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WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD A STRONGER 25TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Friends and neighbors,

I'm happy to bring to you the latest news in my 2020 Summer Newsletter. This year hasn't been the easiest, but we've held strong as a community and continue to do so as we work toward slowing and, ultimately, stopping the spread of COVID-19.

In this newsletter, I'm happy to say you'll find what I believe to be a plethora of useful information your family can utilize as the commonwealth continues to navigate this public health crisis. You'll also read about my continued efforts at the state Capitol to best represent you and your interests back home.

I also want to take time to thank you, the residents of the 25th Legislative District, for doing your part the last few months. From the beginning of March until now, our community has showed the rest of the state that even in our darkest times we stand together, united in helping one another when a helping hand is needed. I'm proud of our community and the residents who live here.

Without your help, we surely would be in a more dire situation than we currently face. So, thank you for staying home, staying safe and practicing good hygiene so that we can get back to our everyday lives.

Most importantly, though, I want to thank our frontline workers in the 25th Legislative District – our doctors, nurses, service industry employees and all those who continue to provide the essential services that are needed most. YOU are the real heroes.

Thank you.

Brandon Markosek



INTRODUCING H.B. 2408 IN WAKE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Within the last year, my House colleagues and I have been able to introduce legislation that has the potential to benefit commonwealth residents across the state.

COVID-19, however, has required many of us to refocus our efforts on doing what needs to be done to immediately help those struggling personally and financially during the pandemic.

I'm fortunate to have had a similar opportunity to do my part during the course of this public health crisis and introduce legislation that I know – as do my colleagues – would have a positive impact on your family.

My legislation, **House Bill 2408**, would exempt cash payments disbursed by the CARES Act from state and local taxation. As you know, Congress voted and passed the CARES Act, which was put in place to help residents and businesses stay afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. Included in the coronavirus response were provisions to provide cash payments to people making less than \$99,000 and couples making less than \$198,000.

This funding was exempt from federal taxation with hopes that it would maximize its impact. My bill does the same thing at the state level.

Thanks to bipartisan support and the need to put political differences aside to help state residents, H.B. 2408 passed the state House of Representatives unanimously in May and has been referred to the state Senate's Appropriations Committee.



BUDGET UPDATE

This year's budget process was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For the government to continue operation, the state legislature passed a five-month spending plan that carries the state at 2019-20 fiscal levels through November, at which time we will reevaluate and revise the budget. Education funding was funded for the entire 2020-21 academic year at the same funding allocation as last year.

The current budget consists of state funding, as well as **\$2.6 billion** in federal funding from the CARES Act. The CARES funding is designated as follows:

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

AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The current pandemic is a public health emergency like most of us have never experienced. That's why I'm providing you with resources I hope will be beneficial to you.

Allegheny County Resources:

Resolve Crisis Response Network: 1-888-796-8226
(telephone crisis & mobile crisis services)

Allegheny County Peer Support

WarmLine: 1-866-661-9276
(mental health or substance use concerns that are not a crisis level)

Center for Victims 24/7 Hotline: 1-412-392-8582

Homeless or in need of Shelter, including to domestic violence: 1-866-730-2368

Health, Financial Resources

Rent, Mortgage and Housing Assistance - The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has programs available to renters and homeowners financially impacted by COVID-19. There are guidelines and criteria for these programs, and information is available at www.phfa.org.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - This program provides resources to purchase food. You can apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us or call my office for a paper application.

Women Infant & Children Food Program (WIC) - Through WIC, pregnant women, mothers, and caregivers of infants and young children learn about good nutrition to keep themselves and their families healthy. Visit www.pawic.com for more information and to learn how to apply.

Medical Assistance Program - Provides health insurance for low-income Pennsylvanians. You can apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) - Health insurance coverage for uninsured kids and teens who are not eligible or enrolled in Medical Assistance. You can apply online at www.chipcoverspakids.com.

State, Federal Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

PA Crisis Text Line: Text "PA" to 741-741
(PA Dept. of Human Services)

PA Support & Referral Helpline: 1-855-284-2494
(PA Dept. of Human Services) (TTY: 724-631-5600)

Veteran Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration: 1-800-662-4357 (www.samhsa.gov)

National Transgender Suicide Lifeline: .. 1-877-565-8860

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program - This program is open from June - November and provides low-income seniors with vouchers to purchase Pennsylvania-grown fruits, vegetables, and fresh cut herbs from approved farm markets and farm stands across PA. For an application visit www.alleghenycounty.us/human-services/resources.aspx.

Child Care Centers - Childcare centers may reopen in Pennsylvania. They must adhere to certain restrictions and CDC guidelines. Parents and caregivers can visit www.dhs.pa.gov for information. If you are looking for child care, visit www.findchildcare.pa.gov.

Nursing Home Information - Many families have a loved one who lives in a nursing home or skilled nursing facility. COVID-19 has been devastating on a whole other level if you are in this situation because of restrictions on visits to keep residents safe and healthy. Those who miss seeing a family member in these situations want to know what procedures facilities must adhere to, especially when they cannot see that process for themselves. If you are looking for information on current guidelines for such facilities, please refer to the PA Department of Health at www.health.pa.gov/topics/facilities/nursing%20homes/Pages/Nursing%20Homes.aspx.



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MY OFFICE IS HERE TO HELP



Stop by and let us help resolve your state-related issue

I want you to know that my office doors are always open to help you resolve any state-related issue. As a matter of fact, my office has been open throughout the pandemic, in hopes that we can help make a difference.

If you plan to visit, we ask that you please wear a mask and practice proper hygiene to stop the spread of COVID-19. We also have been adhering to CDC and state guidelines. We'll do our part, so please do yours.

My office is located at 4232 Northern Pike, Suite 303, Monroeville, PA 15146. My office number is 412-856-8284.

REP. BRANDON MARKOSEK'S OFFICE BY THE NUMBERS

Follow me to see how I am working for you!

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 RepMarkosek.com




OVER 750
 UNEMPLOYMENT ISSUES RESOLVED