

THE ROZZI

Report

From State Representative
MARK ROZZI
126th Legislative District

Summer 2022
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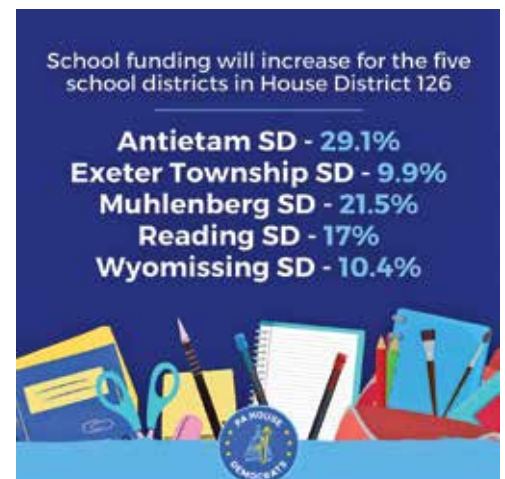
This year's budget brings record funding increases to schools in the 126th

On Friday, July 8, the General Assembly passed a budget, and it was signed into law by the governor later that evening. Although we were a week late finalizing this \$42.5 billion spending plan, it's overall a good budget and passed with wide bipartisan support – including my own yes vote.

This spending plan makes a historic investment in education, an \$850 million increase. In fact, I was able to deliver some of the largest percentage increases in all of Pennsylvania to schools in the 126th District!

Some additional highlights from this year's budget include:

- PA's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program received a \$140 million increase. This will allow for eligible recipients to receive an additional one-time check that is equal to 70% of what they receive in this year's rebate. (No action is required to receive this additional rebate.)
- Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention programs were allotted \$105 million.
- Reduction of the Corporate Net Income Tax from 9.99% to 4.99% gradually until 2031 to align PA with other states and attract more businesses to a competitive market.
- Established the Whole-Home Repair program. This \$125 million investment will provide financial assistance to qualifying homeowners to help upgrade their properties with the aim of improving habitability, energy/water efficiency, winterization, and accessibility for those with disabilities.
- Created the Childcare Tax Credit Program, which received \$24.6 million, to help families offset rising childcare costs. Through this program, filers can receive up to 30% of childcare-related expenses that filers claim on their federal return. Everyone with one or more dependents and whose income falls into a certain range are eligible.



Working hard in Harrisburg

Here is just a glimpse of some of the things I'm working on in our commonwealth's Capitol. I'm proud to serve as our community's voice in the Pennsylvania House!

■ Make higher education more accessible House Bill 2390

Pennsylvania is the fifth most expensive state in the nation to pursue higher education. In-state college tuition costs on average \$23,167 annually, which is over \$8,000 higher than the national average. For individuals in low-income households, an investment like this is simply out of the question. Everyone deserves a chance to receive an education, that's why I introduced this bill to create the Affordability of College Education Scholarship (ACES) Program. Under this program, universities within the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) would receive dedicated funding to provide scholarship awards and emergency grants to low-income students to cover costs of attendance, including tuition, living expenses, supplies, childcare, and disability expenses.



■ Ensuring PASSHE receives equal funding to state-related institutions of higher education House Bill 2387

Funding for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (public universities) does not always equal the funding that other state-related higher education institutions in Pennsylvania receive – such as Penn State and Pitt. PASSHE is designed to provide affordable access to higher education to students across the state, but it can only do this if we provide the necessary financial support it needs. It's critical that we ensure PASSHE schools have equal resources to state-related universities so students can receive a modernized, high-quality education anywhere in the commonwealth.

■ Improving the financial stability of PASSHE schools House Bill 2388

Reductions in enrollment and financial strain at the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education schools led to the decision to consolidate six of its 14 schools into two. My legislation would require the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit, assessing the financial health of the schools after integration, and make recommendations for the Chancellor, university presidents, and the General Assembly to improve the financial stability of the integrated schools so that the integration process is successful. This legislation would help to ensure that our PASSHE schools have a healthy financial future and can continue to educate future generations of Pennsylvanians.

■ Clearing the way for automated vehicles House Bill 2398

Boosting the autonomous vehicles sector would create thousands of jobs, make our roadways safer and help alleviate supply-chain issues we have all experienced. This legislation with bipartisan support would modernize the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code to allow for the driverless testing and deployment of highly autonomous vehicles in Pennsylvania. The bill would permit a highly autonomous vehicle to operate in a driverless fashion while still maintaining pedestrian, occupant, and overall traffic safety as 17 other states have already done in a safe and responsible manner.

REDISTRICTING UPDATE

Redistricting is a process that happens once every decade based on census results. This past March, the PA Supreme Court finalized the Legislative Reapportionment Commission's new state legislative maps. As a result of these new maps being approved, the 126th Legislative District (which I currently represent) includes part of Antietam School District and Muhlenberg School District, as well as large parts of the Exeter and Reading school districts.

Learn more about the reapportionment process and what it entails through the infographic to the right.

What is redistricting?
Legislative districts are geographic areas where voters elect those who serve as their state representative, senator and congressman. **Redistricting** is the process where these district lines are reevaluated to ensure equal representation throughout the commonwealth.

When does redistricting happen?
PA's constitution requires that legislative district lines be redrawn **every 10 years**, triggered by census results. The goal is to have new maps in place prior to an upcoming election where state legislators are up for reelection.

Why is this important?
Redrawing Pennsylvania's district boundaries ensures that **each citizen's vote carries the same weight** at the ballot box.

Who redraws the maps?
PA's **Legislative Reapportionment Commission** consists of five members: the four caucus floor leaders and a chairman selected by those members or, if they can't reach agreement, the PA Supreme Court. This group is tasked with redrawing district maps.

DID YOU KNOW?
Gerrymandering is a term used when legislators selfishly draw district lines that benefit one political party over the other. It's when legislators choose their voters instead of the other way around.

A colorful illustration of a neighborhood with several houses in various colors (orange, blue, green) and a winding road. There are trees and snowflakes scattered around the scene.

Are you prepared to vote this November?

The General Election is right around the corner, happening on Tuesday, Nov. 8. Unlike our closed primaries, this election is open to all of Pennsylvania's registered voters, so I wanted to ensure you have all the information you need to carry out your civic duty.

■ The last day to request a mail-in/absentee ballot is Tuesday, Nov. 1. Anyone interested may request one online at <https://bit.ly/3yoeDmS> (link is case sensitive). If you'd prefer a paper application, my district office can provide you with one.

■ The county election office must receive all mail-in/absentee ballots by 8 p.m. on Nov. 8. Postmarks are not enough. Instead of mailing ballots back, voters may instead utilize a secure drop box or hand deliver their completed ballot to the county election office, located at 633 Court Street in Reading.

■ Voting in person? Visit <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx> to find your polling place. Polls will be open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. on Election Day.

If you have questions on Election Day or encounter problems at your polling place, call the Department of State's toll-free Election Day hotline at 1-877-868-3772.

Don't leave your ballot "naked"

Fill out your ballot and place it inside the secrecy envelope, labeled "Official Election Ballot." Seal it.



Place secrecy envelope inside declaration envelope. Seal that too!



Sign on the declaration line.



No need to add a stamp. Simply return to your county elections office or place it in the drop box at a satellite voting location.

Graphic made with illustrations from Philly Votes. Your local Elections Division and votespa.com will always have the most accurate and up-to-date information.



Scan to find a secure drop box near you.

Around the district



Congratulations Kutztown University Student Government Board on a successful year and thanks for making my birthday so special.



I joined the Mt. Penn Fire Department for their active fire training, giving me a first-hand look at their skill and bravery in action.



Opening night for the Reading Phils is always a hit! I was proud to help bring \$7.5 million home for upgrades to FirstEnergy Stadium to keep the Fightin' Phils right here in Reading.



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Rep. Mark Rozzi's



FREE SHRED EVENT

Saturday, September 10 | 9am - 12pm

First come, first served



Muhlenberg High School
 400 Sharpe Avenue



Free mental health help available

Anyone experiencing a mental health, substance use disorder or suicide crisis may now call or text 988 for assistance. This is an extension of the Lifeline Network's hotline, 800-273-8255 (which still works), to include assistance for people experiencing a range of crises. Trained crisis counselors are on the other end of the line to provide free, confidential support 24/7. This national three-digit code is an important step in accessibility of care. Remember these three numbers and please reach out if you're struggling.

NEED HELP?

It's okay to not be okay.

If you or a loved one are struggling, help is a call, text, or message away:

-  Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
-  Call 9-8-8 (starting July 16th)
If not available in your area yet, call the Lifeline #
-  Text 'PA' to 741741
Crisis Text Line
-  Visit 988lifeline.org/chat
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline online chat

