



Summer
2021

State Representative | 192nd Legislative District

MORGAN CEPHAS

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Tackling Gun Violence in the 192nd

This year is unlike any year before. We are steadily recovering from a public health crisis and an economic crisis stemming from the pandemic. While we remain on edge about COVID-19, and the emerging variants, Pennsylvanians are also carrying the physical and mental trauma of devastatingly increasing gun violence.

As of July 2021, Philadelphia alone has seen more than 1,289 shootings, up almost 30% from the same time last year. This number includes 268 people who have been shot and killed – a 44% increase.

In our communities, the majority of those on either end of the gun are young Black males, which emphasizes the need for targeted responses to get at the roots of this complex issue.

In the wake of this carnage, I am committed to working with my colleagues in Harrisburg to improve gun control laws in Pennsylvania and I am actively working with my team to develop and implement a community-based strategy for the 192nd District.

Legislative proposals that address gun violence and intervention strategies are important to help us to further understand the issue and to secure resources to address it. Allocating funding allows us to support on-the-ground work to combat this violence.

In addition to working on policy and legislation at the state level, I am glad to work alongside local leaders and

elected officials, including the city of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, who have pledged to invest \$100 million into violence prevention by funding grassroots organizations and efforts.

Most recently—a bright spot in the fight against gun violence—two area programs were awarded funding, including THINK Instead, which received a \$13,000 grant from the city of Philadelphia. The Jarell Christopher Seay Love and Laughter Foundation, also received a \$10,000 grant from the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.

As a part of my team's strategy, I am committed to investing in education and job creation and developing community programming with a focus on identifying "hot spots" in the district to target.

While we are not going to make our way out of this crisis overnight, I am focused on looking at every option to turn it around and I am encouraging community members, elected officials, law enforcement and large and small corporations alike to do the same.



I have done in response to this crisis:

- ➔ Secured \$500k to support local Gun Violence Intervention (GVI).
- ➔ Advocated for \$30 million in state funding for anti-violence organization.
- ➔ Funded 3 job training programs for Black males in West Philadelphia.
- ➔ Launched the Haddington Participatory Defense Hub.
- ➔ Supported banning the sales of "ghost-guns" at PA gun shows.
- ➔ Secured over \$3 million to improve community safe spaces at the city of Philadelphia's 159 rec centers.

Here's what's next:

- ➔ Co-hosting gun "buy-back" programs.
- ➔ Meeting with local stakeholders to identify hot-spots for increased investment.
- ➔ Elevating mental health resources for impacted communities.

Building Pathways by Investing in Our Future

Reversing gun violence trends and solving many of our communities' most dire problems are going to take continued investments, including investments in our children and youth. In addition to fighting for fair and equitable funding for schools across Pennsylvania, I have been working with local stakeholders to bring together resources to create a solid workforce in West Philadelphia, especially under-resourced communities like some in the 192nd District.

Employment Training Programs

Recently, \$200,000 was awarded to Philadelphia Works, which funded two workforce development operations – expanding opportunities for district residents. The first program, Ready2Work, is being administered by The Urban League of Philadelphia and is assisting 25 young men to gain the necessary skills and preparation to land careers. Participants earn \$15 per hour and are provided transportation and lunch. The program focuses on teaching valuable life and career skills, including resume drafting, interview prep, and other soft skills. While they undergo this training, participants are also assessed and paired with employers for interviews and potential job placement.

The second program, Earn2Learn, facilitated by New Options, New Opportunities (NoMo) will also be a paid program ending in an interview with an employer and job placement. It is scheduled to begin in September 2021.

I was able to visit the group of participants with the Ready2Work program to talk to them about my vision for the program and the district. As we work to combat generational poverty and the city's gun violence crisis, it is imperative for us to continue to collaborate and maximize resources to ensure our communities' most vulnerable residents have access to opportunities, including job training and long-term employment.



Urban Agriculture as a Career Pathway for Philadelphia Youth

I joined PA Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding when he came to visit the Pinwheel Group, which offers a STEM-based educational platform customized to engage marginalized urban youth.

The interventions that include Agri-Science, Agri-Business, and an introduction to hands on urban farming, engage and challenge youth to problem-solve current healthy food desert issues, while providing real access to fresh produce. The program also introduces young students to possible long-term career pathways. The Pinwheel Group received a 2021 Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant in the amount of \$27,500 for construction of a teaching garden at the Boys Latin Charter Middle School in Philadelphia.



Working Together in the Fight Against COVID-19

To do our part to combat the COVID-19 virus, my team and I hosted several COVID-19 testing and vaccination events throughout the district to ensure residents had continued access to protect themselves. We partnered with Wynnefield Residents Association, Overbrook Park Civic Association, CATE, Independence Blue Cross, Rite Aid, Congressman Dwight Evans, Senator Vincent Hughes, Councilmember Curtis Jones Jr., and Councilmember Katherine Gilmore-Richardson, along with countless others to provide these resources over several months. We were able to connect over 800 people to the vaccine and testing resources. We even partnered with Penn Medicine to help connect nearly 100 homebound residents to vaccine opportunities.



With heightening concerns about the COVID-19 Delta variant and as cases begin to rise again, I want to be sure residents remain vigilant to keep yourselves and your families safe.



Wear a mask

Get the vaccine



Keep Your Distance



Contact our office in advance to schedule an appointment for assistance with state services.

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In the Community During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic placed ongoing restrictions on our communities and made it challenging to provide in-person services. As restrictions lifted, my team and I were glad to partner with a number of local organizations to meet people in the community and provide much-needed resources.

I collaborated with two local organizations for a Diaper and Feminine Hygiene Product Giveaway at 59th & Market streets. I was proud to work with local stakeholders to provide diapers, wipes and sanitary products to over 100 individuals and families.



Addressing Nuisance Businesses and Gun Violence

I joined city leaders, the 19th Police District, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and community members to tour high crime areas in the district and discuss concerns and strategies for addressing nuisance businesses and the increasingly worsening gun violence crisis. I look forward to continued collaboration to improve safety and quality of life for residents across the district.



192nd District School Tours



Tour of the Mann Music Center

The Mann Music Center gave me and the students of Overbrook High School's Music Industry Training Program (MITP) a warm welcome when we visited its campus. Students witnessed the transformation of the bare mainstage into a dynamic opera set and got the chance to explore the stage, backstage and full campus while learning from industry experts about the various careers that make a production come to life.



Youth Employment Workshop Series

On May 22, I hosted a 2-part Youth Town Hall and Employment Workshop Series to provide area youth with community resources for mental health, gun violence prevention and intervention, and summer employment. Attendees were also invited to join partners at Tustin Rec and Shepard Rec Centers to apply for working papers and directly connect with summer employers.

Look Out for these Upcoming Events and Programs

SHREDDING EVENT



Saturday, August 21
9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

St. Barbara Church
Parking Lot
5359 Lebanon Ave.

Let us help you get organized
and give you a greener sense of
security!

Bring your:

- ☐ Old documents
- ☐ Folders
- ☐ Correspondence

Documents shredded on site.
Papers must be loose – No
binders or paper clips

STATE RESOURCES AVAILABLE

“Keep Cool” Fan Giveaway. Limited supply.
Contact our office to reserve your fan.

Community Gun Buy-Back

Saturday, October 9

Holy Cross Baptist Church
1900 N. 63rd St.
Philadelphia, PA 19151

Contact our office for more details!

COVID-19 Relief Programs

**Record Expungement
Assistance**



SFMNP Fruit & Vegetable Vouchers

Summer 2021

Applications Available
Deadline September 15

Contact my office for more details and for pre-registration.



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My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Unemployment compensation problems
- Birth certificate applications
- Pennsylvania income tax problems
- Disability plates and placards
- Questions with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, LIHEAP, income assistance)
- Consumer complaints
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Questions about PennDOT
- Complaints about state road conditions
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Complaints and questions with insurance companies
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Questions about the state lottery
- Local government officials' problems with state agencies
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions, applications and more
- PA Treasury search for unclaimed property

