



State Representative | 159th Legislative District

BRIAN KIRKLAND



District Office

401 Avenue of the States | Chester, PA 19013 | (610) 876-6420

Capitol Office

300 Invis Office Building | P.O. Box 202159 | Harrisburg, PA 17120-2159
(717) 787-5881

Winter
2022

 /RepBrianK |  RepBrianK.com

COVID-19 Update

If you were exposed to COVID-19 and need a test, please do NOT go to an emergency room if you do not have any symptoms that warrant hospital care. Our area's healthcare workers cannot handle an influx of asymptomatic patients coming in at this time. A list of testing sites is available online at <https://delcopa.gov/covid/testing.html>. You may also order up to four free at-home tests through the postal service at <https://special.usps.com/testkits>.

Pennsylvania election update: mail-in voting

Recently, the Commonwealth Court ruled that Act 77 – which implemented no-excuse mail-in voting for Pennsylvania – was unconstitutional. The court reached this verdict because the judges said that changes to our election laws must be adopted via amending the state constitution. However, our state constitution does allow lawmakers to decide voting laws. Therefore, this decision is being appealed by the Wolf Administration.

As this legal process unfolds, Pennsylvanians may still request mail-in ballots. Until the state Supreme Court delivers its final verdict, this will have no immediate impact on voting by mail. If the May 17 Primary Election is changed in any way, Delco's voter services will make an announcement.

For up-to-date localized information on voting, please visit delcopa.gov/vote/voterservicecenters.html.

Order your **FREE** at-home COVID tests!

COVIDTests.gov



Each home in the U.S. is eligible to receive 4 free at-home COVID-19 tests. Orders typically ship in 7-12 days

EVERYONE AGES 5 & OLDER CAN GET
A COVID-19 VACCINE!

Chester | Chester Twp. | Lower Chichester Twp. | Ridley Twp. | Upper Chichester Twp.
Eddystone | Marcus Hook | Parkside | Trainer | Upland

Fighting in Harrisburg for fair funding

I've reviewed multiple pieces of legislation that aim to address inequities within Pennsylvania's public education system. Countless schools, including ones right here in Delco, do not receive their fair share of funding. Every student deserves access to a quality education, and I've signed on as a co-sponsor to these five bills that I believe can protect that right through fair and equitable funding.

- **Fair Funding for Underfunded School Districts (House Bill 1662)**

Pennsylvania's system for funding our public schools creates inequities throughout the commonwealth. It is immoral that our school districts with the highest shares of Black and Hispanic students receive about \$1,900 less per student than their fair share under the bipartisan fair funding formula. This legislation would use the fair funding formula to determine what is fair, and then allocate extra funding to those school districts that are not receiving their fair share to help them catch up and ensure student success.

Last action: Referred to the House Education Committee on June 17, 2021.

- **Accelerating Full and Fair Funding for our Public Schools**

School districts across the state are funded at levels that do not match their respective needs. This legislation package would help correct this issue by providing underfunded schools with the funding that they truly need to educate their students while also expanding on the bipartisan Basic Education Funding Commission's duties. The BEFC would be responsible for ensuring that school funding is adequate, equitable and fair.

Last action: Circulating for co-sponsors.

- **Accelerated Fair Funding Formula (House Bill 1416)**

Currently, only "new" money allocated in each year's budget is run through the



fair funding formula. As a result, only about 11% of all dollars allocated to basic education are distributed in a fair manner. This legislation aims to close inequities created by this system by distributing \$150 million through an accelerated fair funding formula that only goes to school districts that are underfunded if the entire basic education budget (past and present) were run through the fair funding formula. No school district would lose any dollars they currently receive, and this bill would not create any tax increases.

Last action: Referred to the House Education Committee on June 22, 2021.

- **Achieving Fair Funding for All Education Dollars (House Bill 1595)**

The General Assembly established the student-weighted Basic Education Funding Formula and Special Education Funding Formula to direct money to school districts based on certain factors including student enrollment, student population needs and wealth of the school district. However, only about 11% of basic education funding goes through these formulas, and that shortchanges many districts. This forces school districts to rely more heavily on property taxes to fund operations, consequently widening the gap between poor and rich school districts. This bill would fully implement both the BEF formula and the SEF Formula, phased in over five years.

Last action: Referred to the House Education Committee on June 10, 2021.

- **Eliminating Hold Harmless (House Bill 1821)**

Pennsylvania's education funding formula contains a "hold harmless" provision. This ensures that school districts receive the same basic education funding they received the year before even if they are educating fewer students. Sixty-two percent of school districts in the commonwealth have seen a decline in enrollment over the last 30 years, so this "hold harmless" measure is now one of the most significant factors driving Pennsylvania's school funding disparities. This bill would eliminate the "hold harmless" provision, allowing education funding to truly be distributed fairly.

Last action: Referred to the House Education Committee on Aug. 31, 2021.



Budget season kicks off in Harrisburg

On Feb. 8, the legislature’s budgeting process officially began as Governor Wolf delivered his budget address. His address details what he would like the General Assembly to include in this year’s spending plan. His proposed spending plan is a promising start and puts Pennsylvania’s students and workforce first. Here are some of its highlights and what I’ll continue advocating for in Harrisburg as budget talks continue:

- **Raise our minimum wage to \$12 an hour.**
- **Increase basic education funding by \$1.25 billion.**
- **Allot \$300 million in Level Up funding for the Pennsylvania’s 100 most underfunded districts.**
- **Invest \$60 million to Pre-K Counts and \$10 million into Head Start programs.**
- **No tax increases.**



Ongoing safety project in Chester

To combat illegal dumping and strengthen public safety in the City of Chester, I was proud to announce the second phase of a camera initiative. Thank you to police chief Steven Gretzky and Mayor Thaddeus Kirkland for joining me and working to improve our community.

This camera initiative was made possible thanks to \$200,000 in state funding I helped secure. This funding will help the police department run more efficiently and introduce new safety upgrades – such as this camera program.

Grants awarded to our community

One of my jobs as your state representative is to bring funding back to our community. I’m proud to share that the following projects have recently been awarded grants:

- **Jacks Park in Chester Township:** \$30,000 to upgrade recreational amenities such as installing a new playground area with a swing set, adding benches and trash receptables, and upgrading stormwater infrastructure.
- **Panthers Community Foundation:** \$50,000 to continue providing sports activities and youth programs. Funding will support stipends for mentors, operating costs related to learning and listening sessions, and new sports equipment to replace damaged or old gear.
- **Chester Biddy Basketball Association:** \$25,000 to go toward new equipment, gun violence prevention workshops, pay for referees and renting space to facilitate workshops as well as tournament fees.
- **Delaware County’s 911 system:** \$4.6 million to improve our county’s aging 911 system. This grant will ensure no loss of communication during emergency situations by upgrading 24 towers, call center equipment and infrastructure related to telecommunications.
- **ACCESS Community Center:** \$750,000 to construct a community center which will offer services such as youth and adult programming, senior citizen programs, housing assistance, a community garden and veteran services.
- **Monroe Energy LLC:** \$1.85 million to go toward the replacement of a substation. The project will convert steam-driven turbines to more efficient electric turbines, replace power cables and install new cables.
- **Starboard Industries LLC:** \$2 million to transform 24 Keystone Opportunity Zone lots into a four-story office building and create the Small Business Incubator and Corporate Center.
- **Chester City:** \$50,000 for East Coast Greenway development, Norris Street connector design.
- **Marcus Hook:** \$43,800 for a master site development plan for replacement of the Delaware River pier in Market Square Memorial Park.

Need help with water bills?

Are you or someone you know at risk of losing water service at their home? Help is available for Pennsylvanians who need help with water bills or who may lose water service.

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services opened the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. Relief is available to families who have past-due water bills, had their service terminated, or received a notice indicating that their service will be terminated in the next 60 days.

For more information, including income guidelines for program eligibility, visit dhs.pa.gov/WaterHelp.

Does the PA Treasury have something for you?

The Pennsylvania Treasury has billions of dollars in unclaimed property, and some of that could be yours. Some examples of unclaimed property include abandoned bank accounts, uncashed payroll checks, contents of safe deposit boxes and traveler's checks. Anyone can visit www.patreasury.gov to see if the state is holding any property in their name. It is free to search the database, so never pay anyone a fee to search for you. If you need assistance, my staff is here to help you search for and collect property in your name.

**IT'S NO SECRET GEORGE,
PA TREASURY HAS \$3.8
BILLION IN
UNCLAIMED
PROPERTY
THEY WANT
TO RETURN.**



www.patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property

Are you at risk of having your water shut off?



Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program



dhs.pa.gov/WaterHelp



SEPTA

Do you have a SEPTA Senior Key Card?

Due to contact issues caused by the pandemic, SEPTA has extended the printed expiration date on Senior Fare Cards. Cards with expiration dates in 2020, 2021 and 2022 have been extended until the same expiration month in 2023.



Thanks to all who came out to my Healthy Heart Health Fair in Eddystone on Feb. 10! I hope everyone found something to help them live their happiest, healthiest lives.

Working to save CWA

The sale of the Chester Water Authority could result in higher rates and loss of control of our community's water. To help avoid the CWA, a non-profit municipal authority, from being sold to a private, for-profit company, I've co-sponsored these two pieces of legislation:

- **Ratepayer Referendum Prior to Sale of a Public Utility (House Bill 97)**

This legislation would require local ratepayers to approve the sale of a publicly managed utility via a mailed ballot. If a majority of ratepayers vote against the proposed sale via referendum, then the Public Utility Commission would be required to disapprove the sale.

Last action: Referred to the House Consumer Affairs Committee on Feb. 26, 2021.

- **Acquisitions of Distressed Water and Wastewater Systems (House Bill 1936)**

This bill was drafted with bipartisan support and addresses the acquisitions of distressed water and wastewater systems by private companies. Under this bill, buying these companies under the use of Section 1329 would be limited to systems that truly need outside help to meet financial or operational safety best practices. This is because Section 1329 sales drive up rates for customers of those systems, so they should only be used as a last resort.

Last action: Referred to the House Consumer Affairs Committee on Sept. 29, 2021.

Annual Giving Back Holiday Drive a big success



Thank you to everyone who donated to my office's Giving Back Holiday Drive. Because of your generosity, we were able to feed 50 local families this holiday season!



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lpo.ts.0222



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District Office:

401 Avenue of the States | Chester, PA 19013 | (610) 876-6420

Chief of staff: Lisha Long

Outreach coordinator: Thomas White

Legislative Assistant: Margaret Reed

Legislative Assistant: Charita Knox

Research Analyst: ShyQuan Davis



UPCOMING EVENT

World Cancer Day Lunch | April 29, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. | 8500 Furey Rd., Upper Chichester, PA 19061

Ways my district office can serve you:

- ➔ Voter registration and mail-in/absentee ballot applications
- ➔ Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- ➔ SEPTA Key Senior ID Cards
- ➔ REAL ID questions
- ➔ Birth/Death Certificate applications
- ➔ Problems or questions about PennDOT
- ➔ Car registration, special tags, titles/License plate applications
- ➔ Disability plates and placards/PACE cards for senior citizens
- ➔ Problems with the Department of Human Services (SNAP, cash assistance, etc.)
- ➔ Tours of the State Capitol for individuals or groups
- ➔ Information on financial assistance for higher education
- ➔ Unemployment compensation problems
- ➔ Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- ➔ Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones