



Fall
2021

DANIELLE FRIEL ¹⁵⁵ OTTEN

PA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Dear Neighbor,

As I reflect on the past 18 months, I want to recognize the immense sacrifices everyone has made to protect their families, neighbors, and loved ones. It has been a long year-and-a-half with lots of ups and downs.

Throughout the pandemic, I have continued to serve and advocate for the needs of those living in the 155th Legislative District. In Harrisburg, I have advocated for funding to help our small businesses, public schools, and communities recover from a global pandemic that has had an impact on each of us. We've been back in the office full time since June, and whether working in the office or from their homes, my staff has worked hard to provide important constituent services throughout this crisis, such as assisting hundreds of folks through the process of claiming their unemployment and federal PUA benefits. Over the past year, we have hosted a number of virtual events, a successful E-waste recycling event, and a record-breaking shred event – we had to call in a second truck and we filled both to the top! Still, it will take each and every one of us, including you, to help get us all to the other side of this unprecedented time. I thank you for helping to make Chester County one of the most vaccinated counties in the nation and continuing the work to protect those most vulnerable until everyone has the opportunity to receive a vaccine.

Our district office is open, fully vaccinated, and providing constituent services by email, phone, and in-person. The House resumed session in September, and I am invigorated by the challenges before us and honored to be your voice in Harrisburg. I look forward to seeing everyone in person again soon!

Sincerely,

Danielle Friel Otten
State Representative
155th Legislative District

HOW I VOTED



As your elected representative in Harrisburg, I am committed to maintaining transparency surrounding the legislative process.

While state legislators' votes are always public record, the reasons behind those votes may not always be clear. This year, I've added a new "How I Voted" section to my website with the goal of keeping constituents as informed as possible about the bills that come before the House, my positions on those bills, and why I voted the way I did. We strive to update this page as quickly as possible following the end of each session week to make it easy for you to stay up to date.

Look for the "How I Voted" tab at the top right-hand corner of my website, RepDanielle.com.

POLICY HEARING: SAVING COMMUNITY HOSPITALS: KEEPING CARE CLOSE

With Tower Health's announcement in September that it will close Jennersville Hospital, and with the fate of Brandywine, Phoenixville, Pottstown, and Reading hospitals still up in the air, Rep. Dan Williams and I hosted local healthcare workers, first responders, administrators, and advocates for a roundtable discussion to share their concerns about the potential impacts on quality and access to health care, including emergency medicine, maternal care, and mental health care.

Hospital closures and consolidations impact every one of us. I've been the parent in the back of an ambulance with my child, praying to make it to the hospital on time. Our senior-living and long-term care facilities rely on nearby hospitals for emergency calls and patient care. Our law enforcement officers and county human services rely on the availability of psychiatric beds, mental health services, and behavioral health programs to meet community needs. The loss of ERs and reduction in critical care services puts additional strain on our EMS departments and local municipalities—and results in longer travel times and wait times for patients and additional stress for nurses and staff in the larger hospitals that remain open.



The legislature and the administration must do all we can to ensure that our community hospitals stay open and accessible, and that our healthcare workers have the support they need to provide high-quality care at the bedside.

Mental Health Help

Crisis Text Line



Text 'PA'
to 741741

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



800-273-8255

Preventing suicide in PA



preventsuicide
pa.org/

Take a screening



bit.ly/
mh-screen

Get Help Now for substance use disorder



800-662-4357

Veterans in crisis



veterans
crisisline.net

PA's support helpline



855-284-2494

Coping with COVID-19 stress



bit.ly/covid-coping

Disaster Distress Helpline



800-985-5990

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

Earlier this year, Rep. Christina Sappey and I hosted a series of panel discussions on Youth Mental Health and the Pandemic to discuss how the pandemic has affected the mental health of children and young adults among different age groups, what resources are available to help them, and how parents can access those resources. You can find all four sessions on my website: RepDanielle.com.

These conversations are so important, not only for our community, but for us as lawmakers as we seek to understand the challenges our constituents face and find ways to help and support them through legislation and policy.

I want to keep these conversations going, and I would like to hear from you: What mental health topics deserve more attention, what questions do you have, and how can my office best share the information with you? Please send your thoughts and requests to repotten@pahouse.net



ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATES – THE TIME FOR PA CLIMATE ACTION IS NOW!

Climate Caucus

The Climate Caucus is a bicameral, bipartisan caucus dedicated to focusing on climate change and its long-term impacts on the commonwealth. As House chair of the Climate Caucus, I'm able to spearhead discussions surrounding environmental justice issues, economic impacts of climate change, and legislation with the potential to impact or address Pennsylvania's climate, environment, economy, and work force.

September 20-26 was officially designated as Climate Week here in Pennsylvania. I was proud to work with my colleagues on a week of events to build awareness around a range of climate issues and legislation, including:

■ **Go100PA:** Legislation designed to invest in 100 percent renewable energy for Pennsylvania by 2050 and stand up to the corporate interests that are holding us back from fighting climate change. Learn more at go100pa.com.

■ **Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan 2021:** The DEP's plan for Pennsylvania to meet its statewide greenhouse gas emissions goals, reducing emissions 26 percent by 2025 and 80 percent by 2050. Learn more at: <https://bit.ly/3n4yqSN>.

The time for climate action is NOW, and the future, safety, and economic well-being of our workforce, our children, and the generations to follow are depending on us. Thank you to all those who participated in Climate Week events and who remain committed to pushing for climate action.

MARINER EAST UPDATES/MARSH CREEK STATE PARK

August marked the one-year anniversary of Energy Transfer's spill of drilling mud into the wetland, two tributaries, and the lake at Marsh Creek State Park. The spill caused damage to private property and to Marsh Creek's wetlands, streams, lake, and wildlife. As a result of the spill, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) halted construction at the site.

Following the spill, together with state Senator Katie Muth and several of our Chester County colleagues, I called on the DEP, Public Utility Commission (PUC), and Governor Wolf to revoke Sunoco's permits in Chester County and put public health and safety over the profits of an out-of-state, multinational corporation.

On October 5, 2021, Attorney General Josh Shapiro came to Marsh Creek State Park to announce the filing of 48 criminal charges against Energy Transfer for violations of the Clean Streams Law, including one felony count of unlawful conduct for willfully failing to report incidents to the DEP.

These criminal and felony charges against Energy Transfer are just a first step in holding this operator accountable. If convicted, they will be sentenced only to

fines and restitution. Meanwhile, drilling mud containing undisclosed additives, still sits on the bottom of the lake more than 14 months after the spill, impacting aquatic habitats and wildlife and rendering 33 acres of the lake still unusable to the public. According to the grand jury presentment announced by Attorney General Shapiro, the actual volume of the spill was between 21,000 and 28,000 gallons—much higher than the 8,000 gallons reported by Energy Transfer.

It is imperative that the House and Senate work together to pass stronger legislation to address gaps in our laws, protect the health and safety of Pennsylvanians, and stop these multibillion-dollar corporations from playing by their own rules.

The mission of the DEP is "to protect Pennsylvania's air, land, and water from pollution and to provide for the health and safety of its citizens"—not to ease the way for a multinational, multibillion-dollar corporation that has shown utter disregard at every turn for the safety of our neighbors and our natural resources.

I have once again called on Governor Wolf, the DEP and the PUC to revoke Energy Transfer's permits, impose a moratorium on any future permits, and make them clean up



August 10, 2020



August 10, 2021

their mess at Marsh Creek State Park. My full statement on the Attorney General's announcement and my letters to Governor Wolf and our regulatory agencies can be found in the News section of my website, RepDanielle.com.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

As your elected representative in Harrisburg, I've been hard at work on the issues important to you. Here's an overview of just a few of the bills I'm working on this session and their status in the legislature. You can find a complete list of my sponsored legislation under the News tab on my website.

■ HB 15: One Fair Wage

It has been 12 years since Pennsylvania last increased its minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour. There is no excuse for allowing people to work for poverty wages in our commonwealth, especially when every one of our bordering states has raised its minimum wage. All work has dignity, and Pennsylvania needs One Fair Wage as an equitable entry point for our workforce.

Last action: Referred to Labor & Industry, March 15, 2021.

■ HB 1364: Pipeline Early Detection and Warning Systems (formerly HB 1735)

In 2019-2020, I introduced HB 1735 to establish a Pipeline Early Detection and Warning Board that would collect fees from pipeline operators and distribute those funds to municipalities, school districts, or county governments for the development of early detection and warning systems, which would alert communities and emergency responders in the event of a pipeline incident.

Although the bill did not advance last session, it was cited in an April 2021 PUC ruling as a potential remedy for school districts in the path of one or more pipelines, noting that "HB 1735...would provide standards and a fee-generated funding mechanism to cover the cost of real-time leak detection systems that communicate directly with the appropriate first responders."

I have reintroduced this important legislation, which properly places the costs of early detection and warning systems on pipeline operators rather than taxpayers. Additionally, my bill would ensure that warning systems are in place prior to pipeline operation or product change, allowing our municipalities, school districts, and emergency responders to develop emergency response plans and fulfill their statutory requirements under Title 35.

Last action: Referred to Consumer Affairs Committee on May 17, 2021.

■ HB 1716: Local Self-Government Amendment (formerly HB 1813)

Together with new co-prime sponsor Rep. Dianne Herrin, I am reintroducing an amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution that would recognize the fundamental right of the people to protect their health, safety, and welfare through local community self-government. By recognizing this right – while simultaneously ensuring that the local government continues to protect rights already secured by the U.S. and state constitutions and international law – we will empower communities and their local governments to enact protective local laws that put an end to the overreach of multinational private corporations seeking to profit at the expense of our communities, our environment, and our health.

Last action: Referred to Local Government Committee on August 12, 2021.



■ School Free-Play Recess and Lunch Periods (formerly HB 1949)

Recess is an essential part of a student's school experience that contributes to a child's growth and development. Providing a regular period of unstructured time for physical activity and play gives children a necessary break for optimizing their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. This legislation would ensure that children and young adults have opportunity to take a break, be physically active, and interact with others. I introduced this legislation last session as HB 1949, and I'm proud to co-prime sponsor it this year with Rep. Bob Brooks, who reached out to me after a group of students in his Pittsburgh district approached him about adding some of their ideas to the bill.

Last action: Drafted; Co-sponsor memo circulated October 4, 2021.

■ HB 1954: Menstrual Hygiene Products in Schools

Nearly 1 in 5 young American women have missed school or left early due to lack of available menstrual hygiene products. This is an equity issue: it is not acceptable for our children to miss out on their education because they lack access to these essential products. This bill would require public schools in PA to make these products freely available to students in grades six through 12. These products are not luxury items; they are basic necessities, like toilet paper and soap, that should be readily available in school bathrooms.

Last action: Referred to Education Committee on October 5, 2021.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

MY DISTRICT OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH...

- PennDOT documents
- Disability plates and placards
- Questions about REAL ID
- Birth certificate applications
- Unemployment Compensation issues
- Department of Human Services benefits (SNAP, Medical Assistance, Rent & Utility Assistance)
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Consumer complaints
- Concerns about state road conditions
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications
- And more!

UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

■ The Pennsylvania Treasury is seeking the owners of billions of dollars in unclaimed property. My office has received a list of constituents in the district with property yet to be claimed, and we are working to get your rightful property back to you. Unclaimed property may include checks from employers, insurers, or utility companies; dividends and interest from savings accounts and stocks; and credit balances on forgotten accounts.

Visit www.patreasury.gov to see if the state is holding any property that belongs to you. My staff is here to help you search for and claim property in your name.

SEPTA KEY SENIOR ID CARD

■ Seniors who present a SEPTA Key Senior ID Card ride for free on all SEPTA service lines within Pennsylvania. Seniors traveling to NJ or DE are eligible for a half-fare discount with their SEPTA Key Senior ID Card.

Signing up for a card is simple! If you are at least 65 years of age, stop by my district office with a form of ID with a date of birth on it, such as a PA driver's license, non-driver photo ID, U.S. Passport, or birth certificate. We will take your photo and electronically submit your application to SEPTA, and you'll receive your Senior ID Card in the mail within a couple of weeks!





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Exton, PA 19341

STAY INFORMED!

Visit RepDanielle.com/emailsSignup to join my email list for regular updates from Harrisburg and the district.

lpo.ts.1021

MOBILE OFFICE HOURS

Spring City Public Library

245 Broad St.

Spring City, PA 19475

First Wednesday of every month

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Henrietta Hankin Branch Library

215 Windgate Dr.

Chester Springs, PA 19425

Second Tuesday of every month

9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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E-RECYCLING EVENT

Our free E-waste recycling event on October 9 was a huge success! More than 130 constituents dropped off their electronic waste for our partner vendor, The Junkloggers, to tote away and responsibly recycle, keeping more than 1,000 pounds of material out of landfills. We're planning another event for the spring, paired with paper shredding and recycling. Watch my email newsletter and social media for updates!

