



State Representative **MATT BRADFORD**

SERVING MONTGOMERY COUNTY

REPRESENTING THE 70TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

FALL 2021

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Dear Neighbor,

The past year and a half has been incredibly challenging, and I appreciate our community's efforts to pull together in order to get through these unprecedented times.

In Montgomery County, where we were hit first and hard by COVID-19, we made enormous sacrifices to help slow the spread of the virus. The vaccine helped us make progress, and we saw many mitigation measures lifted in Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, the emergence of the Delta variant of the virus has caused case numbers to trend back in the wrong direction. Once again, we must work together – getting vaccinated and following recommended guidance – to keep each other safe and healthy.

I've also been working in Harrisburg to ensure Pennsylvania sees an economic recovery. As Democratic chairman of



the House Appropriations Committee, I am acutely aware of the devastating impact of the pandemic on local businesses and families, and I've fought for a budget that would create a brighter future for all Pennsylvanians.

In this newsletter, you will find updates from Harrisburg and our community, as well as helpful

resources. My staff and I are ready to assist you with any state-related questions or issues.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you in Harrisburg.

Warmest regards,

State Budget: Fighting for a More Equitable Pennsylvania

This year's state budget process presented the legislature with a tremendous opportunity to create a brighter future for Pennsylvania.

With \$7 billion in federal American Rescue Plan funds and \$3 billion in above-expected state revenues, we were given the unprecedented chance to not only deliver meaningful relief from the COVID-19 pandemic but make historic changes to the way we fund public education in Pennsylvania.

Fairly and adequately funding our K-12 schools is critical to ensuring that all students have access to a quality education, no matter where they live.

For too long, too many districts have suffered due to chronic underfunding by the state and an overreliance on property taxes, which has created inequities in how children are educated and served as a barrier to economic development in these communities. Growing our economy

depends on our ability to revitalize neighborhoods and communities. I supported efforts to invest \$1.3 billion to increase public education funding and to send all basic education funding through Pennsylvania's fair funding formula. While the budget ultimately approved does not realize full funding, it does provide a modest increase in school funding, including a new effort to direct funds to the communities that need more help.

House and Senate Democrats also introduced similar plans for spending the \$7 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funds, looking to address immediate and future needs, through investments in areas like affordable child care and housing as well as infrastructure, broadband access and clean energy.

There is work left to do in Harrisburg, and I will be there continuing to fight for a more equitable Pennsylvania and for putting our communities' needs first.



Updates on Lafayette Street

Montgomery County has reported that the third phase of the Lafayette Street Extension Project was completed in late 2020. This is the portion between Barbadoes Street and Ford Street, which was widened and rebuilt, and includes a relocated Schuylkill River Trail and a new mid-block crossing in front of the SEPTA Norristown Transportation Center.

The next phase is the \$66 million Lafayette Street interchange to be built by the Pennsylvania Turnpike

Commission. After being delayed by the pandemic, the interchange project design is underway and a public meeting is anticipated to take place in early 2022.

Montgomery County's Ridge Pike Bridge replacement project is moving along concurrently and must be completed before the interchange project construction starts. Construction is anticipated on the Lafayette Street interchange project in 2025.

Work to construct the new Barbadoes Street Connector roadway between Lafayette Street and Washington Street began June 28, according to PennDOT. The Schuylkill River Trail remains open between Lafayette Street and Washington Street during construction, with the use of a slight detour. Work on the Barbadoes Street Connector is expected to finish in late 2021.

More information can be found at www.lafayettestreetproject.com.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate program – apply online!

Older and disabled Pennsylvanians can apply for a rebate on property tax or rent paid in 2020. The program deadline has been extended to December 31.

Eligible Pennsylvanians can file online at mypath.pa.gov. The online tool has helpful calculators and direct deposit options.

The program is open to Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities age 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.

Visit www.revenue.pa.gov/ptrr for more details, or call my office for help with your application.



Emergency Rent and Utility Assistance

Rent and utility help is available for qualifying Montgomery County residents.

The Rent and Utility Relief Program, administered by Your Way Home, allows eligible households to receive up to 12 months of assistance for rent and utility bills dating back to March 13, 2020. Assistance can be for past due rent and/or utility payments or future rent payments, and funding for security deposits, first and/or last month rent are also eligible.

Montgomery County residents who need assistance can call 2-1-1 or text their ZIP code to 898-211.

Information on eligibility and how to apply is available at www.yourwayhome.org/eruc.



Assistance with Rent or Utility Payments
for households impacted by COVID-19

See if you qualify and learn how to apply.



Find out if the state has your money!

The Pennsylvania Treasury has close to \$3.8 billion in unclaimed property that needs to be returned to rightful owners.

Unclaimed property is any financial asset that has been left with a bank, insurance company, or business or organization without any activity for five years. It can include closed bank accounts, uncashed checks, lost stocks and bonds, and more.

Anyone can search the state database at www.patreasury.gov for free to find out if there is unclaimed property in his or her name. If you need assistance, my office can help you with the search and claims process.

Real ID enforcement extended to 2023

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has extended the enforcement date for Real ID to May 3, 2023, in response to COVID-19.

Starting May 3, 2023, Pennsylvanians will need a Real ID-compliant driver's license, photo ID card, or another form of federally acceptable identification (such as a valid passport or military ID) to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a federal building or military installation that requires ID.

No one is required to get a Real ID. To learn more about whether you should get one, visit www.penndot.gov/REALID.

Veterans Discount ID Card Event

Montgomery County veterans are invited to my district office on Nov. 5 to get their Veterans Discount ID Card!

The Veterans Discount ID Card, provided through Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds Jeanne Sorg, allows veterans who live in Montgomery County to receive discounts for goods and services in

appreciation for their service to our country.

Veterans can stop by my office from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 5, for help obtaining their card. Veterans should bring their DD214 discharge document and a photo ID, such as a driver's license.

Please call my office with any questions.

SEPTA Key Senior Card Assistance

As you may know, my office can help seniors apply for a SEPTA Key Senior Card!

Seniors 65 and older with a valid ID ride free at all times on Transit Routes and Regional Rail in Pennsylvania.

To apply for your SEPTA Key Senior Card, please contact my office for help with the application process. SEPTA will then process the application and mail the card to the applicant.

Hurricane Ida Recovery Resources

Resources are available for anyone impacted by Hurricane Ida, which hit our region in early September.

Federal assistance has been made available for individuals and businesses in Montgomery County.

The county has shared detailed instructions on how to apply for assistance, plus information on housing, transportation and other resources, at www.montcopa.org/ida. Feel free to reach out to my office if you need further assistance.



I received my COVID-19 vaccine from Skippack Pharmacy in April!



Along with Rep. Joe Webster, I visited a COVID-19 vaccine clinic organized by Skippack Pharmacy in March. Clinics like this are integral in helping eligible Montgomery County residents get vaccinated as seamlessly as possible, especially seniors. I am grateful to the health care workers and volunteers who have helped make the process work.

Around the Community



Thank you to the Elmwood Park Zoo for hosting and to all who came out to enjoy our Family Fair event in September.



I recently joined state Sens. Steve Santarsiero and Vince Hughes on a tour of the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center in Bucks County to learn more about the innovative research going on at the entrepreneurial hub and talk about how we can grow Pennsylvania's vibrant biotechnology industry.



I had the pleasure of welcoming the family of Hank Cisco to the Capitol to recognize his inspiring life and present them with a House Condolence Resolution. Hank was affectionately known as the "ambassador" of Norristown and is greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.



I'm happy to support the Marshals Baseball/ Norriton Connie Mack Baseball League! Thanks to Coach Carmen Ronca, president of the league, for stopping by with a plaque.



Investments in infrastructure can be transformational for communities, and I was glad to tour parts of Montgomery County with Congresswoman Madeleine Dean and county leaders in May to discuss opportunities for economic development.



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INVESTMENTS *in Our Community*



Norristown Borough

\$1,000,000 – Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant for mixed use redevelopment at Main and DeKalb streets.

\$202,500 – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources funds for rehabilitation of Riverfront Park.

\$300,000 – Blight Remediation Program funding for remediation of fifteen properties that present danger to the community.

East Norriton Township

\$203,352 – Growing Greener grant for the Kimberly Drive Basin Retrofit project, retrofitting the basin so that less water discharges into the East Norriton sewer system.

\$454,437 – Multimodal Transportation grant to install ADA curb ramps at intersections in the township.

Worcester Township

\$326,200 – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Recreation and Conservation grant program funds for the development of the Zacharias Creek Trail.

Plymouth Township

\$250,000 – Greenways, Trails and Recreation grant for East Plymouth Valley Park improvements.