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State Representative

TIM BRIGGS

149th Legislative District



302 Main Capitol • 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



Dear Neighbor,

It's an honor and a privilege to serve as state representative for all of the people of the 149th Legislative District.

I take seriously the responsibility of being a public servant and representing your voice. Our democratic process depends on the public's trust. No one is perfect, but I will continue to strive to live up to the higher standards expected of elected officials.

I'm proud to continue fighting for progressive values in Harrisburg, and I'm honored to have been named to leadership positions that better position me to work for change.

This legislative session, I was named Democratic Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, which reviews legislation related to such important matters as criminal justice reform, gun safety and law enforcement.

I was also appointed to serve on the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's (PASSHE) Board of Governors. As a proud graduate of a State System school, I'm committed to ensuring Pennsylvania students have access to quality higher education at a reasonable cost.

In this newsletter, you'll find more information on how I'm working to put your needs first in Harrisburg. You can also keep up by following me on social media, at [Facebook.com/RepTimBriggs](https://www.facebook.com/RepTimBriggs) or on Twitter, [@RepTimBriggs](https://twitter.com/RepTimBriggs).

Constituent service is my top priority. My staff and I are always ready to help you with any state-related issue. Feel free to stop by my district office at 554 Shoemaker Road, Suite 149, in King of Prussia, or call us at 610-768-3135.

Sincerely,

Higher Education: Working for affordability

I understand the importance of ensuring that Pennsylvania students have access to quality higher education that doesn't leave them drowning in debt for years to come.

As a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's Board of Governors, I'm fighting for reforms that put students first, and I'm pleased that the board took one such step in July, when we voted to freeze in-state tuition. Tuition has more than doubled since the last freeze in 1998-99.

But there's more work to do.

I graduated from West Chester University in 1992. Around that time, Pennsylvania was picking up 53% of the cost of a student's education at a State System school. Today, state support covers just 27% of that cost.

We have to do more to reduce the burden on our students and put pressure on the legislature to support the state system – the schools that we own.

Along with Rep. James Roebuck, I introduced legislation to look at ways to improve access to higher education and job training in the state – including the charge to develop a higher education funding formula. Our language became part of Act 70 of 2019, establishing the 19-member Higher Education Funding Commission.

Working to protect our children's health

The U.S. Surgeon General has declared e-cigarette use among youth an epidemic, and the Pennsylvania Health Department has warned of the potential health effects.

So I'm pleased that the House passed H.B. 97 to make it illegal to sell vaping products to minors. The bill, which I co-sponsored, is now with the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I've also co-sponsored H.B. 1823, which would raise the legal age to purchase tobacco, e-cigarette and similar products to 21, with consideration for members of the armed forces.

Medical experts have warned that the high doses of nicotine available in many of these products negatively affect the developing adolescent brain, and the long-term effects of inhaling vaporized chemicals is unknown.

I'll continue to fight for ways we can protect our children's health.

CPR skills for students

In June, Governor Wolf signed into law Act 7 to enhance CPR training for high school students. This law requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide curriculum to schools to teach hands-on CPR, a no-breath, compression-only technique recommended by the American Heart Association for sudden cardiac arrests. The curriculum must also include instruction on the use of automatic external defibrillators.

These are life-saving skills for our young people, and I was pleased to support this legislation.



Fighting for quality education for all students

I have consistently been a strong advocate for our children and especially their education. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania's charter school law has earned a reputation as one of the worst in the nation, and it's time we took steps to fix it.

Every one of our children deserves a quality education, and we should hold charter and cyber charter schools to the same standards as our traditional public schools. There are a few good examples of charter schools that work, but too many that don't.

Each year during the state budget process, we fight to invest more in our public schools, but the unfair system of funding charters drains our school districts. We have to work to reform our system to ensure our taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely and make sure all students are receiving the education they need to succeed.

I was pleased to see Governor Wolf take executive action this summer to overhaul charter regulations, and I hope to see the legislature heed his call for more action.



2019 'There Ought To Be A Law' contest winners

I am passionate about getting our children interested in government early. So for 10 years, I've been holding an annual essay contest for fifth-grade students, called "There Ought To Be A Law."

Students are invited to write an essay about a law that would improve their school, community or state. This year's contest had an environmental theme.

The contest is a great way to spark students' interest in the legislative process and to get them thinking about how they can improve our communities.

This year's winners were:

Jake Prendergast, Upper Merion Area Middle School. Jake wrote about composting. He proposed that every house should include a compost bin to increase recycling and improve the environment.

Lucy Yan, Penn Valley Elementary School. Lucy wrote about making junk mail more eco-friendly. She proposed that companies sending junk mail must have it scanned by the U.S. Postal Service and emailed to reduce wasteful paper.

In addition to the winners, we had 15 finalists:

Jan Bach
Upper Merion Area Middle School

Ashimaa Behl
Upper Merion Area Middle School

Eesha Bosula
Upper Merion Area Middle School

Ava Canale
Upper Merion Area Middle School

Rosalind Gorn
Upper Merion Area Middle School

Ethan Heyward
Penn Wynne Elementary

John Hiester
Waldron Mercy Academy

Maham Khan
Upper Merion Area Middle School

Parker Kleinman
Penn Wynne Elementary

Clara Loiter
Gladwyne Elementary



Haneen Maarouf
Penn Wynne Elementary

Chloe Orbach
Upper Merion Area Middle School

Valerie Saul
Gladwyne Elementary

Rachel Schneider
Caskey Torah Academy

Allison Tan
Penn Valley Elementary

Thanks to the more than 500 students who participated and the teachers and parents who encouraged them!

Voting Access: Apply for an absentee ballot online



We need to make voting more accessible in Pennsylvania – and I'm happy to share a new step in that direction.

You can now apply online for an absentee ballot. A secure, mobile-friendly site was launched in September at votespa.com/ApplyAbsentee. Voters who apply online will receive their absentee ballot in the mail, and voters must still mail or hand-deliver their voted absentee ballots to their county elections office.

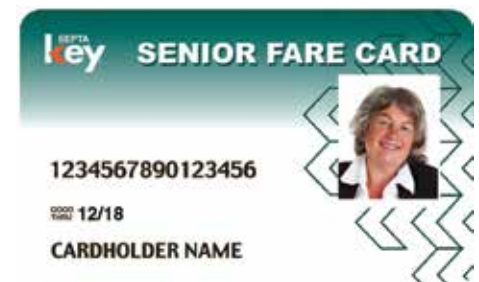
I'm working with my colleagues on a package of legislation to make voting easier, including measures that would make it easier to register to vote and cast your ballot.

Please keep these important dates in mind.

Oct. 29: Deadline to apply for an absentee ballot for the Nov. 5 election

Nov. 1: Deadline to turn in your voted absentee ballot for the Nov. 5 election.

Find your polling place and more information at votespa.com.



Need a SEPTA Key Senior ID?

Seniors 65 or older can ride SEPTA for free in Pennsylvania – all you need is a SEPTA Key Senior ID card.

My staff can help you apply for your card! Stop by with your driver's license or state ID, and we'll help you sign up. You can also call my office at 610-768-3135 with any questions.

Preserving our future: Climate change and our environment



It's time to take steps to preserve our environment for the generations to come after us – before it's too late.

We can all play a role in addressing the environmental harms caused by our “throwaway” society by changing our own habits, but the state must make changes, too.

I've spearheaded a package of legislation that would address issues created by disposables, including single-use plastics such as straws and plastic bags, and other issues such as e-recycling.

I've introduced H.B. 627 to prohibit food establishments from using polystyrene, commonly known as Styrofoam, takeout containers. Polystyrene can take hundreds of years to decompose, clogging our waterways in the meantime.

While I've been working on addressing our broken recycling laws, our climate must be our top priority. I'm supporting efforts to make Pennsylvania a leader when it comes to climate change – a crisis we cannot ignore.

I am an active member of the legislature's Climate Caucus and have co-sponsored legislation to transition Pennsylvania to 100% renewable energy by 2050. Moving to clean energy sources will help us protect our air and water – as well as create economic opportunity and sustainable jobs.



Grants for our community



I'm always pleased to be able to help bring grant money to our community! My priorities are consistent with improving our quality of life as well as making investments in good jobs for the future.

This year, I have been able to support funding our fire and emergency responders through the Office of the State Fire

Commissioner, Fire Company, Emergency Medical Services Company Grant program and Temple Brith Achim in King of Prussia, which was awarded \$63,584 for security improvements through the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

Millions of dollars have been awarded in funding for our parks, trail projects and various other recreational opportunities, as well as significant funding through the Commonwealth Financing Authority toward projects to assist the Bridgeport Business Park Remediation Project and the proposed Discovery Labs, an exciting life science mecca being proposed in Upper Merion.

Keystone Historic Preservation grants were awarded to help with efforts to preserve Ashbridge House and the John Frederick Hartranft plot in Historic Montgomery Cemetery. Additional funding will help our schools through a school safety grant for Norristown Area School District and a grant to help Montgomery County Community College with renovations to the South Hall Building.

I'm always fighting for investments to help move our community forward.

In the winter I was honored to host Governor Tom Wolf to tour parts of the 149th Legislative District. It was a great way to showcase the many wonderful things that make our community one of the best in the commonwealth. I always am committed to working with leaders to best represent our community.



Working for you: I was recently honored to be recognized with leadership awards by both the King of Prussia District as well as the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Authority! I'm proud to be recognized for working on your behalf.

Criminal Justice: Working to protect Pennsylvanians

This session, I was honored to be named Democratic Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, which reviews all legislation related to civil and criminal court systems, law enforcement and corrections. The committee's work includes such important topics as gun safety and criminal justice reform, and I'm proud to be able to push for action on some of the greatest challenges facing our state.

Criminal justice reform

In June, one year after the Clean Slate Act was signed, the automatic sealing of some criminal records began. The law aims to help individuals who have paid their debt to society get a second chance and put their lives back on track.

The Clean Slate Act provides for automatic sealing of records for:

- Non-violent misdemeanor convictions after a person has remained crime-free for 10 years
- Non-conviction records

In late September, I voted against bills before the Judiciary Committee that would take us in the wrong direction – reinstating mandatory minimums for certain offenses. There's evidence that mandatory minimum sentences simply don't work; they cost us more money to keep people in jail longer.

What would help our communities is sentencing and probation reform. Several of my colleagues have proposed legislation, in the Judiciary Committee now, aimed at reforming our probation and parole system to reduce recidivism, lessen the work on counties and help formerly incarcerated individuals avoid technical pitfalls that keep them trapped in the system.

I also support Governor Wolf's push for the Justice Reinvestment Initiative 2, which would address the high costs of incarceration in Pennsylvania, strengthen support for county probation programs and fix inadequate sentencing guidelines.

Helping law enforcement combat gun violence

Over the summer, I worked on a bipartisan bill, H.B. 1614, to make sure law enforcement agencies and the state Attorney General's Office continue working together in joint task forces if their departments approve.

A Supreme Court decision had threatened to make that cooperation difficult and even invalidate previous law enforcement work. Our bill, which was signed into law as Act 58, also provided a two-year pilot program that would give the Office of the Attorney General concurrent jurisdiction in Philadelphia to prosecute certain crimes related to illegal guns. It will be my goal to expand this concurrent jurisdiction statewide.

It was refreshing to work together and keep our communities safe.



Gun safety reform legislation

I hosted a policy committee hearing in September on the issue of gun safety, namely several commonsense bills that Governor Wolf has called for action on. We discussed H.B. 525, my bill to require the safe storage of firearms in homes where children may be present; H.B. 673, to require universal background checks; and H.B. 1288, to require the reporting of lost or stolen firearms.

Unfortunately, Rep. Kauffman announced in late September that he would call up no more gun safety bills this session. Thousands of Pennsylvanians die each year from gun violence, and we have to do something about it. I'll do whatever I can to force votes on these commonsense bills that will save lives.

Puppy mill legislation

In August, I hosted the Humane Society and other advocates and lawmakers in King of Prussia for a rally to support Victoria's Law – a measure that could help us end the sale of animals from cruel puppy mills. Senate Bill 44 would prohibit the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores throughout Pennsylvania unless they were sourced from shelters and rescues.

Victims' rights legislation

In July, I stood with Governor Wolf as he signed six bills to expand protections and support for crime victims – children, victims who have intellectual disabilities, victims of sexual violence, and more. It's critical that we work to support victims as they seek justice.



The General Assembly also passed a bill known as Marsy's Law – a proposal to add a victims' bill of rights to the Pennsylvania Constitution. The measure passed the House and Senate during two consecutive sessions and will be put before voters on the ballot in November.



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 Harrisburg, PA 17120-2149

 www.facebook.com/RepTimBriggs

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Free Shredding Event

Saturday, October 26
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Upper Merion Area Middle School
 450 Keebler Road
 King of Prussia

Bring any old papers containing confidential or personal information for shredding on site! Please limit to three boxes or bags per person.

Examples of documents that should be shredded include canceled or unused checks, tax or bank records, and papers that include Social Security, credit card and bank account numbers.

My Office Can Help You With:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Health and Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions
- Consumer complaints
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications

Notary services

Free notary services are available for constituents at my district office! Appointments are recommended. Call 610-768-3135.

- Property Tax/Rent Rebate questions
 - Questions about the state lottery
 - PACE prescription discount cards for senior citizens
 - Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
 - Liquor Control Board concerns
 - Information about federal, state and local government agencies
- Any issue with state government!***