



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# JOE WEBSTER

SERVING THE 150TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY



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## The Ongoing Fight Against a Worldwide Pandemic

In January 2020, we first began learning about a troubling new virus that had begun to spread across parts of the world.

According to national leaders at the time, the novel coronavirus was not going to impact our country in a significant way, and the American public had nothing to worry about.

Now, as we enter September – and the start of a new school year – our national fight against this worldwide pandemic caused by COVID-19 continues.

By Aug. 18, the number of positive cases in the United States neared 5.5 million, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Deaths caused by the virus climbed to nearly 170,000. In Pennsylvania, we have recorded more than 125,000 positive cases with about 7,500 deaths attributed to COVID-19.

The United States, with only 4% of the world’s population, accounts for more than 25% of total coronavirus cases globally and the highest death count of any industrialized nation.

The federal response – specifically, the lack of assumed responsibility mixed with a wildly uncoordinated plan to combat and control the virus – has been disastrous and far beneath the standards established by previous administrations of either political party.

It is far too late for us to prevent the immeasurable loss already endured, but it is not too late to truly mitigate the virus’ spread, restore our national dignity, recover our

economy and end this pandemic once and for all.

To do so, we must be united and unwavering in our response. Pathogens like the novel coronavirus are indiscriminate in whom they affect. Consequently, it is our collective responsibility



**Wear your mask and do your part to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19!**

to keep ourselves and our community safe. That means wearing a mask when in public, avoiding large crowds, regularly washing our hands and staying home when sick.

Nationally, our COVID-19 testing capabilities and contact tracing efforts need to improve, as does our adherence to isolation and quarantining when those actions are required. Delayed test results stemming from influxes of the virus in other parts of the country have hampered our ability to contain and trace the virus when it spreads through our communities here in PA.

Using the available data, we also need specialized containment efforts for regions experiencing spikes in the spread of the virus. Intelligent, science-based, localized containment, combined with a national infrastructure equipped to deliver immediate test results would work best to prevent ongoing surges while also allowing those areas that have controlled the spread successfully to maintain safe reopening courses of action.

In our state legislature, we will continue to seek solutions for individuals, families and businesses affected by a virus that has impacted communities across the state indiscriminately. We need to advocate for bills that directly address the impacts of the virus and the recovery that we are undertaking to get our commonwealth back on its feet.

Ultimately, we require a sound nationwide strategy, with clear, consistent messaging. The sooner we achieve this commonsense and feasible goal, the closer we will be to seeing our way through to the other side of this pandemic.

### Protect Yourself from COVID-19

 Wear a mask whenever you leave home	 Continue to keep your social distance	 Wash hands often, for 20 seconds each time
 Frequently wipe down high-touch surfaces	 Remember: All activities out of the home carry some risk	 Avoid hanging out in large groups

# IN PURSUIT OF EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

## A Step in the Right Direction

During a worldwide pandemic, the May 25 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody sparked sustained national protests calling out the systemic racism that exists throughout our country. In amplifying calls for policing reform to address unjust acts of violence against American citizens, activists have striven to create long-lasting substantive change and keep this worthwhile subject at the attention of legislators.

In Montgomery County, this took the form of the Collegeville George Floyd Memorial Service, the student-led Eagleville protests and the women-led Norristown courthouse protests. Their efforts, spanning the length of the summer, delivered results.

On June 8, members of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus took over the House floor in the state Capitol with a call for action on several reform bills that had languished in the House Judiciary Committee for far too long.

This act of courage ultimately led to swift and unanimous passage of House Bills 1841 and 1910, which were recently signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf. These social justice reform bills, which I proudly co-sponsored, ensure thorough background checks for law enforcement applicants, establish an electronic database containing separation records of law enforcement officers to weed out those who have been removed from positions for misconduct and other reasons, require mental health evaluations with a focus on PTSD of law enforcement officers, and require training for police officers on trauma-informed care, use of deadly force, de-escalation, implicit bias and other key issues, procedures and techniques.

The people of our commonwealth deserve action, not excuses. Activists, residents and community leaders have called for us to address systemic injustice in our society as it impacts many of our neighbors. This extends beyond policing reform and applies in any situation in which Americans, specifically Americans of color, are discriminately impacted by policy and legislation, intentional or not. There is no time for diversion and deliberate



## POLICE REFORM PROPOSALS

### REFORMS THAT REQUIRE STATE LEGISLATION

- ✓ Require law enforcement officers to be evaluated for PTSD after a lethal use-of-force incident.
- ✓ Create database to track officer disciplinary actions that law enforcement agencies can search to find potential red flags before hiring an officer that's separated from another law enforcement agency.
- ✓ Remove consent as a defense to sexual assault that occurs while in police custody.

SIGNED INTO LAW JULY 14, 2020

misinformation. It is time to recognize Black Lives Matter in all things, so all of Pennsylvania can move forward.

The calls for social justice are being heard, although we have a long way to go. I stand in unity with those seeking positive change, and I promise to continue doing everything I can do to help advance necessary legislation and promote equality and justice in Harrisburg.

# HELP IS AVAILABLE

## Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation Program Progression

### UNDERSTANDING THE UC PROGRAMS & HOW TO GET BENEFITS



## PUA and additional UC

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program is available for self-employed workers, independent contractors, gig workers and workers impacted by COVID-19 but not eligible for regular unemployment compensation.

The PA Department of Labor & Industry also launched the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program to provide an additional 13 weeks of benefits to people who exhaust their regular unemployment compensation. If you have an open UC claim but

exhausted all your benefits, the 13 additional weeks will automatically be added to your existing claim.

To apply for unemployment compensation or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, reach out to my office for help or visit [www.uc.pa.gov](http://www.uc.pa.gov).

## LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program



The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Recovery Crisis Program helps Pennsylvanians during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The Department of Human Services is working with utility companies and deliverable fuel vendors to help Pennsylvanians at risk of losing access to electric, natural gas or deliverable fuels such as oil; pay utility bills; and maintain access to home energy services.

### LIHEAP Recovery Crisis benefits may be available if a household:

- Has its main or secondary energy source completely shut off.
- Is notified that their utility service will be shut off in the next 60 days.
- Has broken energy equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced.
- Is in danger of being without fuel in 15 days or less.
- Owes funds to a utility provider that would constitute a service termination if not for the Public Utility Commission's moratorium on terminations.

Find instructions and apply on COMPASS:  
[www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).

Eligibility guidelines are the same as those used during the 2019-20 LIHEAP season. More Info: [bit.ly/2TjJzht](https://bit.ly/2TjJzht).

## Property Tax/Rent Rebates Arriving Early

This spring, Governor Tom Wolf and Treasurer Joe Torsella announced that many older homeowners, renters and people with disabilities could begin receiving early rebates through the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. The governor signed House Bill 1076 to authorize the early distribution.

It was a commonsense solution to give older and vulnerable residents their rebates earlier than normal, as the COVID-19 pandemic forced the need for quicker financial support.

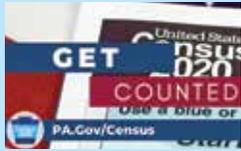
However, for those who have not yet applied for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, there is still time. The deadline to submit applications, delayed by the coronavirus, is now Dec. 31, 2020.

For eligible applicants who haven't yet filed their application, the Department of Revenue is available to help. Claimants are encouraged to call 1-888-222-9190 for guidance. Claim forms and related information are available by visiting [www.revenue.pa.gov](http://www.revenue.pa.gov) and searching "Property Tax Rent Rebate Forms."

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older; widows and widowers 50 or older; and people with disabilities 18 or 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.

# WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

## Make Sure You're Counted!



Many of you probably already received a postcard from my office detailing the importance of filling out the U.S. Census. Consider this another reminder of how crucial it is to make sure you're counted.

The process is safe. Your answers are secure. And the funding that our communities depend on is determined by everyone's participation.

It was announced in early August that the U.S. Census Bureau is ending all counting efforts for the 2020 census on Sept. 30, a month earlier than previously scheduled.

While roughly four of 10 households nationwide have yet to be counted, this adjusted deadline makes it even more critical to take a few short minutes and fill out your census.

## Upcoming Events

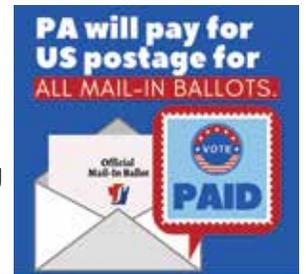
### Policy Committee Hearing Date/time: TBA

The Everyday Environmentalist: A problem like climate change can seem so large that it is paralyzing. This hearing will unfreeze that mentality by introducing and discussing solutions that allow residents and businesses alike to contribute to a more efficient and effective environmental policy approach. Green high-efficiency building and retrofitting, small-scale renewable energy projects like solar roofs, urban planning approaches that empower walking and cycling, and even back-to-basics campaigns like tree planting and trash pickups can have substantial effects, and can be empowered by state-level policy and grant programs.

Please check our website – [www.RepJoeWebster.com](http://www.RepJoeWebster.com) – for updates on this policy committee hearing and other upcoming events.

## What You Need to Know About Voting

There continues to be a lot of misinformation being spread – including from the White House – about the safety of mail-in voting. These widespread conspiracy theories about fraud are not only provably wrong, but they're especially dangerous during a worldwide pandemic. We should be working together to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and, when it comes to voting, nothing could be safer than voting from the comfort of your own home.



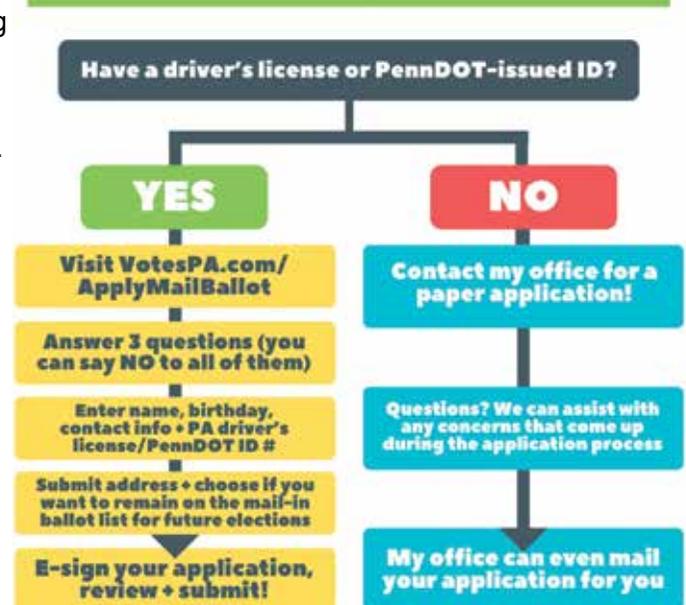
**Here's what you need to know about voting in PA ahead of the Nov. 3 general election, keeping in mind that you should act as soon as you feel you're able to do so to ensure your vote is counted:**

- You can register online today to vote in the Nov. 3 election at [register.votesPA.com](http://register.votesPA.com) if you're not already registered. The deadline to register is Oct. 19, but register as soon as you're able! You can check your registration status at [votespa.com/status](http://votespa.com/status).
- You can apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot until 5 p.m. the Tuesday before the election (Oct. 27), and as of now **your voted ballot must be returned by 8 p.m. Election Day** (Nov. 3). Any registered voter is eligible for a mail-in ballot.
- Apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot online at [VotesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot](http://VotesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot). To do so, you must have a valid PA driver's license or photo I.D. from PennDOT. There are also options to apply for a mail-in ballot by mail or in person. Once you've filled out your mail-in or absentee ballot, you can send it via mail – PA recently announced it is covering postage costs – or you can drop it off at your county election office by 8 p.m. the day of the election.
- Because of U.S. Postal Service backlogs caused in part by cost-cutting efforts enforced by the Trump administration, it is recommended you request your ballot at least 15 days before Election Day and mail your completed ballot at least one week before the due date.

■ If you are planning to vote in person on Nov. 3, you can find your polling place at <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx>.

■ For national information on voting, visit [vote.org](http://vote.org). For information from the state, visit [votesPA.com](http://votesPA.com). And, for more localized information, visit [montcopa.org/753/Voter-Services](http://montcopa.org/753/Voter-Services).

### APPLYING FOR A MAIL-IN BALLOT



# OUT & ABOUT FOR THE 150TH

## What's Joe been up to this summer?



I proudly stood with county and statewide leaders like Reps. Stephen Kinsey (left) and Margo Davidson (right) to condemn hatred in this commonwealth.



With my wife, Laura, as we paid tribute to George Floyd during a memorial service in Collegeville.



Working for you from the State Capitol this summer!



Discussing legislation during a meeting in Harrisburg this summer.



Walking with friend and colleague Rep. Matt Bradford during a Black Lives Matter protest in Eagleville.



Showing off our masks with friend and colleague Rep. Chris Rabb.



Chatting up a colleague on the House floor.



Protestors rallied in Norristown in support of Black Lives Matter and creating substantive change for our community.



Helping to assemble and distribute meals to families with children in need during our "Community Cares" day this summer!



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## FALL 2020 HOUSE REPORT

### Stay in touch!

**Want to learn more about what is happening in our district and in Harrisburg? Sign up for my email!**

You can receive my regular email updates by visiting my PA House page: [www.RepJoeWebster.com](http://www.RepJoeWebster.com) then scroll down to “Stay Informed” and sign up!

You can also follow me on Facebook ([facebook.com/RepJoeWebster](https://www.facebook.com/RepJoeWebster)) and on Twitter ([twitter.com/RepJoeWebster](https://twitter.com/RepJoeWebster)).

For the latest and best information about COVID-19, rely on the CDC ([cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)), the PA Health Department ([health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus)) and the Montgomery County Office of Public Health ([montcopa.org/covid-19](https://www.montcopa.org/covid-19)).