affordable Health Care
Quality Schools • A Fair Economy**

Together, we can build a strong economy that works for all of us.

Get the details at www.planforpa.com.

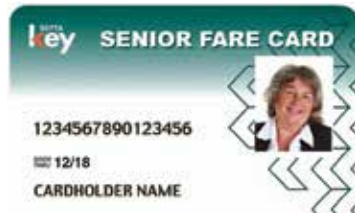
Get your SEPTA Key Senior ID

Seniors 65 and older can now ride for free on all SEPTA lines within Pennsylvania with a SEPTA Key Senior ID Card – including the SEPTA trains into Philadelphia!

My staff can help seniors apply for their cards. Seniors can stop by the district office with their state ID or driver's license, and my staff can help with the application and take the photo for their Key Card.

It just takes five minutes per person and the process is absolutely FREE!

Learn more at www.septa.org/fares/discount/seniors-ride-free-info.html.



Serving our veterans

I'm proud to say that there are more than 800,000 fellow veterans living in Pennsylvania. Serving our veterans is one of our most important responsibilities.

I'm honored that one of my appointments in Harrisburg is to serve on the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. With more than 20 years of service in the U.S. Air Force, I have significant personal insights into the unique challenges our veterans face and how we can help them.

Since taking office, I've co-sponsored numerous bills aimed at supporting our veterans, including:

- H.B. 541 – to create veterans treatment courts to help veterans charged with a misdemeanor or felony other than a crime of violence.
- H.B. 29 – to expand the Disabled Veterans Real Estate Tax Program, allowing for an exemption amount matching a veteran's disability percentage as determined by the VA.
- H.B. 951 – to create the Veteran Suicide Prevention Grant Program, by increasing the fee for birth and death certificates by \$2 each.
- H.B. 857 – to create a space on the PA tax return to donate \$5 to the Veterans' Trust Fund, which issues grants that go toward supporting Pennsylvania veterans and their families.

Additionally, my office is here to serve veterans. We can help connect veterans and their families with the many state and county resources available for them. Emergency financial assistance, help with educational costs for veterans' children and other benefits are all available for Pennsylvania's service members.

Call my office at 484-200-8263 if you have questions.

REAL IDs are now available



Pennsylvanians will need a REAL ID to:



PennDOT.gov/REALID

Real ID is here. Need help?

REAL ID is now available for Pennsylvanians who want one.

Beginning **October 1, 2020**, Pennsylvanians will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, photo ID card, or another form of federally-acceptable identification (such as a valid passport or military ID) to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a federal building or military installation that requires ID.

You won't need a real ID to replace your driver's license or state ID for driving or other services.

You have three options for getting your REAL ID:

- Ordering online, if you have already been pre-verified.
- Visiting any PennDOT Driver's License Center to have the required documents verified and imaged. Receive your REAL ID within 15 business days.
- Visiting one of the 12 REAL ID Centers in Pennsylvania with the required documents. You can receive your REAL ID at the time of service at these centers. There are centers at 143 S. Gulph Road, King of Prussia, and 1700 Markley St., Norristown.

To get your REAL ID, the following documents are required:

- One proof of identity (Birth certificate or valid passport)
- Social Security card
- Two proofs of Pennsylvania residency
 - ☐ Current PA Driver's License or ID card
 - ☐ Current PA vehicle registration
 - ☐ Proof of insurance
 - ☐ Bank Statement (no more than 90 days old)
 - ☐ W-2 form or pay stub
 - ☐ Tax records
 - ☐ Lease agreement or mortgage documents
- And, proof of all legal name changes (if applicable)
 - ☐ Certified marriage certificate
 - ☐ Court order

Visit www.PennDOT.gov/REALID for more information.

Voter rights: making sure your voice is heard

I've heard stories from first responders, nurses and medical staff about having to rush to vote before 12-hour shifts. I've also spoken to many people rushing to make it back from their commute in order to vote before the polls close.

I'm extremely impressed by the commitment of our community to participate in the democratic process.

The reality is that our freedom and ability to cast a ballot and choose those who represent us in government is our most fundamental right as Americans, but Pennsylvania doesn't do enough to ensure that this vital freedom is accessible to us.

I'm proud to be part of the effort to make it easier for Pennsylvanians to make their voices heard. My colleagues and I have introduced a package of bills that aim to make the processes for citizens to register and vote more streamlined and efficient.

Bills in the package include measures to allow early voting in Pennsylvania, to allow voters to submit their ballots by mail, to allow more time for submitting absentee ballots, and other

measures that would keep voting secure and make voting more accessible for our citizens.

I'm introducing a bill that would have a person's voter registration automatically move with them, if they move to a new house in Pennsylvania.

Right now, if you move across the street, you'd have to file new paperwork.

We also must work on redistricting reform, which is necessary to address the gerrymandering that has manipulated legislative boundaries around our state. I've co-sponsored legislation that would seek to create an independent redistricting commission for congressional and state legislative districts – an idea that fell victim to partisan politics last session.

Voters should choose their representatives – representatives shouldn't choose their voters. When they do, your voice and your vote matter less, and that's unacceptable in America.

Fair redistricting reform is a necessary step to ensure that your voices can be heard fairly and equally.



Quality schools – key to thriving communities



We're lucky in the 150th District to be part of several wonderful school districts – Methacton, Norristown Area, Perkiomen Valley and Spring-Ford Area.

There's a relationship between successful schools and thriving communities that is important to nurture and grow. A healthy and successful school district is the cornerstone of many successful communities.

An excellent local education system will help our kids land good jobs right here in our community – meaning they can afford to stay here, raise their families and contribute back to our economy.

At the state level, we must do our part to fund public schools and encourage efforts to connect students with the skills they need for the challenges of the ever-evolving job market.

I was thrilled that the Spring-Ford Area School District was awarded a state grant earlier this year to expand computer science classes and teacher training. Norristown Area School District will be a vital center for Governor Wolf's new teacher apprenticeship program. And six Montgomery County initiatives were awarded 'Teacher in the Workplace' grants to connect educators and businesses – helping to ensure students are well prepared for good-paying, in-demand jobs.

Investing in education pays off for our community. We can't stop with the K-12 level – we need to make sure that college and technical programs are affordable and within reach.

Montgomery County Community College is another incredible resource, making career and technical programs accessible and affordable for people in our community.

I will continue to work to support schools and ensure the state is doing its part to prepare kids for a bright future.

Protecting our precious natural resources

All Pennsylvanians have a right to clean air and water - which is granted in Article 1, Section 27 of our state constitution – and we must do our part to help keep our environment clean not only for us, but for our children and grandchildren as well.

Our local Perkiomen Valley Watershed and the Delaware River Watershed to which it flows are vitally important for our health.

It's important that we make sure these watersheds are properly managed to prevent flooding and water pollution, ensuring that we can enjoy our rivers, streams and creeks for generations to come.

State grants have been awarded in the past to help improve the watersheds, and I'm actively looking to find more opportunities to continue that work in the future.

As residents, we can do our part as well. We should work to reduce the amount of waste we produce and keep litter from ending up in our local streams and rivers.

Fighting the opioid crisis

Like the rest of the country, Pennsylvania continues to fight an opioid crisis that is affecting every community across the state – including many families right here in the 150th District.

The numbers are startling – there were 4,267 overdose deaths in Pennsylvania in 2018. Thankfully, that's a decline from 2017, when there were 5,559 deaths. We're seeing progress, but not fast enough, and the work is far from over.

In March, Gov. Tom Wolf renewed his opioid disaster declaration for the sixth time, an effort that has helped the state coordinate efforts to combat this crisis.

The state has worked to put naloxone, an overdose reversal medication, into more hands, giving out more than 6,000 kits in December 2018 as part of Stop Overdoses in PA: Get Help Now Week. It's estimated that emergency medical services saved more than 9,000 Pennsylvanians using naloxone last year.

We are also lucky to have two Centers of Excellence located here in Montgomery County.

Centers of Excellence help ensure that people with opioid-

related substance use disorder stay in treatment to receive follow-up

care and are supported within their communities. The centers coordinate care for people with Medicaid, and treatment is team-based and "whole person" focused, with the explicit goal of integrating behavioral health and primary care.

It's very clear that we must work to tackle this problem from many fronts – addressing mental health, housing, transportation and jobs.

I've co-sponsored House Bill 424, which would create a statewide "warm hand-off" program for overdose survivors, moving them from emergency care to treatment. I will continue to look for ways we can save more lives through effective substance abuse treatment and prevention efforts.

Are you or someone you know suffering from a substance abuse problem?

1-800-662-HELP is a 24-hour hotline, available in English and Spanish, staffed by trained professionals who can provide information on treatment resources.

Between January of 2018 and March 2019, there were 19,500 hotline calls.

Upcoming Events



May 23

Spotted Lanternfly Prevention and Mitigation Forum
6:30 p.m.

Perkiomen Valley High School
509 Gravel Pike, Collegeville

A panel of experts will discuss how to deal with this invasive pest.

May 30

Get Your Veterans' Discount ID Card!
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

IBEW, 3900 Ridge Pike, Collegeville

Veterans can stop by to sign up through the Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds Office for an ID that entitles veterans to special discounts in our community. Learn more by visiting <https://www.montcopa.org/478/Veterans-Photo-ID-Discout-Card>

June 13

Cultural Awareness Panel: Islam and Our Community

Islamic Society for Greater Valley Forge
958 N. Valley Forge Road, Devon

Rep. Movita Johnson-Harrell will moderate a panel discussion. More details to come.

Stay Tuned

My office is planning more events, including a Youth Pride celebration in June, a job fair in July, a panel on voting rights and a back to school event in August. Get the latest information by signing up for my email updates or following me on social media!

Coming Fall 2019 – Shred 2.0!

I'm excited to announce our next shredding event – Shred 2.0!

We're thrilled to offer such an important identity-protecting service to the community. During our shred event in April we quickly realized that we needed a bigger location and more capacity to properly serve the 150th.

That's why my office is putting together the details now for a shred event at a bigger location, with more shredding capacity.

We'll be updating the community with details - be sure to sign up for our short weekly e-mail updates at www.pahouse.com/Webster and click in the "Stay Connected" box.

What Joe's doing around the 150th

I, along with Sen. Katie Muth and others, joined to help community members learn how they can work with us to make a difference on environmental issues.



Our National Nutrition Month Field Day event was a great opportunity to provide information on health and wellness, as well as fun activities!



Rep. Joe Ciresi, Sen. Katie Muth and Rep. Steve Malagari and I joined Lt. Gov. John Fetterman's listening tour to hear your thoughts on the possible legalization of adult-use cannabis.



I was pleased to attend the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit's legislative breakfast for an important discussion on legislative issues and their impact on public education.



I was honored to be part of the escort committee for Gov. Tom Wolf when he gave his budget address in the House.

The work that Share Food in Philadelphia is doing to feed our community is amazing. I was able to learn how its programs support vulnerable populations, and how we can help in Harrisburg.



It was a privilege to participate in Montgomery County Community College's Legislator in Residence program.



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SPRING 2019 HOUSE REPORT

■ FIGHTING FOR YOU

■ SUPPORTING VETERANS

■ REAL ID NEWS

Stay in touch!

Feel free to email me at RepWebster@pahouse.net. If you would like to receive email updates on news from Harrisburg and the 150th District, please visit www.pahouse.com/Webster and click on the "Stay Connected" box. You can also like my Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/RepJoeWebster or follow me on Twitter [@RepJoeWebster](https://twitter.com/RepJoeWebster).



Perkiomen Valley Schools visited the Capitol during March, Music in our Schools month.