



State Representative Ismail Smith-Wade-El 49th Legislative District

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Dear Neighbor,

The first six months serving as your state Representative have been exhilarating and challenging. Thanks to our majority in the House, the Democrats have been able to advance important legislation that will help Pennsylvania's working families live better lives.

We've passed a budget that makes historic investments in education.

And we are just getting started.

It is also an honor to serve on the House Education, Housing & Community Development, Human Services, and Local Government committees, where I am working to improve the lives of all Pennsylvanians. I've had three pieces of legislation pass the House that will protect people's rights, address the housing crisis in Pennsylvania and expand the number of homeowners and renters who can qualify for PTRR so they can stay in their homes.

I've been working hard to bring back millions in taxpayer dollars to Lancaster and Millersville to improve services and infrastructure.

My office has assisted over 1,000 residents get the state services they need.

I am here for YOU. I am going to keep fighting for you, your families, and your jobs.

And I'm just getting started.

A Great Honor!

I was honored to receive the Rhea & Phil Starr award this summer from the Jewish Family Service of Lancaster, given for a commitment to social justice for vulnerable peoples!

I got to spend some time with Rhea herself, and hear about how she and Phil met, her history with the YWCA, and her hopes for the future of Lancaster County. Thank you, Rhea, and thank you Marcy Dubroff for the award nomination - solidarity is everything!



AT THE CAPITOL

Passing House budget which includes another increase for public education

On a bipartisan vote in early July, the PA House passed the 2023-24 budget for the commonwealth, which includes a lifesaving \$717 million increase in education funding. The budget was signed into law in early August.

The budget's investments in K-12 education funding will help to provide relief to our schools that are struggling financially. The \$717 million combines the increases of \$567 million in the basic education subsidy, \$100 million for Level Up districts, and \$50 million for special education.

I'm very glad that we've invested this money to help our deserving, talented students succeed in a rapidly changing world.

They are worth the investment.

The 2023/24 Budget Invests In:



Educational Equity & Equality



Post K-12 Educational and Training Opportunities



Community Safety



Reducing Food Insecurity



Keeping Low Income Residents and Seniors in Their Homes



Better Access to Healthcare

The following funding will be awarded to our area's school districts:

Lancaster School District
\$6,896,991 (8.2% increase)

Penn Manor School District
\$1,323,208 (7.7% increase)



Among other highlights, the budget includes the following funding increases and new investments:

- An additional \$23.5 million for Career and Technical Education, including increasing equipment grants to CTE programs by 170%.
- A \$10 million increase in Violence Intervention and Prevention grants funding to help community-led efforts to improve public safety.
- Providing \$3.5 million for the Schools-to-Work program, which grows partnerships between career and technical education schools and employers to create new opportunities for students.



I'm fighting every day to ensure that all our children—regardless of zip code—have access to a great education. Our community's social stability and economic development depend on it.

AT THE CAPITOL

Comprehensive charter reform (HB1422)

In a bipartisan vote, the PA House passed legislation (H.B. 1422) that would modernize Pennsylvania's charter school law to specifically address cyber charter schools to ensure transparency, accountability and fiscal responsibility.

This bill would hold cyber charter schools to the same standards we expect of anyone who receives public funds, including transparency, ethical standards and greater oversight of spending. This legislation would end the \$455 million in overpayments and ensure that taxpayer dollars are being properly spent on their intended purpose – educating students.

The bill would set a single statewide tuition rate for non-special education students at cyber schools that is better aligned to the actual cost of cyber education and applies the existing three-tier special education funding formula currently used for school districts, which sets funding based on the student's special education needs, to cyber charter schools.

By making sure cyber charter schools operate openly and with proper oversight, we will help our students – regardless of what type of school they go to – and our taxpayers.



Cyber Charter Reform 
Bringing \$456 MILLION back to the taxpayers.



Additional Grants for Our Community

\$1.5M in PHARE grants

One of my biggest concerns as your state representative is to make sure that we build the safety net for our most vulnerable residents. I am proud to have helped secure \$1,500,000 in PHARE grants for eight Lancaster housing and unhoused services organizations.

\$124,827 in historical preservation grants to the city of Lancaster and YWCA

I am very proud to have helped secure \$124,827 in state grants to preserve the city's history for its current and future residents. These preservation projects will enhance the distinctiveness of the city's diverse neighborhoods and will repurpose historic buildings and sites in creative ways to meet evolving community needs.

\$30,000 to School District of Lancaster for Girls' IDEA Innovation Lab

We need to increase equity in STEM fields, so I helped secure a \$30,000 grant for J.P. McCaskey High School to outfit a girls' IDEA Innovation Lab. The lab will encourage girls to pursue and thrive in STEM classes and prepare them for college and a career in STEM fields. I look forward to seeing the special projects that the girls will perform in the lab and their future academic and professional success in STEM fields.

Fairness Act (HB300)

I was honored to stand as one of the prime co-sponsors of The Fairness Act, which passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives this spring—a moment 22 years and hundreds of elections in the making.

For decades, LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians have faced discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. The PA Fairness Act would get Pennsylvania closer to a place where everyone's rights are protected, where all citizens would be wrapped in freedom, equality, fairness and justice. I look forward to that day when the Act is signed into law, and I can claim my inheritance as a Black queer Pennsylvanian.

Let's get this done!

AT THE CAPITOL

Expanding PTRR to Help More Homeowners and Renters (HB1100)



Act 7 of 2023 which I co-authored will expand Property Tax/Rent Relief Program eligibility and was signed into law in early August to increase rebate amounts for seniors and people with disabilities for the first time in over 17 years. Our legislation also includes a cost-of-living increase so recipients will not lose their rebate in future years when they get a modest increase in their Social Security or pension.

The new guidelines will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2024. We're working to put more money in your pockets and keep more seniors and people with disabilities in their homes - and this legislation gets us closer to that goal!

Government Programs

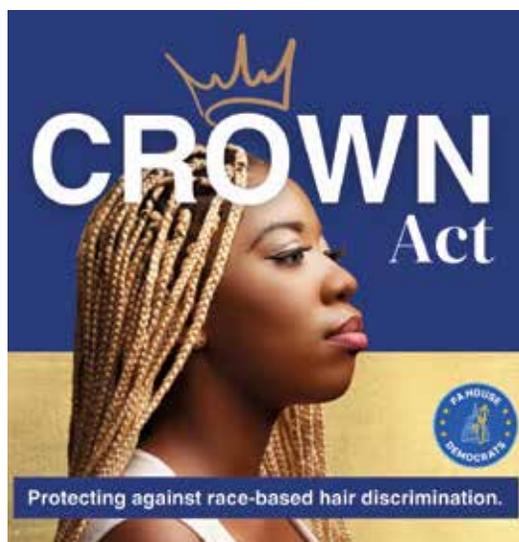
PTRR Deadline Extended

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate program's application deadline has been extended to Dec. 31. The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or older. The current income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded.

You can apply for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2022.

The Department of Revenue strongly encourages applicants to submit their applications online.

My office can also help you apply for PTRR. Give us a call at (717) 283-4218.



The Crown Act Passage

In July, the CROWN Act (H.B. 1394), passed the House of Representatives. The CROWN Act would update Pennsylvania's anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination based on hair type, hair texture or hairstyle. After four years of Republicans refusing to take a vote on the CROWN Act, the new Democratic majority successfully passed this important legislation that will help protect Pennsylvanians from discrimination in the workplace.

My Resolution to Study the Impact of Housing and Health Quality (HR66)

We have a housing crisis in Pennsylvania. Not only is there not enough affordable housing, but most housing dates from before 1978 and exposes residents to lead contamination, poor ventilation, ill-constructed waste systems, and other unsafe and toxic conditions. Bad housing is having a devastating impact on people's health and on our health services.

For these reasons, I introduced H.R. 66, which directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study and issue a report on the impact of housing on health in Pennsylvania, and which was adopted by the House. The LBFC will reach out to relevant stakeholders to gain insight on the impact housing has on residents' health and provide recommendations for housing solutions.

Everyone deserves a safe and healthy home. Stable and affordable housing decreases the cost of public support services and improves the health and quality of life of our fellow Pennsylvanians. Collecting information on health outcomes impacted by housing will allow us to identify appropriate policy changes to improve outcomes, reduce costs, and save lives.



COMMUNITY EVENTS:



Grand Opening (3/3)

First, I want to say thank you to everyone who came to our District Office Grand Opening in March! It was an honor to see more than 100 old friends and new constituents, and to let people know about how the office can help them get the services they deserve! Special thanks to Boys and Girls Club of Lancaster, Union Community Care, and homage: Cuisines of the West African Diaspora for help making the night extra special!



Senior Fair (6/2)

My Senior Health & Safety Fair in June at the Bright Side Opportunities Center in Lancaster was a huge success. Presenters included Brian Roche from WGAL, Drs. Jesse Main & Ada Emuwa, and David Jones. My Senior Health & Safety Fair was a wonderful opportunity for our seniors to get information to help them stay healthy and safe and offer them the opportunity to connect with each other over good food, music and dancing. Our seniors have given so much to our community, and this was an opportunity to do something for them.

Raise the Wage Rally (6/1) and Townhall with Senator Haywood (6/22)

This June state Senator Art Haywood (Montgomery/Philadelphia) and I joined together to raise awareness of the fight to raise the minimum wage via a Rally to Raise the Wage and a Town Hall on Facebook.



We believe that the minimum wage should be a livable wage. People right now are just scraping by, having to choose between necessities such as food, health care, childcare, transportation and paying off debt.

Our minimum wage hasn't been raised since 2009, despite the cost of living going up year after year. There are 2 million employees in PA who would immediately benefit from a \$15 minimum.

It's long past time to raise the wage. The benefits of raising the wage would be vast, from helping to reverse decades of pay inequality to narrowing the racial pay gap for workers of color. Raising the minimum wage would particularly benefit women, who make up the majority of minimum wage workers. Those benefits extend to local businesses, too. When our families have more to work with, they spend more money, nurturing homegrown businesses instead of sending our community's wealth to corporate executives and shareholders who don't care about our neighborhoods.

Raising the wage will also help Pennsylvania taxpayers. As the minimum wage isn't enough to live on, many people must rely on social programs, which are paid for by taxpayers. Meanwhile, the people profiting off the labor of minimum wage workers are enjoying record corporate profits supported by tax breaks.

It's time to share the wealth. Our working families and our taxpayers shouldn't suffer in the name of ever-increasing corporate excess. The time to raise the wage is now.

Join us in the fight to raise the minimum wage in Pennsylvania.



PHFA Visit

In July, I met with Melissa Grover, director of government affairs from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, at the PHFA re-registering application event at Tec Centro.

The Pennsylvania Homeowner Assistance Fund, or PAHAF, is a housing-related program funded by the U.S. Treasury to assist Pennsylvania homeowners facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program provides financial assistance to homeowners for qualified mortgage and housing-related

expenses to address delinquency and avoid default, foreclosure, or displacement.

All PAHAF applicants must re-register in PHFA's Neighborly system to review and, if needed, update their application information at pahaf.org.

People do not need to reapply to the program, but applications cannot be processed until this re-registration step is taken.



State Representative

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My office can help you with these services:

- ✓ PennDOT problems or questions — including disability license plates and placards
- ✓ Obtaining birth or death certificates
- ✓ Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications
- ✓ Property Tax/Rent Rebate forms (for qualified seniors)
- ✓ PACE (pharmaceutical assistance for qualified senior citizens)
- ✓ Information regarding PHEAA (PA Higher Education Assistance Agency)
- ✓ Information on PA's 529 College Savings Plans
- ✓ CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program)
- ✓ Requests for state informational materials
- ✓ Questions or problems with any state agency
- ✓ Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- ✓ Citations from the PA House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and important family milestones