

State Representative

TIM BRIGGS

149th Legislative District



105-B East Wing • P.O. Box 202149 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2149(717) 705-7011
554 Shoemaker Road, Suite 149 • King of Prussia, PA 19406.....(610) 768-3135
www.facebook.com/RepTimBriggs • www.twitter.com/RepTimBriggs

Fighting for school funding, fairer budget

During the previous four years of total Republican control of Harrisburg, former Governor Tom Corbett signed budgets that drastically cut funding, especially for education. At the same time, Corbett and the Republican leadership of the legislature continued to give a free ride to the oil and gas industry by resisting a severance tax on gas drilling – something all other major natural-gas states already have and a measure that has wide, bipartisan support across the commonwealth.

Last November, the voters of Pennsylvania made it perfectly clear that they wanted to change this by electing Governor Tom Wolf by a wide margin. Unfortunately, the Republican majorities in the House and Senate chose to continue playing their political game by passing what some have called

“Corbett’s 5th budget” which they knew Governor Wolf would never sign. It included a small “increase” in school funding but not even close to restoring the Corbett cuts from previous years and made no mention of addressing the issue of rising property taxes for Pennsylvania



homeowners – something that was a central component to Governor Wolf’s budget proposal.

Furthermore, the Republican budget also would have created a **\$3 billion structural deficit** for next year, and would have pushed \$172 million in human services payments into next year as well.

This ultimately resulted in the governor issuing his veto while asking the Republicans to begin to negotiate a proposal that is responsive to the needs of all Pennsylvanians. I applauded the governor’s decision to veto. Over the last few months, I have been frustrated by the lack of urgency coming out of Harrisburg to finalize a budget, but I remain committed to working with him and my House colleagues to come up with a responsible budget that moves Pennsylvania forward. We need to start restoring the drastic cuts made to education and we need to pass a severance tax on gas drilling to do it.

As of this writing, the state has been operating without a budget for over two months. While the impasse is not good for anyone, I wanted to assure you that my office will be open and ready to serve you throughout the duration.

I encourage you to visit my website at www.pahouse.com/Briggs or follow me on social media at www.facebook.com/RepTimBriggs or on Twitter [@RepTimBriggs](https://twitter.com/RepTimBriggs) to stay up to date. As always, please do not hesitate to contact my district office at 610-768-3135 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this or any other state government issue.

Earlier this year, I stood with education advocates from the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association and urged my colleagues in the General Assembly to properly invest in our schools and students.

Fee for background checks waived for volunteers

As many of you know, legislation was enacted in 2014 to reform the way Pennsylvania protects our children and responds to child abuse. Under these new reforms, volunteers who work with, or come in routine contact with children, are now required to complete criminal history checks and child abuse clearances.

Requiring clearances for those who work with our children is a necessary reform to ensure the safety of our kids. We have always required these checks from school employees, day-care workers and those working with our kids in a professional capacity. We should require the same from

those volunteering.

However, many of my constituents contacted my office regarding the financial burden caused by having to obtain these checks. In June, the legislature was able to make several revisions to this law and worked with Governor Wolf to waive any state costs associated with the child abuse and criminal background checks conducted by Pennsylvania for our volunteers. This announcement allows us to protect our kids without imposing an unnecessary burden on those wishing to volunteer or work with them.

SPRING SHREDDING EVENT RECAP

This spring, I was pleased to continue hosting my free Community Document Shredding Events in Lower Merion at Harriton High School and in Upper Merion at Swedeland Park. These events are always a great way to help you safely destroy unwanted documents that contain personal information such as Social Security, credit card and bank account numbers. The events are always well attended, and we are able to shred and recycle thousands of pounds of documents.



I typically try to host a few of these events throughout the 149th District during the year, and I invite you to attend the next event this fall on **Saturday, October 10 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Upper Merion Area Middle School, 450 Keebler Road, King of Prussia.**

Common types of unwanted items that should be shredded include credit card statements, credit card applications, bank statements, canceled checks, income tax information, insurance records and retirement or pension fund information. This event is only for residential document shredding and, to best accommodate everyone, we suggest a three-bag limit.

CHOP KOP RIBBON CUTTING

I was proud to take part in the ribbon cutting for the new Children's Hospital of Philadelphia 135,000-square-foot Specialty Care & Ambulatory Surgery Center in King of Prussia. The new center offers expanded services and the ability for children to have same-day surgery close to home and can offer a multitude of services for up to 400 patients per day. The facility became fully operational in July.





“There Ought to Be a Law” essay contest winner & finalists

In June, I was proud to announce the winner and finalists for my sixth annual “There Ought to Be a Law” fifth-grade essay contest. Every year, I encourage local students to write an essay about a law that would improve their school, community or state. This year, I asked students to think of a law that would improve the environment. Over 400 essays were submitted on topics ranging from a ban on non-biodegradable plastic bags to the establishment of learning gardens in our schools.

As a state representative, it is my job to advocate for more than 60,000 residents of Montgomery County in Harrisburg, and it is important to remember that many of them are children. It is my hope that this contest shows these young men and women what can be accomplished with hard work and creativity.

This year’s winner was Sofia Walczak from Penn Wynne Elementary School. Her essay proposed a law that would better regulate the use of road salt during the winter. Sofia researched the harm excessive salt can do to the environment and argued that there are better options to treat roads during winter storms. Along with Sofia, there were 15 finalists throughout the district:

Gladwyne Elementary School

Eugenie Lucq
Daniel Novick
Alesandra Pollack

Penn Wynne Elementary School

Ry Miller
Janet Spingarn
Sofia Walczak, winner

Torah Academy
Chananya Halpern

Waldron Mercy Academy

Maggie Carr
Adjuke Heyburn
Sydney Parson
Chloe Saulnier

Upper Merion Area Middle School

Fiona Hogan
Sophie Jordan
Michael Loschiavo
Morgan Puglisi
Nathaly Rosas



In recognition of her winning essay, I invited Sofia Walczak and her family to Harrisburg for a tour of the state Capitol and official recognition on the floor of the House (top). I also attended the Upper Merion Area School Board meeting (middle) and Lower Merion Board of School Directors meeting (bottom) to announce and congratulate the students selected as the finalists in my sixth annual There Ought to be a Law contest.





Good Will Fire Company 100th anniversary

This spring, Bridgeport's Good Will Fire Company recognized its 100th anniversary with a great parade and post-party. Good Will was founded in 1914 and incorporated in 1915, and with terrific volunteers has been serving the people of Bridgeport and providing assistance to other area fire companies for the past century and I was happy to join in their celebration.



Valley Forge Military Academy Legislative Appointment Program

My office is now accepting applications for the Valley Forge Military Academy Legislative Appointment Initiative. This program allows each of Pennsylvania's 203 representatives, and 50 senators, to appoint a student from their district as the Commonwealth Scholar for guaranteed admission and a guaranteed partial scholarship to Valley Forge Military College.

The minimum academic requirements are a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) and a combined verbal and math SAT score of 1000 (or ACT score of 20).

You can apply anytime during the fall of your senior year until February 15 for admission the following fall.

The full amount awarded depends upon the academic achievement of the student selected. The minimum annual award is \$12,000 for a high school GPA of 2.5, rising to an annual award of \$17,000 for a high school GPA of 3.75.

Please contact my district office at 610-768-3135 if you are interested in participating in this great program!

Online voter registration now available



There is now another option available for you to have your voice heard in the elections.

Gov. Tom Wolf and Secretary of State Pedro Cortes launched a website to make it easier for you to register to vote. The new website, which is available in English or Spanish, can be accessed at <http://register.votespa.com> or from my website.

The site allows you to make updates to your voter record, such as change of name, address or party affiliation. You can also request assistance at a polling place.

This online system is more secure because the form will be transmitted directly to the proper county voter registration office for processing, compared to the traditional paper application containing personal information that might pass through several hands before you are officially registered.

The site is directly linked to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Motor Voter systems, so if you have a driver's license or PennDOT ID card, your signature on file can immediately be linked to your voter record.

If you do not have a driver's license or ID card, you can print, sign and mail the completed online application to your county voter registration office. If you are unable to print the application, you may request the Department of State mail you a signature card to complete and send back.

LEGISLATION

Over the spring and summer, I have been working on several pieces of legislation:

Prohibiting the carrying of firearms in casinos

Last year, the Office of the Attorney General conducted a review of the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act and determined the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board no longer had the authority to limit the possession of firearms in a licensed casino facility and, on April 16, 2015, the board convened and repealed its firearm regulations. I have introduced legislation (H.B. 1236) that would reverse that move and reinstate the prohibition of carrying firearms into Pennsylvania casinos.

Updating the Aquatic Health Code

I have been working on legislation aimed at improving the safety of our public pools and swimming areas. Existing regulations in Pennsylvania have not been substantively updated since the 1970s. My legislation amends the Public Bathing Law to require the Department of Health to periodically update regulations to be consistent with the Model Aquatic Health Code with respect to safety, preventive maintenance, health hazards, and training. It is my hope that this will encourage the department and public swimming places throughout the Commonwealth to implement current and future best practices to ensure the safety of all patrons.

Green cleaning in schools

This legislation would require school districts to establish policies for the procurement and use of green product cleaning supplies in schools. Many traditional cleaning products contain chemicals that can contribute to poor indoor air quality, trigger asthma and other respiratory illnesses, and contribute to long-term health problems. Additionally, many school districts already have saved money by replacing ready-to-use conventional cleaning products with highly concentrated green cleaners that are just as effective.

Ban on using exotic animals for captive hunting

Captive hunting – also known as “canned hunts” – involves the killing of animals that have been trapped within man-made enclosures. In high demand for these hunts are exotic, non-native animals that may come from breeders, animal dealers, circuses, or zoos. My legislation would prohibit any facility that harbors these types of animals to knowingly permit their use in captive hunting.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

The deadline for applying for a rebate on your 2014 rent or property tax is **December 31**. The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded. My office is able to provide help answering any questions you might have about the program, or assistance completing and submitting the necessary form.

LIHEAP Opening Soon

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps low-income families pay their heating bills. LIHEAP is a grant that offers assistance in the form of a cash grant, sent directly to the utility company, or a crisis grant for households in immediate danger of being without heat. Although the application period for this year has not been announced yet, the program typically runs November 1 – March 31. Please contact my office if you have any questions regarding this program.





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Inside

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Working for you

My office assists thousands of constituents just like you with problems, questions and concerns about state-related issues. I could not do it without the help of a great staff who are always ready to serve you. At my district office, you can obtain a variety of informational booklets, brochures and other publications on state programs; receive help completing state forms; and get help solving a problem regarding a state law, program or service.

The office is located at 554 Shoemaker Road in King of Prussia, and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. To be as open and accessible as possible, we also have satellite offices at locations that might be more convenient for you. Free notary service is also available at all offices.

Problem-solving and constituent service is a lot of what we do, but I am also just as committed to be available to discuss legislative issues and concerns about our state. I have been excited to host a number of community events including town halls, community roundtables, and my Breakfast with Briggs meetings. This helps me to stay in touch with you and hear what's on your mind. I look forward to seeing you around the district.



My office can help!

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program
 Free Notary Service
 PennDOT Driver Services

Any state-related service or program!

Save the Date!

These events are always a success and I am very happy to provide my constituents with this service. The shredding event is only for residential document shredding and, to best accommodate everyone, we suggest a three-bag limit.



FREE Community Document Shredding and Prescription Drug Drop-off Event

Saturday, October 10

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

UPPER MERION MIDDLE SCHOOL

450 KEEBLER ROAD

KING OF PRUSSIA, PA 19406

