

News From State Representative

CHRISTINA SAPPEY

158th Legislative District | Chester County

Capitol Office: 111A East Wing | P.O. Box 202158 | Harrisburg, PA 17120-2158 | (717) 772-9973 | Fax: (717) 772-3072

District Office: 698 Unionville Road | Kennett Square, PA 19348 | (484) 200-8264

 /RepSappsey |  RepSappsey.com



Dear Neighbor,

These past few months have been a tremendous challenge for all of us. Every sector of life has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even still, I am amazed by the resilience, compassion and generosity of the 158th District. Thank you for all you have done to help your neighbors in need and for doing your part to keep our community healthy and safe.

In this newsletter, you will find information on my work in 2020. I also invite you to get updates on my legislative Facebook page and through my e-news, which you can sign up for by contacting my district office or visiting my website.

My office is committed to serving you. We are here to help navigate state programs, locate resources, make referrals and to share information. Please don't hesitate to reach out for help at 484-200-8264 or email RepSappsey@pahouse.net with questions and concerns.

All the best,



COVID-19

Throughout the pandemic, I have been in constant communication with local and state public health, school and government officials to advocate and coordinate resources, guidance, and support for residents, agriculture and the business community. Legislation was required to execute many of these efforts.

I voted YES to each of the following:

- **Act 10** provides \$50 million in state health care funding to hospitals, nursing homes and emergency workers for PPE and medical equipment, such as ventilators and N95 masks.
- **Act 24 and Act 2A** increase funding to our long-term care providers, such as nursing homes, and provide greater testing capability, worker protections, business and agriculture relief, mortgage and rental assistance, and food assistance.
- **Act 17** ensures PA National Guard Members and other emergency responders continue to receive pay if diagnosed with COVID-19.
- **Act 13** provides early support and direction for school districts to ensure continuity of programming and remote learning.
- **House Bill 1189** passed the House unanimously and awaits action by the state Senate. It would provide a tax credit for employers to encourage more first responders still working in the private sector to volunteer.
- **House Bill 2412** would keep real estate operations going with specific safety guidelines in place.
- **House Bill 2429** would keep garden centers open.
- **House Bills 2415 and 2463** would require the governor and other state agencies to provide additional information to the legislature and require the Office of Open Records to maintain publications during an emergency order declaration. This would ensure transparency, fairness, equity and accountability throughout the decision-making process during an emergency declaration. The bills passed the House and await action by the Senate.



BUDGET UPDATE

This year's budget process was disrupted by the COVID-19 health crisis. Extensions to tax deadlines created uncertainty in 2020-21 fiscal year revenue projections. For the government to continue operation, the legislature passed a 6-month spending plan that carries the state at 2019-20 fiscal levels through November, at which time we will re-evaluate and revise the budget. Education funding is an exception and is funded for the full year.

The current budget consists of state funding and \$2.6 billion in federal CARES Act funding.

The CARES Act funds will go to:

- \$980M for vulnerable populations, including long-term care centers and nursing homes.
- \$150M for worker protections, such as childcare, paid sick, family and/or medical leave and student loan forgiveness.
- \$870M for business and local services relief.
- \$347M for schools, of which \$300M is being used to make up for declining gaming revenue that annually supports school property tax relief for homeowners.
- \$30M to health care initiatives, such as community-based health centers and vaccine research.
- \$225M toward food and shelter resources, such as the mortgage and rental assistance program and additional funding for food banks and pantries.



PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Riparian Buffers

I'm working closely with colleagues in Harrisburg to pass riparian buffer protection legislation. Riparian buffers are planted zones near waterways that secure banks, provide natural filtration, support ecosystems, prevent runoff and protect homes and businesses from flooding. This is particularly important with the increased strong storms we are experiencing. It also encourages pollination and growth of our natural habitats to promote native plant species and wildlife.



Regional Green House Gas Initiative

I support the state joining RGGI and recently voted against House Bill 2025, which would have eliminated the state Department of Environmental Protection's authority to admit the state in this coalition. In 2019, Governor Tom Wolf announced that Pennsylvania would be joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). In joining this cooperative effort, we have an opportunity to grow our economy and prepare our state for the jobs of tomorrow.

RGGI is a multistate initiative that limits climate-disrupting carbon dioxide pollution from power plants. Under RGGI, generators purchase allowances and the proceeds from those allowances are reinvested in programs that work to limit carbon pollution and energy waste.

From 2015-17, RGGI states gained \$1.4 billion in net economic value, with a gross domestic product growth of 47%. Electricity rates decreased 5.7%, while in other areas of the state and country, electricity prices increased by 8.6%. In addition to the economic benefits, RGGI states are also showing lower asthma and premature death rates.



Plastic Bag Usage

Plastic bags are non-biodegradable, and could take up to 1,000 years to decompose. To protect our environment for generations to come, it's time we find a way to move away from single-use plastic bags.

In order to dissuade the use of plastic bags, I support several measures that would:

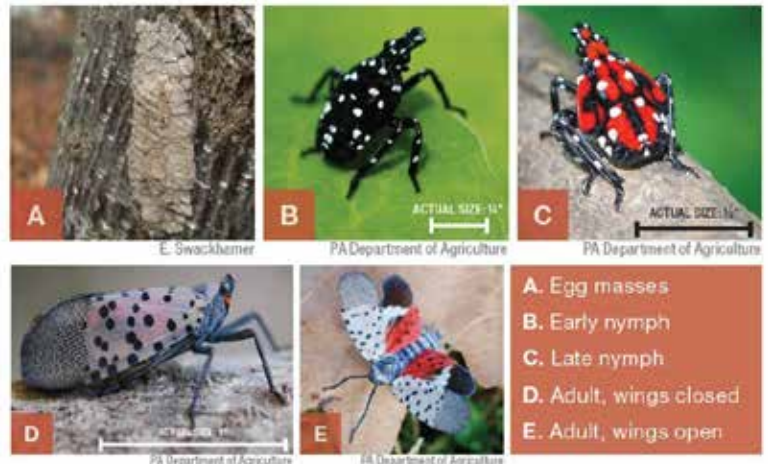
- Provide a modest fee of two cents per non-reusable plastic bag.
- Create a Plastic Pollution Task Force in Pennsylvania.
- Require plastic packaging companies to take part in a recycling program.
- Significantly reduce the use of plastic straws.

Plastic waste is present in so much of what we do today, but these steps will start to remove this harmful waste from our landfills and oceans.

Spotted Lanternfly

This is the time of year that spotted lanternflies' winter egg masses begin to hatch and cause damage to personal property, trees and farmers' crops. Resources and tips, such as how to build your own trap or protect trees with banding, are available through the Penn State Ag Extension at extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly.

The state is continuing to fund research to address this invasive species and working closely with businesses in the quarantined area to prevent the spread. If you have any questions, please contact my office.



ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

Water Ratepayer Bill of Rights

As public utilities, water and wastewater service providers should clearly demonstrate that they are delivering their customers safe services at a fair price.

To ensure this level of transparency and accountability, I have introduced legislation that would provide a bill of rights to water and wastewater ratepayers. This comprehensive bill would:

- Require water and wastewater utilities to publish an annual report with information regarding average residential billing amounts.
- Reform the acquisition process for water and wastewater systems, ensuring that residential customers do not experience inflated rates.
- Allow customers to have an expanded role in matters regarding acquisitions and the source of their water.

Firework Law Updates

Many residents have brought to my attention the unintended consequences of the previous legislature's 2017 change to the state fireworks law. Recently, I attended an Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee hearing on how increased access and improper usage has led to an increase in injuries, property damage, escaped or injured pets, horses and other livestock and negatively affected veterans. This is of concern for residents. To help address this, I have signed onto House Bill 1687, which would provide restrictions on usage, provide municipalities authorization to impose violations and increase penalties for offenders.

Phorid Fly Research Update & Hotline

For the last few years, the phorid fly has been a seasonal burden to southern Chester County residents. I am advocating to renew funding so we can continue to learn more about this pest. Since this fly is linked to mushrooms, our most prominent cash crop, Penn State University has been hosting information sessions with mushroom growers to provide updates and tips from their findings in previous studies. I'm grateful that PSU and members of the mushroom industry are working together to address the phorid fly and have been making progress toward minimizing its presence in our community.

For more information on the phorid fly or to ask questions about the flies' presence in your home or business, you can call the phorid fly hotline at 1-833-574-6743. Information received via the hotline will assist with Penn State's ongoing research and testing.

HEALTH CARE

During this session, I have co-sponsored several pieces of legislation that ensure affordability and access to medical care. House Bill 1873 would cap the price of insulin at \$100. My House Bill 2454 would increase access and coverage of telemedicine. This legislation would provide equal coverage of mental health services, COVID-19 and services offered under CHIP.

Additionally, I have called for votes on House Bills 469, 470, 471 and 913, which would protect coverage for pre-existing conditions, would provide coverage for emergency services, prescription drugs, and behavioral health treatment, would end lifetime coverage limits, and would preserve the right of adult children to remain on their parent or guardian's insurance until they are 26 years old.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

I have supported legislation that funds grant assistance programs for our small businesses and agri-businesses. If your business has been negatively affected by COVID-19, please contact the state Department of Community and Economic Development at 833-722-6778 or the state Department of Agriculture at 717-787-4737.

Below is a list of helpful resources developed for use during this time:

- **Questions about COVID-19? PA Department of Health: 877-PA-HEALTH**
- **COVID-19 testing questions? Chester County Department of Health: 610-344-6225**
- **LIHEAP Utility Assistance: 866-857-7095**
- **Chester County Food Bank: 610-873-6000**
- **Mortgage/rental assistance: 855-827-3466**
- **Feeling overwhelmed? Valley Creek Crisis Center: 610-280-3270 or text “PA” to 741741**
- **Chester County Warmline for those feeling depressed or needing someone to talk to: 866-846-2722**
- **Chester County Human Services: 610-344-6640**



VOTE BY MAIL

Mail-in voting was implemented successfully for the first time in the June 2020 primary. As a result, record high voter turnout was reported in Pennsylvania during the pandemic; however, we still have work to do to address delayed results and increase efficiency before the 2020 General Election in November. I support mail-in voting and current legislation needed to tweak the law passed in 2019. House Bill 2483 would permit earlier counting of mail-in and absentee ballots. Additional funding for our vote-by-mail system would be provided by House Bill 2367.



RACIAL EQUITY & POLICE REFORM

In June, House Bill 1910 and House Bill 1841 passed the House and Senate unanimously and were signed into law by the governor on July 14. House Bill 1910 calls for mandated training on the use of force, de-escalation techniques, cultural awareness/bias and training on trauma-informed care, specifically PTSD. House Bill 1841 expands background checks for law enforcement officers and would create a confidential record repository relating to misconduct.

Many of you joined my recent virtual panel discussions, “Examining Race and Institutionalized Disadvantage in Our Community”, which provided an opportunity to reflect on racial discrimination, our own biases and how our community moves forward with equity and justice for every individual. I am also honored to serve on the Southern Chester County Regional Police Department’s committee formed to address police reform and best practices with representatives from the NAACP and local Black Lives Matter advocates.



State Representative
CHRISTINA SAPPEY

698 Unionville Road
Kennett Square, PA 19348

lpo.kaf.0720

STAYING CONNECTED AND EVENT UPDATES

Recently, I hosted two in-depth virtual panel discussions titled, “Gerrymandering and Institutionalized Racism” and “Examining Race and Institutionalized Disadvantage in our Community,” with more to come. My panels feature the voices of church leaders, civil rights activists and fellow lawmakers from throughout the commonwealth.

I encourage you to visit my website, RepSappey.com, or contact my office at 484-200-8264 for recordings of these important conversations with inspiring panelists. Thank you to everyone who has made these such great discussions, and I hope to hear from you at the next one!

To receive information on future events, including upcoming virtual panel discussions, please visit RepSappey.com to sign up for my email updates and like “Rep. Christina Sappey” on Facebook.

