



Spring
2021

State Representative | 181st Legislative District

MALCOLM KENYATTA

District Office:

1501 N. Broad St. | Suite 17 | Philadelphia, PA 19122 | (215) 978-0311

Capitol Office:

105 B East Wing | P.O. Box 202181 | Harrisburg, PA 17120-2181 | (717) 787-9471

@RepKenyatta | /RepKenyatta | RepKenyatta.com



Dear Neighbor,

This past year was difficult. We're still wading through public health and economic crises. Rest assured that we will get through this. However, through all the turmoil of the pandemic, social injustice, and the attacks on the sanctity of our elections, there have been glimmers of hope.

I am thrilled to serve my third term as your state representative. I have also been appointed to a host of committees (Commerce, Finance, Liquor Control, the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus Subcommittee on Voting and Democracy, and State Government) geared toward bolstering economic equity and safeguarding our elections.

This newsletter serves as an update to inform you of my tireless efforts to bring us one step closer on our ongoing journey towards achieving progress in our commonwealth.

I look forward to what more we can accomplish!

VOTING AND DEMOCRACY

This past election was a free and fair election that also had historic record turnout, especially among voters of color. However, those in power ruthlessly worked to mute the voices of the people by trying to delegitimize our democracy — attempts that harken back to voter suppression tactics of Jim Crow.

We're in the wake of another critical election year. As a vocal member of the House State Government Committee and as co-chair of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus Subcommittee on Democracy and Voting, I am working tirelessly to ensure that these political games from the 2020 general election have no bearing on this year's election or any other election moving forward.

I will not tolerate these ongoing attacks on our democracy and attempts to disenfranchise Pennsylvania voters of color!

I also want to assure you that I and my Democratic colleagues on the House State Government Committee have heard many suggestions from county officials from across the state on updating our elections processes, especially counting ballots, to make them more efficient. As we work to reach a bipartisan agreement, I ask that you be patient with our neighbors who have volunteered their time to ensure every vote in our community counts.



Pulling One of Pennsylvania's Top Industries From The Brink

I teamed up with my colleague state Representative Pam Snyder, along with small business owners, in front of the state Capitol to demand the state legislature immediately vote on our recently introduced bill, H.B. 1223, that would expand business interruption policies to acknowledge losses suffered during the governor's disaster declaration.

Countless local businesses — generationaly owned and community mainstays — have been forced to permanently shutter because of the devastating effects of this economic crisis. This has also resulted in loss of income for both family business owners and employees.

We can no longer be idle in protecting working people, and our bill would provide these small businesses reeling from this devastation the

vital lifeline they desperately need to protect livelihoods.

Our bill seeks to provide business interruption insurance coverage to establishments that suffered financial loss due to pandemic closings by aiming to:

- Clarify that business interruption policies in effect as of the date of the governor's disaster declaration (March 6, 2020) include coverage of perils related to COVID-19.
- Allow insurers to receive reimbursement for business interruption insurance claims paid due to COVID-19.
- Provide a mechanism to make funds immediately available for such reimbursement.

Months prior to our call to our lawmaker colleagues, Rep. Snyder

and I hosted Business Interrupted, a discussion on the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses across Pennsylvania, with the goal of finding meaningful solutions to preserve one of Pennsylvania's top industries.

My first job was in the restaurant industry washing dishes, then I began hosting and waiting tables through college. This industry has essentially helped me survive, along with so many others in our commonwealth who are currently afraid that their means of survival and way to showcase their craft will soon disappear.

The virtual discussion featured testimony from experts in the restaurant industry and provided more insight to ensure our legislation adequately addresses the needs of this vital industry that employs so many workers across this state.





Racism in Academia

We're almost a year out from the global Black Lives Matter protests that highlighted how heavily racism is intertwined in our society. This is especially evident on high school and college campuses.

A policy hearing, hosted by me and colleague state Representative Maureen Madden, provided a better explanation into the experiences of students and faculty of color and gave clarity as to how systemic racism impacts their pursuit for success.

They spoke of how terms like

'diversity quota' and 'affirmative action applicant' are just some of the covertly racist insults that disparage the merits of students and faculty of color in academia. Ultimately, these slights have devastating effects on the emotional and mental health of these students and faculty, thereby straining their likelihood to excel and graduate at these institutions.

I intend to use this testimony to draft meaningful policy to address these issues in academic institutions across our commonwealth.

Protecting Our Communities from Gun Violence

As we are in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, communities across our city and state continue to grapple with a longstanding public health crisis — gun violence. Far too many Pennsylvanians, especially our neighbors here in Philadelphia, have had their lives cut short due to gun violence, and we're seeing a grim upwards trajectory.

Many of these guns used to cause unspeakable carnage in our communities are stolen from legal gun owners, only to be trafficked in a seedy black market to dangerous individuals who should never have them.

While I support lawful and responsible firearm ownership, I believe being a responsible gun owner also entails being proactive when their firearms are stolen by immediately reporting it to law enforcement.

As gun violence soars and the victims become increasingly younger, I felt it was dire enough to co-introduce H.B 980 with my Democratic colleague state Representative Ben Sanchez. Our bill would require any owner or other person lawfully in possession of a firearm who suffers the loss or theft of a weapon to report it to law enforcement within 72 hours of the discovery. If a person fails to do

so, they would be charged with a summary offense.

Bills like this are viable solutions to curbing this societal epidemic. According to the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, laws that require firearm owners to report lost or stolen firearms help law enforcement and keep the public safe. These laws help deter gun trafficking and discourage straw purchasing, as well as assist lawful gun owners by facilitating the recovery of their lost or stolen property.

To date, other states such as Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, as well as the District of Columbia require the reporting of lost or stolen firearms, and it is critical that Pennsylvania joins this growing list because so many lives depend on it.

As we try to quell the abundance of these stolen guns on our streets, we're simultaneously dealing with other, more elusive guns of a different kind — ghost guns.

I am proud of my colleagues, state Representative Amen Brown and state Senator Anthony Williams, and state Attorney General Josh Shapiro for reaching a historic agreement with Pennsylvania's largest gun show



promoter, Eagle Arms, to ban the sale of ghost gun kits at its shows. As lawmakers, we must do all we can to make sure these untraceable guns do not end up in the hands of people who shouldn't have them.

Ghost guns typically start as 80 percent receivers that are sold in kits without background checks. They can easily and quickly be put together, lack serial numbers so they cannot be traced, and, once fully assembled, can operate as fully functioning firearms. In Philadelphia, 99 ghost guns were recovered in 2019, and 250 were recovered in 2020. More than 80 have been recovered so far in 2021.

I am hopeful that our bill, in conjunction with this unprecedented agreement, puts us on track to passing comprehensive policy that would fully curb gun violence across Pennsylvania.

Combatting COVID-19

I was proud to team up with my colleague, state Representative Danilo Burgos, who represents the neighboring 197th Legislative District, to provide free COVID-19 testing in Norris Square Park on two Saturdays earlier this year, with the goal of offsetting the disparities in testing among Black and Latino communities in Philadelphia.

This pandemic has widened the gap in many long-existing systemic disparities that are influenced by race, ethnicity and socioeconomics; and as relief measures such as testing availability and vaccinations are deployed, we're still seeing how these factors dictate who benefits and who doesn't.

Testing remains among one of the best ways to protect ourselves and our communities, and this free testing event we hosted aimed to close the gap by making testing accessible to communities hardest hit by this health crisis.

I am thankful to Latino Connection and Independence Blue Cross for providing the testing, to CHOP for administering the tests, and to Starbucks for providing the hot coffee that helped warm up volunteers and the constituents who lined up for the testing.

A report found that race and ethnicity data for COVID-19 cases are widely unaccounted for in Pennsylvania, especially in Philadelphia. This lag undercuts the severity of survivability outcomes of both groups. For Latinos, specifically, despite only making up 6% of the population in Pennsylvania, they disproportionately make up 11% of COVID-19 deaths when applying weighted population distributions, according to a study found on the Centers for Disease Control's website.

In the wake of vaccine distribution, Blacks and Latinos remain severely underrepresented.

COVID-19 Vaccine Resource

We all celebrated each time news of a new, approved and successful vaccine was announced, but I know that the roll-out process may have been confusing and at times overwhelming. My staff and I have been working hard to make sure you have the most relevant information and resources.

I am also proud to announce that I have received the vaccine! It was a quick, painless process, and medical staff eagerly answered all of my questions and closely monitored me for any side effects. I am proud to report that there weren't any adverse reactions!

I'm thrilled to finally be among many of our neighbors who also received the vaccine, an effort that lends to keeping our communities safe.

You can also do your part by getting the vaccine.

As a reminder, Philadelphia is a separate vaccine jurisdiction, as designated by the federal government, and does not follow the state guidelines for vaccination phases.

Here are telephone numbers for where your questions can be answered:

Pennsylvania Department of Health – 877-724-3258
Philadelphia COVID Call Center – 215-685-5488
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging – 215-765-9040

You can also fill out the city's interest form to receive updates and schedule an appointment to receive your vaccine:
covid-vaccine-interest.phila.gov





Keeping the 181st Clean!

Earlier this year, I was delighted to be joined by YaFav Trashman, Grant Blvd Clothing, Starbucks, T-Mobile, Keystone First and over 200 volunteers to pull off something amazing:

- 8 lots cleaned.
- 2 TONS of trash collected.
- 3 random toilets discarded.

We also gave away over 100 bags of food and dozens of winter coats to the community!

That's 1 community happier and cleaner!

Celebrating Motherhood

My staff and I distributed 95 free petunia flower plants to moms in the Hartranft community, on Mother's Day weekend. The flower giveaway also included a clean-up of the area by members of the Hartranft Playground Alliance, the 26th Police District and other volunteers. Part of the playground includes Danny Boyle Park, a memorial for the 20-year-old rookie police officer who was tragically killed while pulling over a stolen car in 1991. Boyle's parents also joined us on our clean-up.

The clean-up was an all-in effort with police repairing broken boards on the park's benches and rejuvenating them with fresh coats of paint. No mom was forgotten on this day — for home-bound moms who couldn't make it to the park, I personally brought flowers to them at their homes.





State Representative
MALCOLM KENYATTA

1501 N. Broad St., Suite 17
Philadelphia, PA 19122

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My staff and I can help you with:

- ➔ Birth Certificates
- ➔ Unclaimed Property Search
- ➔ Home Heating Assistance
- ➔ SEPTA Key Senior ID Card
- ➔ PACE Cards and Prescription Drug Assistance for Seniors
- ➔ Consumer Complaints
- ➔ Any State Government Program and Issue

Stop by or call to let us know how we can assist you!

181st Legislative District COVID-19 Vaccination Sites Philadelphia County

Rite Aid

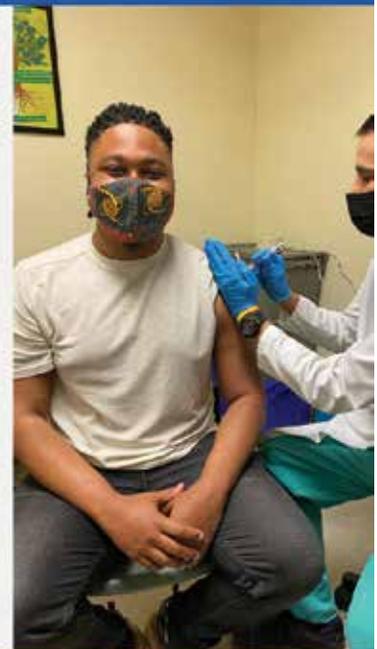
COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline: **(866) 674-4659**
 2150 North Broad Street | **(215) 765-9332**
 2131-59 North Broad Street | **(215) 236-2297**
 2801 West Dauphin Street | **(215) 225-1912**

CVS Pharmacy

1717 North 12th Street, Unit F | **(215) 235-2001**
 401 Spring Garden Street | **(215) 418-3065**

Temple University

1528 North Broad Street



For assistance, please contact Representative Kenyatta's District Office
 ☎ **215-978-0311** 🐦 **@RepKenyatta** 📘 **@MalcolmKenyatta**