



Fall
2019

State Representative | 181st Legislative District

MALCOLM KENYATTA

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Keeping Up with Kenyatta!

Dear Neighbor,
Fall is upon us, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your state representative here in the district and in Harrisburg. When I am not at the State Capitol, I use my time doing what I have been elected to do: meeting with constituents like you, enjoying our community events, and working to accomplish the goals we would like to see for the 181st Legislative District. Inside, you will find information on some of the services that I can help you with, some of my legislative priorities, a look at some of the events that I held, and more. My door is always open and I'm here for you!

Sincerely,

Malcolm Kenyatta
State Representative
181st Legislative District



Fighting for you



Call to bring back General Assistance Fund

Ending the General Assistance Fund was one of the cruelest legislative decisions that has been made in this body since I became a member. There is no logical excuse or argument for denying support for the most vulnerable communities when they needed it most. It was like kicking them while they're down. I have urged my colleagues across the aisle to understand the severity of the harm this caused for Pennsylvania families and to fix it.

I introduced House Bill 1709, which would provide emergency relief to those people who previously received support through the General Assistance Fund. This program, which the General Assembly voted in June to end, provided \$200 a month in cash assistance to those who were unable to work, those caring for loved ones who were sick or disabled, veterans, victims of domestic violence and those receiving treatment for substance abuse, among others.

In September, I joined some of my colleagues, advocates and former recipients of the General Assistance Fund to once again call on the General Assembly to restart the program that many vulnerable residents depended on here in the commonwealth. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court recently heard arguments for and against bringing back the General Assistance Fund temporarily. A decision is expected any day now.

The General Assistance Fund was a vital lifeline. While we wait to see if any action will be taken to either pass my legislation or bring the program back, I will continue to fight to help the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians.



Calling for special session on gun violence

Following the mass shootings in Dayton, Ohio and El Paso, Texas, I partnered with some of my Democratic colleagues to call for a special session of the House and Senate to address gun violence in Pennsylvania.

There are several pieces of legislation pending on gun safety in both chambers that include bills to ban assault weapons, close the loophole for gun background checks, and adopt Extreme Risk Protection Orders that equip families, law enforcement, and the courts to temporarily restrict access to guns for people at risk of violence to themselves or others.

The ongoing gun violence here in Philadelphia has become a public health epidemic. People should not have to fear for their lives by just walking out of their house, going to the store or attending an event in their community. I've sat with way too many families who have lost loved ones to gun violence.

Luckily, Gov. Wolf took some action just weeks after our news conference. He signed an executive order that would create a special council on gun violence with members from state departments and advisory committees, establish the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and the Division of Violence Prevention that would enforce oversight and data sharing, create initiatives to reduce gun violence and combat mass shootings, and prevent domestic violence-related shootings and suicides.

While this is a great first step, it's not enough. We as lawmakers and leaders must pass commonsense gun safety reform. We owe it to all those whom we can save who are not yet victims of gun violence, but who could be if we don't act.

Environmental justice for low-income families

Philadelphia has been dealing with an increase in pollution and poor air quality that is resulting in breathing difficulties for the young and old. This is especially occurring in the poorer communities across the city.

I decided to tackle this disparity head on by hosting a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing. We discussed environmental justice and health issues affecting Pennsylvanians, particularly those in disadvantaged neighborhoods. While many children are dealing with health issues from pollution and dirty air, they must also face going to school in buildings where lead paint poses a serious health risk.

The policy hearing provided an opportunity for experts in the field to explore risk factors and discuss possible solutions with me and those from the committee in attendance. The information gathered from this hearing will be used to introduce legislation to help fight pollution in disadvantaged areas across the commonwealth.



Here to serve you

SEPTA KEY SENIOR ID CARD

Constituents 65 and older are eligible for a **FREE** SEPTA Key Senior ID Card.

It allows you to ride SEPTA buses, trolleys, subways and regional rail for FREE!

The card is good for up to 3 years and can be used over again.

We're here to help you apply for your SEPTA Key Senior ID Card right in our office.

REAL ID

Beginning October 1, 2020, a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or ID card, or a U.S. Passport or Military ID, will be necessary to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a secure federal facility.

To obtain a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or ID card, you will need to bring all the following documentation to a full-service Driver's License Center:

- Proof of identity (original birth certificate with a raised seal, or a valid U.S. Passport)
- Social Security card
- Proof of all legal name changes (marriage license or court order from applicable county's family court)
- Two proofs of current, physical PA address (unexpired PA license or ID and a no-more-than 90-day-old bank statement or utility bill with the same name and address)

If you have questions about how to obtain your REAL ID, or to learn if it's right

MEDICAL CANNABIS CARD

The Medical Marijuana Act in Pennsylvania allows people who suffer from anxiety, PTSD, cancer and many other ailments to safely and responsibly medicate without the risk of addiction or incarceration.

There is a multi-step process in applying for one, including creating a profile on the Medical Marijuana Registry, getting diagnosed by a physician for one or some of the qualifying medical conditions and locating a proper dispensary. My office is here to connect you with organizations that can get you registered.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

While the Pennsylvania Supreme Court could rule any day to reinstate the General Assistance Fund, there are people still struggling to live day to day without the \$200 per month from the fund. My office is here to help you, or anyone, to apply for financial assistance programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Homeless Assistance Program (HAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and more.

OTHER WAYS MY DISTRICT OFFICE CAN SERVE YOU:

- Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Notary services
- Birth and death certificate applications
- Child clearances services
- Problems with Pennsylvania income taxes
- Problems with Department of Human Services (food stamps, welfare)
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information, student aid information, etc.
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Disability license plates and placards
- Assistance in getting and filling out state forms of all kinds, like PACE (Pharmaceutical assistance for qualified senior citizens), voter registration, property tax/rent rebate (for qualified seniors), PHEAA (PA Higher Education Assistance), etc.

Legislative Corner

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE 181

I've secured more than **\$1 million** in grants to spur economic development and support community organizations doing the work on the ground.

Measure containing my legislation passes House

I'm excited to tell you that my legislation which would expand the type of businesses that could apply for a performing arts facility liquor license was amended into a bill that passed the state House.

My legislation, H.B. 1576, would allow theaters that primarily screen independent films, classic films and second-run films if they have between 100 and 350 seats to get such a license.

It was amended into H.B. 1589, which would permit performing arts facilities to serve alcohol prior to 1 p.m. on Sundays. Businesses would be able to move operating hours to as early as 10 a.m. This is the first bill to pass for me as a first-time legislator.

Here is just some of the legislation that I have authored and sponsored this session so far:

H.B. 1622 – Known as “Phillip’s Law,” this bill was named after an 11-year-old boy who lived in my district and died by suicide after enduring continuous bullying by his peers. Phillip attempted to seek help from the support staff at school, but he was told he had to wait. Afraid to miss the bus and worried about his brother, Phillip left school and took his own life.

This tragedy has drawn attention to the fact that school mental health professionals may not always be available due to budget constraints or no mandate to have one on staff. This bill would require the Department of Education to look at the number of mental health professionals in schools and make recommendations on how to increase the number to meet nationally accepted ratios.

H.B. 1623 – Would require the Department of Human Services to maintain a system to track intergenerational poverty. The data collected would be used to implement policies and programs addressing poverty, public assistance, education and other issues to help reduce poverty. The legislation would also require a poverty impact analysis on the governor’s proposed budget, the enacted budget, and any bill or amendment or joint resolution as requested by a General Assembly member.

H.B. 1703 – Everyone should have the right to marry who they love. Here in Pennsylvania, there are sections of law that prohibit marriage equality. This legislation would bring state law up to date by repealing Section 1704 (marriage between persons of the same sex) of Title 23 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes.

Cybersecurity Coordination Board – This legislation would create a board that would streamline cybersecurity measures across the commonwealth.

Domestic Workers Bill of Rights – This would create standards for domestic workers including designating wages, rest breaks, meal periods and work schedules. It would also create a board to provide industry recommendations and ensure domestic workers have a voice in future policy decisions.



I helped secure \$15,000 for **Grands as Parents**, an organization that supports grandparents who currently serve as caregivers to their grandchildren. It will use the funding to revitalize its meeting space, heating system and roof repairs, and install a new floor.



I also helped secure \$15,000 for **Urban Creators**, a community collaborative that turned three acres of blighted land into a network of sustainable urban farms. The organization will use the money to utilize solar power as the farm’s lighting and to build more space to host community events.



I was pleased to present a grant for \$20,000 to the **12Th & Cambria “The Rec”** to help make needed repairs and continue the center’s programming.

Happenings in the 181



It was a blast hosting my Back-to-School Bookbag Giveaway to help students get the tools they need for a successful school year.



Out in the district talking to my neighbors and constituents about reducing gun violence, trash, quality of life concerns, and how my office is working every day to serve all our neighbors.



The day was all about fitness as I took a bike ride with my colleague Rep. Danilo Burgos and constituents before hitting my Fall into Fitness Fair. The event provided health screenings, health information and fun for everyone!



Every Friday in partnership with the Share Food Program, we give out dozens of boxes of food to our seniors on a fixed income. This is one of the many things we do to help our neighbors retire with dignity. If you know a senior who is food insecure, call my office at 215-978-0311.



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STAY INFORMED! JOIN MY EMAIL UPDATE LIST

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic updates from me about public meetings, community events, state and local programs and services, legislation and other items of interest to the community. If you would like to be added to that list, either visit my webpage at pahouse.com/Kenyatta or email my office at RepKenyatta@pahouse.net.