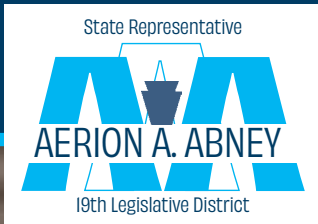




Summer 2024



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Aerion A. Abney

REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE 19TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

HELLO,

It's been some time since I've had the chance to talk to you in a newsletter, and I'm excited to give you a preview of what you can look forward to reading about in the next few pages.

My colleagues and I are coming off passing the 2024-25 fiscal year budget, a bipartisan plan that invests more than \$47.5 billion in services, programs, and resources for Commonwealth residents. As a member of the PA House Appropriations Committee, it's been an eye-opening and enriching experience to help both shape the budget and shepherd it from conception to passage into law. This is my third budget as a state legislator, and I continue to work toward inclusivity for Pennsylvania and its population.

I've also prime-sponsored or co-sponsored multiple pieces of legislation, one of which has become my first to pass the House. These bills include preserving prescription coverage for seniors, working toward a greener and more economically vibrant PA, building stronger neighborhoods, helping individuals and families afford internet access, ensuring incarcerated individuals have free and fair voting access, and looking out for social workers. As a proud social worker and legislator, it is a privilege to work on behalf of the people I represent and those throughout the state.

Additionally, I've enjoyed meeting and talking with 19th Legislative District neighbors like you and residents statewide. The issues and concerns that have been shared with me are what drive me to do my part to implement positive and meaningful change. I'm eager to further this crucial dialogue and put words to action in Harrisburg as your state representative.

In service,

AAA



Inside: State budget, my legislation, and more!

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HARRISBURG HAPPENINGS & MORE

I've been hard at work in the House chamber facilitating positive policy change and making the lives of the neighbors I represent and all Pennsylvanians more equitable. I'm pleased to share that more than 400 bills have passed the House so far in the current legislative session! On that note, I'm thrilled that my first piece of legislation as a state representative has passed the chamber.

The bill would help ensure that PA seniors do not lose access to their prescribed medications while keeping more money in their pockets at the same time. It would do this by changing eligibility requirements for the state programs that help seniors pay for their prescriptions – PACE and PACENET – to not count the total dollar amount of redeemed savings bonds as part of an applicant's income when they apply for either program.

Now, the Senate must act and move this legislation a step closer to becoming law.

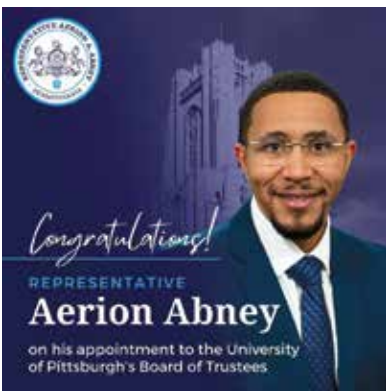
Additional legislation I've spearheaded or partnered with colleagues on includes:

- Creating the PA Climate Emission Reduction Program, which would award monies collected from carbon emitters to be distributed to utility customers as rebates and to statewide energy efficiency projects.
- Raising the total dollar amount available through the Neighborhood Assistance Program from \$36 million to \$72 million.



- Instituting a state version of the Federal Affordable Connectivity Program, which would provide eligible households with \$30 per month for broadband internet service.
- Ensuring incarcerated individuals can vote by absentee ballot and providing them with resources to learn more about the process.
- Adding PA to the Social Work Licensure Compact, which would allow PA-licensed social workers to serve clients across state lines.

There's still much to be done, so I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and build upon the good work delivered to Pennsylvanians!



I was honored to be appointed as a Commonwealth Trustee on the University of Pittsburgh's Board of Trustees by PA House Speaker Joanna McClinton.

As a two-time alumnus, I know how much Pitt plays a significant role in preparing our future

workforce, contributing to our economy, and serving as a core social partner at the local community level.

Taking on this leadership role and working with the university administration to continue its legacy of being a world-class institution is a great privilege and role I will fulfill to the best of my ability.

One of the ways my House Democratic colleagues and I continue working for you at the state Capitol is holding hearings and other events that focus on the issues that

matter most. The image above is from a PA House Democratic Policy Committee hearing I led on safe and secure elections.

From standing with social workers and PA's moms to advocating for crime prevention and the rights of Black and brown citizens, I'm committed to doing all I can for you and your family.



A BUDGET FOR ALL

The 2024-25 budget is a more than \$47.5 billion investment across services and programs of life for Pennsylvanians. Please visit www.houseappropriations.com/Topic/BudgetYears/804 to view a full summary.

An essential part of the plan is a \$1.3 billion investment in public schools, which includes an \$8.5 million increase in education funding for Pittsburgh Public Schools. This funding represents a 5% increase compared to the previous year's budget allocation.

Higher education also becomes more affordable with this budget. One new program is the Grow Pennsylvania Scholarship Program, which awards \$5,000 grants to Commonwealth students enrolled in an approved course of study, who maintain satisfactory academic progress, and have not yet earned a bachelor's degree. In return, they must agree to work in Pennsylvania for 12 months for each academic year they receive the scholarship.

Budget highlights also include:

- \$161 million for public transportation and multimodal projects.
- \$70 million for attainable housing initiatives through the PA Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund.
- A \$20 million increase for county-based mental health services.
- \$20 million for student teacher stipends.
- A \$16.5 million increase for anti-violence investments and after-school programs.

2024-2025 EDUCATION FUNDING
MORE MONEY FOR SCHOOLS

\$8.5 MILLION
increase in education funding for the Pittsburgh School District

5% INCREASE ←

PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE ASHTON L. LANE

- **NEW:** \$2.5 million for legal services in eviction proceedings.

There's no such thing as a perfect budget, but I believe this financial plan has the right priorities and makes the kind of bold investments PA needs!

2024-2025 PA BUDGET WINS

- No new taxes
- **Over \$1B** for Pre-K to 12 education funding
- **\$30M increase** for Career and Technical Education
- **\$100M** for Public school facility improvement grants
- **NEW \$3M** investment for menstrual hygiene products in schools to address period poverty
- **Over \$15M increase** for Community Colleges
- **Over \$140M** for grants, scholarships, and other programs to make higher education more affordable in PA
- **Over \$26M increase** for subsidized childcare services
- **NEW \$6M** for Urban Search and Rescue in Western PA
- **\$36M increase** for Neighborhood Assistance Program
- **\$5M increase** for Homelessness Assistance
- **Over \$2M increase** for Domestic Violence Prevention
- **\$5M increase** for Non-profit Security grants
- **\$7.5M** for indigent defense
- **AND MUCH MORE!**

STATE & LOCAL RESOURCES



Property Tax / Rent Rebate Program 2024 Expansion

MORE people eligible, **MORE** money back!

| Homeowner Income | Rebate | Renter Income | Rebate |
|------------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| Up to \$8K | \$1,000 | Up to \$8K | \$1,000 |
| Up to \$15K | \$770 | Up to \$15K | \$770 |
| Up to \$18K | \$460 | Up to \$18K | \$460 |
| Up to \$35K | \$380 | Up to \$45K | \$380 |
| Up to \$45K | \$380 | | |



Questions? Contact me for more information by calling (412) 471-7760 or visit our office at 730 James St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212-4935

PA's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. Half of Social Security income is excluded, and spouses, personal representatives, or estates may also file rebate claims on behalf of claimants who lived at least one day in the claim year and meet all other eligibility criteria. In addition, each Pittsburgh senior household with an income under \$30,000 will have their property tax rebate increased by an additional 50%. Not only that, the program's gotten even better this year!

A new law raises the annual income cap to \$45,000 for homeowners and renters starting this year and is tied to cost of living moving forward, resulting in the number of eligible seniors rising from 400,000 to 575,000. On top of that, the maximum rebate amount jumps from \$650 to \$1,000 in 2024 and beyond. The enclosed chart is a breakdown of rebate payouts based on income.

Please visit www.revenue.pa.gov and click on "Property Tax/ Rent Rebate Program" under "Popular on Revenue.PA.Gov" to apply. Apply by December 31st.

Are you behind on your rent?



It's crucial to catch up. We can help.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY
LEAD SAFE HOMES
PROGRAM



The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh has a multitude of resources available for individuals and families needing help with staying current on paying rent. From setting up payment plans to programs that seek to pre-empt eviction proceedings, HACP is here to help.

Everyone deserves to have a safe and stable roof over their heads, so please visit hacp.org/rent-resources/ to get assistance.

Allegheny County's Lead-Safe Homes Program tests homes for lead, makes FREE repairs, and works to remove lead from homes. To see if you qualify and to learn more, call Action Housing at (412) 227-5700 or email alleghenylead@actionhousing.org.

The pilot program Allegheny GO, which provides a 50% discount on Pittsburgh Regional Transit fares for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients, is now permanent. Interested riders should download PRT's Ready2Ride app and then visit www.discountedfares.alleghenycounty.us/ to apply to the program.

Eligible applicants will have the ability to pay for discounted fares within their app and, initially, Allegheny GO will only be available to applicants with smartphones. It will be available, however, on PRT's new smartcard set to launch next year.



IN THE DISTRICT



I joined Gov. Josh Shapiro and state legislative colleagues at Mill 19 in Hazelwood and Achieva on the South Side to help support the PA Economic Development Strategy and caregivers who assist individuals with intellectual disabilities respectively.



I led a call-to-vote event at the Allegheny County Courthouse alongside several of my House Democratic colleagues and local leaders. Prior to becoming a state representative, I served as Pennsylvania director of special projects for All Voting Is Local, a national organization fighting to remove discriminatory barriers at the ballot box.



I helped present a check for \$2.5 million to the Allegheny YMCA on the North Side, alongside Mayor Ed Gainey and other leaders. The funds were used to make renovations to the pool, kitchen, locker rooms, meetings rooms, and utility systems of the nearly 100-year-old facility.



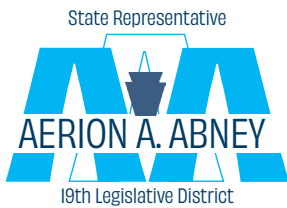
Rep. Lindsay Powell's staff and I led a landlord/tenant event at Tripoli St. Community Center. Local magistrates were on hand to provide information and help answer questions about the legal rights of landlords and tenants.



I teamed up with Rep. Dan Deasy and Magisterial District Judge Nick Martini for a license plate replacement and mobile health unit event at Sheraden Healthy and Active Living Center. City of Pittsburgh Police Department officers helped neighbors replace unreadable license plates, and UPMC was on hand to provide various health tests and screenings.



Holding town halls across many corners of Pittsburgh has been an engaging and inciteful experience to say the least. I've enjoyed meeting new and familiar faces alike and hearing how I can improve your life and the lives of your family members.



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INSIDE:

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KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND IN HARRISBURG

Each week, I send out an e-newsletter with the latest information from our communities and Harrisburg, including helpful news about state programs and services.

It's a great way to keep up with what's happening or discover how my office can help you, your family, and friends. My team and I are here to help with things like the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, unemployment compensation, veterans' resources, or Children's Health Insurance Program applications.

You can find all this and more at www.RepAbney.com, follow me on social media, or scan the QR code to sign-up for my weekly e-newsletter!

