



State Representative **JORDAN HARRIS**

House Democratic Whip
Representing the 186th Legislative District



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**HEARD
IT FROM HARRIS**

- BETTERING PA WITH THE PA RESCUE PLAN
- BUDGET INVESTS IN EDUCATION, BUT NOT NEARLY ENOUGH
- INCREASED FUNDING TO FIGHT GUN VIOLENCE
- PROTECT YOUR HEALTH BY GETTING YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE

State Budget Finally Invests in Educational Equity, *but Much More is Needed*



Earlier this summer, the state legislature passed, and Gov. Tom Wolf signed, a budget that gave a large influx of funding to our state's education system. These totals include \$300 million for basic education, \$50 million for special education, and \$30 million for early childhood education. The budget also allocated \$100 million to a new Level Up initiative to

help bring equity to some of our state's most under-funded schools, including the Philadelphia School District.

I've long been a proponent of pushing all education funding through what's known as the Fair Funding Formula. Currently, only new education spending is distributed through the Fair Funding Formula, which was created in 2016. The vast majority of education funding is still distributed at pre-2016 levels and leaves some of our neediest school districts behind. I and many of my House Democratic colleagues joined Gov. Wolf in fighting for all education spending to go through the formula this year, but unfortunately there wasn't enough support across the aisle to get that done. While the Level Up initiative helps address some of this inequity, Pennsylvania's students deserve to have education dollars allocated correctly through the Fair Funding Formula and I'll continue to advocate for that.

Pennsylvania also had \$7.3 billion in federal funding from the American Rescue Plan to allocate. I pushed strongly for the Pennsylvania Rescue Plan, which you can read about in this newsletter, and send this money to folks who need it the most. We could've invested in our small businesses, infrastructure, and health care workers, and provided more Property Tax relief, but my colleagues across the aisle instead decided to put that federal funding in our state's Rainy Day Fund for potential future use. While I of course understand the value of saving money for the future, in my opinion it's been raining in Pennsylvania since before the pandemic started.

Far too many folks are struggling to afford their rent. People are working multiple jobs because Pennsylvania hasn't raised the minimum wage in over a decade. Our frontline health care workers aren't paid for the value of what they provide. We have students who can't take part in online schooling because they don't have access to affordable



high-speed internet. Mom and Pop businesses have shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, possibly to never reopen. This isn't the time to put this money away for a rainy day. This is the time to invest in our state and our people.

This pandemic has highlighted the inequities that so many of us already knew existed. It's my priority to continue to work with my colleagues to do everything we can to end those inequities and create a better Pennsylvania for all.

Budget provides \$30 million to fight gun violence

Gun violence is taking far too many of our friends, family members, and neighbors at too young of an age. I've long supported increased funding to fight this public health crisis and get illegal guns off our streets. I'm proud to have worked with Gov. Wolf in the past, along with Attorney General Josh Shapiro and the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, to get illegal guns out of the hands of criminals and secure funding to help communities in Philadelphia and around the state tackle gun violence.

This year, Pennsylvania's budget includes \$30 million for community violence prevention programs. This funding is managed by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and goes directly into our communities to push back against this scourge. Grassroots organizations that know their neighborhoods the best and know what they need can access this funding through a grant program that will literally save lives. I'm confident these dollars will make an impact in our community as one of the many tools we must utilize to push back against this senseless violence.

Pennsylvania Needs the PA Rescue Plan



Investing in clean energy jobs was the topic of a hearing in Philadelphia.

lifetime opportunity to invest in our state and set Pennsylvania on a path for a brighter future.

To that end, I joined our House Democratic leadership team and many of my House colleagues on a week-long House Democratic Policy Committee tour around the state. We toured economic centers and industrial sites, spoke with nurses and health care workers, and talked with everyday Pennsylvanians

Following the passage of the American Rescue Plan, House Democrats in Harrisburg unveiled the Pennsylvania Rescue Plan. This plan aims to use the \$7 billion Pennsylvania received from the American Rescue Plan to help businesses, rebuild our infrastructure, invest in public health, support Pennsylvania families, and strengthen our workforce. This is a once-in-a-

about how the PA Rescue Plan could benefit them. This isn't aimed at only certain parts of the commonwealth. These investments the plan would make would benefit urban, suburban, and rural parts of our state. For example, investing in high-speed broadband internet to make it more accessible can help our students in urban cities access educational opportunities while helping residents in rural counties access telehealth options. This plan benefits every Pennsylvanian regardless of where they live.

During our budget negotiations, my colleagues across the aisle did not see the benefit of this massive investment in Pennsylvania. Though no investment was made, the federal stimulus dollars remain largely intact for now for Pennsylvania to use. That still gives me hope that this fall we can renew the discussions of how to best spend these federal dollars that will do the most good for the most people. I'll keep you updated on our progress or you can visit www.pahouse.com/PARescuePlan.



In Harrisburg, we discussed the need to help families afford quality, accessible childcare.



In Erie, we toured industrial sites in need of remediation to bring in new opportunities for Pennsylvanians.



In Pittsburgh, we held a hearing to discuss affordable housing and what Pennsylvania must do to increase access to it.



We took a walking tour of downtown Reading to discuss revitalization projects and how to help our cities strengthen their small businesses.



At a news conference in State College, we talked about the need to do more for our workers around the state.



Listening to residents of an independent living center in Allentown gave us insight into what more the state can do to help them.



In Dickson City, we heard from nurses on the frontline of the pandemic about what they needed to be safe and secure in their jobs.

PA Rescue Plan Investment Priorities

Investments in Businesses

- \$250 million to businesses unable to stay open or work remotely due to COVID-19.
- \$500 million to create jobs and kickstart the economy in local communities.
- \$200 million to connect everyone to high-speed internet and vital infrastructure.
- \$50 million to tackle climate change and prioritize clean energy.
- \$170 million to improve childcare for working parents.

Public Health Infrastructure and Preparedness

- \$511 million to train and pay direct care workers.
- \$15 million to modernize public health infrastructure.
- \$25 million to increase access to health care and telehealth.
- \$200 million to repair or replace toxic school buildings.
- \$75 million to invest in health care research and innovation.

Support for Families

- \$250 million to expand property tax and rent relief.
- \$250 million to promote affordable housing and local economies.
- \$250 million in hazard pay for front line essential workers.
- \$250 million to create a Paid Sick and Family Leave program.

Workforce Development

- \$25 million in grants for students in high-demand career training and adult learners.
- \$80 million to help community college students.
- \$10 million in impact payments for those whose unemployment checks were delayed.
- \$53 million for retirement savings plans for workers without an employer option.

Protect Our Community: *Get Your COVID-19 Vaccine and Mask Up*

The past year has been one of the most difficult we've ever had to live through. COVID-19 completely changed how our society operated. We lost time together, memories, and sadly in many cases, we lost loved ones and dear friends and neighbors. There is no doubt that this is a period of time we will never forget. With the increasing case counts due to the Delta variant, we're not out of the woods yet.

With that in mind, I strongly encourage you to get your COVID-19 vaccine and continue to wear a mask when in public. We have several vaccines available that greatly reduce your risk of serious side effects from COVID-19. I received my vaccine in the spring to help protect myself and my community and am thankful that I now have one more tool against COVID-19. We're also encouraging folks to wear a mask in public and mandating that students, teachers, staff, and guests wear a mask in school. As of now, the COVID-19 vaccine isn't available for those under the age of 12. We need to do everything possible to keep them in school and keep them safe, and wearing a mask is our best way to do that.

If you've yet to receive a vaccine and need help, please know that there are multiple sites around Philadelphia that are providing vaccinations. If you or someone you know has trouble leaving the house, please contact the city by dialing 3-1-1 and arrangements will be made for those who are homebound. If you'd like to schedule an appointment at a vaccination site run by the city, please call (215) 685-2933. For general questions about the vaccine, you can contact the city's Department of Public Health by calling (215) 685-5488. You can also visit www.vaccines.gov for information from the Centers for Disease Control.

Heroic actions a reminder help is available

Earlier this year, one of my district office staff members, Al Custis, did something incredibly heroic for our community. Al serves as a Legislative Aide and Community Liaison Outreach Coordinator and routinely helps organize events in our district. In April, outside our district office, Al noticed a car moving in reverse down the street with what appeared to be a sleeping driver. He went outside to investigate, and thankfully, the car was moving slowly enough that Al could walk alongside and knock on the window. After receiving no response, he noticed a needle in the driver's arm.

Al was able to get the driver's side window open and put the car in park. The driver remained unresponsive, and Al called 911 and waited with the driver until medical help arrived. Al's quick actions may have saved a life that day. This story serves to highlight the special actions that happen in our community every single day by our friends and neighbors. It also serves as a reminder that some of our friends and neighbors are struggling, and I want to remind you that help is available by calling the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at 1-800-662-4357.

I'm proud that not only is Al an invaluable member of my staff, but he's an integral part of our neighborhood and most importantly, he's a good friend. Thank you, Al, for going above and beyond in your service to our community.



Kids in schools must MASK UP indoors

Together, we can beat COVID-19

PA HOUSE DEMOCRATS

DID YOU KNOW

The data is in and clearly shows that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective in protecting you against the virus. According to data from the Pennsylvania Department of Health:

- Fully vaccinated Pennsylvanians are 7 times less likely to get COVID-19
- Fully vaccinated Pennsylvanians are 8 times less likely to die from COVID-19
- 97% of deaths, 95% of hospitalizations, and 94% of cases in Pennsylvania are among the unvaccinated

By getting vaccinated and continuing to wear masks in public, we're doing everything we can to keep kids in school and businesses open while protecting our community from the virus. For more information on the virus or the vaccine, please visit the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.



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JORDAN A. HARRIS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE



My Offices are Open and Ready to Help



In an effort to better serve our community, I've opened two new satellite district offices in addition to my main district office where my staff is available to help you with any state government-related issue. I strongly encourage you to contact us at the location nearest to you:

Main District Office

Point Breeze Office

1444 Point Breeze Ave. | Philadelphia, PA 19146
 Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Satellite Offices

African Cultural Alliance of North America Office

5532 Chester Ave.
 Philadelphia, PA 19143
 Thursday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Snyder Avenue Office

2103 Snyder Ave.
 Philadelphia, PA 19143
 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday,
 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Salvation Army Office

3225 Reed St.
 Philadelphia, PA 19146
 Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

My staff is ready and able to help you with:

- Unemployment Compensation issues
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications
- PennDOT services, such as car registrations or handicap placards
- Birth and death certificates
- Consumer complaints
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Any other state government issue

If you need assistance, please give us a call at 215-952-3378 to set up an appointment!