

Fall 2023



State Representative

David A. Madsen

— 104th Legislative District —

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Dear Neighbor,

It is with immense pride and a sense of duty that I address you as your representative in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. This session has been a remarkable journey, one that I am truly honored to embark upon alongside 49 fellow first-term members. Together, we form the largest and most diverse class of freshmen legislators in over a decade, a testament to the shared commitment to progress and change.

As we navigate this legislative landscape, our focus remains unwavering—forging equitable and safe communities while propelling our state’s economy to new heights. This newsletter is designed to provide you with a comprehensive glimpse into our ongoing efforts and the strides we are taking to fulfill these core objectives.

Budgetary matters have been at the forefront of our deliberations, and this year’s budget is nothing short of transformative. It is a blueprint for a future where every Pennsylvania child has access to a world-class education, where our communities are fortified by robust infrastructure, and where mental health and environmental concerns are met with dedication and action. We are celebrating a historic \$1 billion K-12 investment, that stands as the largest Basic Education Funding Formula boost in our state’s history. This allocation provides support for underprivileged schools, special education, safety grants, free breakfast and lunch programs, student-teacher stipends, and dual enrollment initiatives.

Public safety takes center stage, with significant funds directed towards indigent defense, proper legal backing for those without means, and comprehensive support for first responders. The fabric of our communities is further enriched by investments in mental health, environmental conservation, and the overarching welfare of our citizens. Our legislative accomplishments are a testament to our collective dedication. Over 100 bills have passed the House, marking a remarkable stride towards our shared goals. This landmark achievement is coupled with the fact that Democrats now hold the House majority, a feat not realized in thirteen years.

In closing, I am honored to represent the people of Harrisburg and its surrounding areas. It is one of the greatest honors to be asked to be a voice for friends, neighbors, and residents of the 104th Legislative District. Together, we are molding a future of inclusive prosperity, safer communities, and opportunities for all.



2023/24 State Budget

This year's budget is a transformative milestone in our pursuit of an inclusive economy, safer communities, and top-notch education for all Pennsylvania kids. Our state is on the brink of growth due to unprecedented K-12 funding, robust workforce investments, strong support for local growth, and substantial allocations for agriculture and safety.

My affirmative vote celebrates a historic \$1 billion K-12 investment, the largest Basic Education Funding Formula boost in PA's history. It funds underprivileged schools, special ed, safety grants, free breakfast/lunch, student-teacher stipends, and dual enrollment.

In a first for our state, funds are earmarked for indigent defense, securing proper legal backing for those without means. Previously, we lagged here, but this budget brings a change, with \$7.5 million for public defenders. Health concerns are tackled too, from mental health to maternal care, backing EMS and healthcare. Public safety will also see support for infrastructure, police support, trooper training, violence prevention, pardons, and campus safety.

This budget mirrors our state's priorities, enriching students, seniors, workers,

law enforcement, and businesses. It signifies vital investments across sectors, elevating Pennsylvanian lives and our state's future.

This budget stands as a commendable stride in the right direction, aligning with our core objectives. It signifies an investment in our shared priorities, yet it is imperative that we persist in channeling more resources into subsequent budgets. As advocates for your needs, Democrats remain unwavering in our commitment to championing essential causes.

Education takes center stage with a substantial boost of \$717 million across multiple fronts. Basic and Special Education, alongside the Level Up initiative, benefit significantly. School food services receive a \$46 million expansion for universal free breakfast and broadened lunch offerings, nurturing our students' well-being. Career and technical education secures an uplift of \$23.5 million, while early intervention and community colleges each enjoy \$10.4 million and \$5.1 million increases, respectively.

Our resolve against violence finds stronger support with a \$10 million augmentation for intervention and

prevention grants. Furthermore, we address fundamental community needs, fostering accessibility to fresh food through a \$2 million Fresh Food Financing Initiative and fueling historically disadvantaged businesses with an injection of \$20 million in assistance. The commitment to enhancing lives extends to housing, as we empower homeowners with \$50 million for Whole Home Repairs.

This robust budget reflects our commitment to propelling our shared ideals into action. While celebrating these notable strides, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of even greater strides in the future, cementing a better tomorrow for all.



Around Our Community



Celebrating National Bike Week with Recycle Bicycle Harrisburg and the city of Harrisburg was a blast!

My colleagues and I spoke on the importance of supporting and protecting PA workers alongside Harrisburg's Central Labor Council and fellow colleagues.



Having a blast celebrating #America250PA with some cool kids. While we still have 3 years until the official anniversary, Shippensburg's Red and I are starting the celebration early.

Legislative Action

Tenant Relocation

Through no fault of their own, tenants may find themselves without housing when their rental buildings fall into disrepair and face condemnation. When a landlord has failed to maintain the necessary upkeep of a rental property, tenants are left to suffer with unsatisfactory living conditions that could harm their health and the potential to be forced to relocate. There is often great stress for the tenant when relocating, not only the financial costs of moving belongings and finding comparable housing but also the emotional stress of experiencing the loss of a home and the pressure to relocate in a short timeframe. It should be the responsibility of the landlord, when the landlord is at fault, to assist tenants with the burden of relocation. However, a landlord is not obligated to help tenants with the costs and stress of relocation.

For this reason, I am working on legislation that would require a landlord to pay a permanently displaced tenant a relocation payment equal to six months' rent paid by the tenant if the rental property has code violations that require the condemnation of the property, or the property is deemed unfit for human habitation. A landlord would also be obligated to pay a temporarily displaced tenant with a relocation payment equal to one month's rent and provide alternative, temporary housing. Moreover, this bill would amend existing law to clearly state that it is the duty of a landlord to provide a tenant with safe, clean, and habitable housing.

Solar for Schools

The Solar for Schools grant program aims to facilitate the widespread adoption of solar energy systems in school facilities across the state. Under this program, schools would receive grants to cover the costs associated with solar energy projects, including equipment, installation, and maintenance of solar energy systems. This initiative is expected to yield significant financial savings for local taxpayers and school districts by reducing energy costs, potentially freeing up resources for other crucial investments such as hiring additional teachers. The program also carries substantial environmental benefits, including the reduction of carbon emissions and the creation of family-sustaining jobs in the renewable energy sector.

Supporters of the legislation emphasize the wide-ranging positive impact it could have. Labor unions and educational organizations, such as the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Building Trades, AFT PA, Philadelphia AFL-CIO, LIUNA, and IBEW, have thrown their weight behind the initiative. They see it as an opportunity to not only generate employment opportunities and lower energy expenses for consumers but also to improve the health and well-being of students, educators, and staff by promoting clean air and water.

The legislation has garnered strong environmental support from groups like Conservation Voters, Sierra Club, PennFuture, and Penn Environment, highlighting its potential to contribute to solving the climate crisis. The success story of the Steelton-Highspire School District, which installed a solar field providing 100% of the district's energy, serves as a testament to the viability and benefits of the proposed program. This legislation is poised to empower schools and students while propelling Pennsylvania towards a cleaner, more sustainable future through renewable energy adoption.



I had the pleasure of welcoming the Steelton-Highspire Roller Football team to the PA State Capitol to see Governor Shapiro sign his first bill into law.



I toured the Irving Steel Plant to learn about and discuss a vital sector of PA's economy. As a representative of Steelton, supporting, protecting, and advancing Central PA's steel industry is incredibly important to me.

Funding in Our Community

\$1 million - Highspire Borough Authority - Wastewater Treatment Facility improvements.

\$850,000 - Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC - Whitaker Center Critical Indoor Air Quality improvements.

\$600,000 - Swatara Township - Law Enforcement and Emergency Operations Center.

\$225,000 - Lower Swatara Township - ClearSpan Salt Shed Project.

\$250,000 - Harrisburg Area Learning Academy has been awarded funds to support the continuation and expansion of its Central PA Center for Trauma and Healing, an evidence-based trauma recovery center.

\$200,000 - Community Action Commission has received support for the reinstatement of the Harrisburg Community Safety Project, which is designed to address increased crime and violence within Harrisburg.

\$60,000 - City of Harrisburg - Traffic safety improvements.

\$30,000 - Swatara Township Police - New police dog.

COLA Increases for State Retirees

Recently, my district office has been receiving a lot of correspondence from state retirees regarding their state retirement benefits. I want to emphasize my unwavering commitment to increasing the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) payments for our state retirees. It's crucial that we recognize the dedication and service these individuals have provided to our communities. Over the years, the purchasing power of retirees' pensions has been steadily eroded by inflation, and it's time we address this issue head-on. I firmly believe that our retirees deserve better – they deserve COLA payments that are indexed to match the rising cost of living. As your representative, I'm dedicated to and will continue to champion this cause in the legislature, ensuring that our state's retirees can enjoy a more secure and dignified retirement. It's our duty to support those who have dedicated their careers to public service, and I'm committed to making this a reality.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Increases

One of the most popular programs we help our older or disabled neighbors with is the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, which provides qualifying households with a rebate on their property taxes or rent from the previous year. We are excited to announce that as part of the state budget signed by Gov. Josh Shapiro, this program will be expanded to allow more of our neighbors to qualify and to increase the amount of the rebate available.

Starting in 2024, the new law:

- Increases the income cap from \$35,000 to \$45,000 for homeowners.
- Increases the income cap from \$15,000 to \$45,000 for renters.
- Automatically increases the income cap to grow with inflation, beginning in 2024.
- Increases the maximum rebate from \$650 to \$1,000.

As a result of this historic expansion – the first for the program since 2006 – nearly 175,000 more Pennsylvanians will qualify and many of the 400,000 seniors who already qualify will see their rebates nearly double.



Congratulations to Teamsters Local 776 - Harrisburg, and UPS Teamsters across America on their new national contract. As a former UPS worker, I'm proud to stand beside them in support of fair wages and adequate benefits.

Around Our Community



I've enjoyed meeting many of you and gaining your input during my legislative door knocks around our community.



I joined my colleagues to advocate for the construction of the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at the PA Capitol Complex. I'm proud to support legislation that would give Gold Star Families a place to honor their fallen loved ones.



I had an incredible experience visiting Ft. Indiantown Gap National Guard Training Center and learning about the soldiers who keep us safe. This facility helps train more than 100,000 service members every year! Thanks for the tour!

I had an amazing tour of the Senior Life Center in Steelton! It was eye-opening to see firsthand how they serve our local community and provide essential support to our seniors. I learned a lot about their incredible work and discussed ways the state can assist them in continuing their impactful mission.



I am forever grateful for courageous Americans like Mr. Wayne Bowers. He is a Purple Heart recipient and Korean War veteran. I had the honor of presenting him with a citation to thank him for his sacrifice and his honorable service to our country.



It was an exciting day at Reservoir Park's grand opening of the Chutes and Ladders Playground! Let's continue creating spaces where children can unleash their imaginations and embrace the importance of staying active.



I had an opportunity to meet with leadership at Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and toured the intensive care unit and the Penn State Health Children's Hospital. It's great to see the incredible work that they do to keep our community healthy.



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Available at My Office

- Pennsylvania Driver's Manuals and Commercial Driver's Manual.
- Assistance with the Department of Human Services.
- Obtaining Birth and Death Certificates.
- PennDOT Services: vehicle registrations, reduced vehicle registration, special tags, titles, driver's license applications and disability placards.
- Questions for the Department of Revenue.
- Liaison to state agencies.
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions.
- Information on financial assistance for higher education.
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications.
- Unemployment compensation, disability, and workers' compensation.
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance).
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information.
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications.
- PACE cards for senior citizens.
- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions.
- Information about federal, state, and local government agencies.
- Unclaimed property search.