

News From State Representative

# CHRISTINA SAPPEY

158th Legislative District | Chester County | Summer 2022



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

## CHRISTINA SAPPEY

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## DEAR NEIGHBOR,

I hope this summer newsletter finds you well and that you're finding an opportunity to slow down, spend time with friends and family and enjoy the abundant natural beauty here in the 158th.

Since my last newsletter in February, much has happened in the world which has impacted our nation and each of us on an individual level. We are experiencing myriad challenges at the international, national, and even state and local levels. Inflation impacts all of us daily as the cost of everything from gas to basic necessities climbs to record levels. Rising interest rates impact everyone as well. My staff and I are here to make sure you have access to any short-term relief that is available from the state. Just as importantly, I am actively working to bring about systemic change, identify root factors and actions the state can take to bring lasting fairness and prosperity to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

In times like these I believe it's important to keep in mind the many positive developments happening around us. I choose to focus on all that you bring to this wonderful place we call home: your generosity, ingenuity and innovation. Chester County is the special place it is because of its people. It's for that reason that I hope you will always feel free to call, email, or make an appointment to speak to me or my staff. It's an honor to serve you and we will be happy to hear from you!

All the best,

# THE ECONOMY AND YOU

WE'RE ALL STRUGGLING WITH THE IMPACTS OF INFLATION RIGHT NOW. HERE ARE SOME WAYS I'M WORKING T

## GAS PRICES

I'm a co-sponsor of HB 2697, which would end gas price gouging. The bill would prevent raising prices within 24 hours of a previous increase, outlaw unconscionable increases in times of emergency, and empower the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute gasoline price gouging.

## WORKFORCE

To combat workforce shortages, especially in the education and health care fields, we must create incentives for our young people to live and work in PA. To help retain these workers, I voted for Act 2 of 2022 which invests \$15 million in American Rescue Plan funds for the PA Higher Education Assistance Authority (PHEAA) nurse loan forgiveness program. The 2022-2023 state budget subsequently added \$35 million to this program.

I have also signed on to HB 2384 and HB 2091, which would provide partial student loan forgiveness for mental health, intellectual disability, social work and drug and alcohol treatment professionals working in Pennsylvania.

To encourage students to pursue high-demand careers, the state budget invests an additional \$2.4 million in the Targeted Industry Scholarship Program, designed to assist with the pursuit of careers in energy, health, agriculture and manufacturing.

Providing adequate child care is important for maintaining a robust workforce. Unfortunately, the pandemic has exacerbated the challenges that child care providers are faced with, thereby reducing the supply of high-quality care that would allow parents to participate in the workforce. I believe that direct subsidies to child care providers could help alleviate high operating costs imbedded in the industry and am proud to have supported a \$25 million increase in direct child care subsidies for low-income families in this most recent budget. Child care facilities can use the funds for proper pay, workforce recruitment and training, leading to more supply for working families. The budget also created a new child care tax credit for working families, providing tax relief to parents in the workforce.

## HOUSING

To help make home ownership more attainable, especially for workers in Chester County, I have co-sponsored HB 2701, legislation to establish the Pennsylvania Lease-Purchase Home Ownership Program. This program would allow prospective first-time homeowners to rent a home for a period before taking on the mortgage and ownership of the property. A portion of each month's rent would be set aside in an escrow account for use to cover the down payment and closing costs.

The new state budget included \$250 million toward affordable housing construction as well as a cost relief program to ensure the state's low-income housing projects do not encounter delays due to rising costs.

## SMALL BUSINESSES

I regularly meet with local business owners and business chambers on state matters directly impacting them. It is crucial that we support local business as nearly half of money spent with an independent local business is recirculated locally, versus approximately 14% with a large chain.

The Small Business Advantage Grant program is currently open and accepting applications through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. The program provides 50% matching grants up to \$5,000 for PA small businesses to purchase energy efficient or pollution prevention equipment or adopt waste reduction processes.

During the most recent budget negotiations, I was happy to support an increase of \$20 million in historically disadvantaged business assistance. The budget also included a 24.7% increase for Keystone Opportunity Zones, designated areas that provide tax relief to encourage economic development.



*Meeting with Sean Hanrahan, owner of Hilltop Crab House Restaurant and Bar in New Garden Township.*

## HOW HELP MAKE IT A LITTLE EASIER FOR INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, WORKERS AND SENIORS.

### FAMILIES

Providing flexibility for working families is crucial to our economy. I have introduced HB 642, which would require insurers to cover telemedicine services. Throughout the pandemic, many workers were more easily able to access timely, affordable, and quality health care, and it's important this remote care remain in place.

I have also introduced HB 641, which would provide up to six weeks of protected, unpaid leave for employees caring for a grandparent, parent, sibling, or grandchild with a certified terminal illness. The Senate version of my legislation, SB 617, has passed the Senate and is now being considered by the House Labor and Industry Committee.



### SENIOR CITIZENS PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

I am pleased to share that the 2022-2023 state budget included a \$140 million increase for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. This program is for financially eligible seniors, widow/widowers and people with disabilities. Rebate recipients will automatically receive a one-time supplemental payment equal to 70% of their regular payment.

### REDUCING CORPORATE NET INCOME TAX

It is important that Pennsylvania remain competitive in attracting new businesses and industries. In this year's approved budget, I voted for a reduction in the state corporate tax rate. PA currently has the second highest corporate tax rate in the nation. The plan put into place will slowly reduce the rate, over several years, from 9.99% to 4.99%. Cutting corporate tax rates encourages business development and leads to increased investment, productivity gains and, in turn, increased economic growth, output, and higher standards of living.

## INVESTING IN EDUCATION

The 2022-2023 state budget included a \$1.8 billion increase in education funding for Pre-K through college. I was proud to vote in favor of this plan and am pleased that the state legislature is finally giving the children and families of Pennsylvania what they deserve and need to succeed.

In recent years, the state has not invested enough into our public education system, resulting in tightened budgets for schools and ultimately increased property taxes for homeowners. In 2020, Pennsylvania ranked 43rd for state share of allocations to schools. This year's increase included \$750 million for basic education, with \$225 million of these funds directed to the "Level Up" program for traditionally underfunded school districts, including Coatesville. This investment ensures the state is paying its fair share to help our school districts provide a safe, quality learning experience for all youth.



#### Other education highlights include:

- **Special Education Funding: \$100 million increase from last year.**
- **School Safety & Security Committee: \$100 million for mental health grants and \$100 million for physical safety grants.**
- **An additional \$60 million (25% increase) for Pre-K Counts and \$19 million (28% increase) for Head Start Supplemental Assistance.**
- **Early Intervention (Age 3-5): \$10 million increase from last year.**
- **Expands Education Tax Credits (EITC and OSTC) by \$125 million increase (an increase of 45%).**
- **More than \$220 million in additional funding was provided to higher education across the state.**

# GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

As mass shootings continue to devastate families and communities across the country, I share your frustration and anger at the unwillingness to address this crisis. The vast majority of us, including law abiding gun owners, agree that doing nothing is unacceptable. I have signed on to approximately a dozen gun violence prevention measures and stand ready to work with my colleagues toward compromise for action. Additionally, the state has included in the new budget an increase of \$103 million for state police, with \$1.6 million for gun checks, \$30 million for violence intervention and prevention programs, and \$260 million for public safety grants.

It's important to note that the enormous number of guns in our country are a problem, but focusing on this issue in a vacuum won't work. I believe we need a multifaceted approach that recognizes the impact of trauma and the ever-increasing stress and strain on individuals and families that creates instability and poor mental health in our communities.

We have several initiatives under way in PA that could address the root causes of gun violence. HEAL PA is the commonwealth's initiative to tackle trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs include all forms of

abuse, neglect and other potentially traumatic experiences that occur under the age of 18. The more ACEs a child has, the greater the probability for high-risk health behaviors, chronic health conditions, emotional and behavioral dysfunction and early death. Through trauma informed services, we can provide the support needed to help identify and address mental health crises.

At a local level, I have been working with colleagues in several areas that I believe could improve mental health. Access to affordable child care gets parents back to work and keeps them there. Paid family leave encourages parent-child bonding. Fair education funding provides strong schools and opportunities for everyone. Accessible health care, attainable housing, and an end to food insecurity all lift up families and communities.

Youth mental health has been and remains a priority of mine. You can read more in detail about the Chester County Youth Mental Health Initiative in the section below.

Through these collective actions, we can proactively prevent tragedies, rather than reacting to them.

## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Over the last two years, I have heard from an increasing number of families dealing with mental health issues affecting their school aged children. In 2021, as our students returned to in-person classes, school districts quickly experienced an increase in reported anxiety, depression and behavioral issues among children, resulting in an alarming number of crisis situations. Recognizing this dire need, I organized meetings with school district superintendents, the Chester County Intermediate Unit and Chester County mental health administrators to examine programming currently available and to identify gaps in service.

As a result, our superintendents identified four key areas where immediate action is required to improve youth mental health services in our county. They presented to a full, bipartisan delegation of state legislators, county commissioners and the county department of human services. Following that presentation, four workgroups were formed with key stakeholders from throughout the county to begin charting the course forward:

- 1. Addressing the Critical Shortage of Mental Health Professionals**
- 2. Embedding Crisis Counselors in Schools**
- 3. Opening an In-County Inpatient Mental Health Care Center(s)**
- 4. Creating Family Partnerships for Continuation of Care in the Community**

There is nothing more important than the health and well-being of our children. I am proud of the work each of these workgroups is putting in to provide families and schools appropriate mental health resources. I will continue to keep our families and children in my focus and will also update you on this important collaboration.

I was pleased to support the recent state budget, which included a substantial increase in spending for mental health programs including \$100 million for schools, \$100 million for adults and \$15 million for county mental health services.



*The county legislative delegation, county commissioners and school district superintendents discuss local youth mental health needs at a meeting I organized with the CCIU.*

# HERE TO SERVE YOU

Since January of 2022, my office has answered over 2500 constituent inquiries. If you have a state-related question or concern, please reach out at 484-200-8264 or stop by. The office is located at 698 Unionville Road, Kennett Square, PA 19348.

## WE CAN ASSIST WITH:

- ✓ SEPTA Senior Passes
- ✓ State Income Tax Questions
- ✓ Property Tax or Rent Rebates
- ✓ State Grant Opportunities
- ✓ PennDOT Roadway Concerns
- ✓ Vehicle and Driver Services
- ✓ Unemployment Assistance
- ✓ Unclaimed Property
- ✓ Harrisburg Capitol Visits
- ✓ Legislative Inquiries
- ✓ General Information and Referrals
- ✓ Consumer Complaints

## EMBREEVILLE BRIDGE

Many constituents have inquired about the status of the Embreeville Bridge (Route 162), which was heavily damaged from Hurricane Ida. In the immediate months following the storm, the damage was assessed by PennDOT (which manages Route 162) and reported to FEMA for evaluation and approval of federal funds for repairs. Once these funds were approved, PennDOT was able to develop a blueprint for repairs. In April, Section 106 was completed, which is a required step by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and provides clearances from historical/archeological perspectives. Right-of-way clearances for construction vehicles have been obtained. This month, the design will be completed and advertised for construction. By August, the construction contract will be awarded. Work will begin in September, and the project should be completed and the road open to vehicular traffic by December.

Due to this closure, I have been working closely with PennDOT, state police, and county and local officials to maintain related detour routes, signage, speed and large truck enforcement, particularly on Northbrook Road and roadways surrounding and including Harvey's Bridge.

## YOU'RE INVITED! SENIOR FAIR SEPTEMBER 24 10:00AM-NOON

**Kennett Middle School**  
195 Sunny Dell Road  
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Senior citizens in the 158th District and their families are invited to my free 2022 Senior Fair. Vendors will provide information on health and wellness, government services, legal services, and community events. Health screenings, including blood pressure readings, hearing tests and more will also be offered. Vaccinations will be available for those who provide an ID and insurance card. Join the fun, live music, light refreshments and free door prizes!





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lpo.ad.0722

## INTRODUCING THE NEW 158TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Every 10 years, after the U.S. Census, the Legislative Reapportionment Commission is created to redraw the boundaries of Pennsylvania's state House and Senate districts to maintain equitable representation based on population.

In March, the bipartisan Legislative Reapportionment Commission and the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania approved new legislative district maps. These maps will remain in place for the next decade.

### **The new 158th Legislative District consists of:**

- » Avondale Borough
- » East Fallowfield Township
- » East Marlborough Township
- » Kennett Square Borough
- » Kennett Township
- » New Garden Township
- » Newlin Township
- » Pocopson Township
- » West Bradford Township
- » West Marlborough Township

### **The following municipalities will no longer be in the 158th and have moved to the legislative district in parenthesis:**

- » East Bradford (moved to the 156th)
- » West Goshen (moved to the 156th)
- » London Britain (moved to the 13th)



I will continue to serve as state representative for residents of East Bradford, West Goshen and London Britain until the end of the current legislative session on Nov. 30, 2022.