



Winter  
2020

# DANIELLE FRIEL <sup>155</sup> OTTEN

## PA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

### District Office:

631 Pottstown Pike • Exton, PA 19341 • (484) 200-8259

### Capitol Office:

102B East Wing • P.O. Box 202155 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2155 • (717) 783-5009

@RepDanielle /RepDanielle pahouse.com/Otten @Rep\_Otten



# STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS



On February 4, Governor Tom Wolf addressed a joint session of the PA House and Senate to present his proposed budget for 2020-2021. His budget reflects a commitment to our children, schools, and working families, along with a promising start to new conversations about pipeline safety.

I am excited about the budget's investment in public education at all levels, including Pre-K, full-day kindergarten, basic education funding, special education funding, and our state colleges and universities. The first time I ever sat down with an elected official to advocate for something I cared about was more than six years ago, with my then-school board director and school board president, to advocate for full-day kindergarten in the Downingtown Area School District, so this focus on early education is especially meaningful to me.

The budget address was the first time we've heard Governor Wolf acknowledge pipeline safety as a priority for our commonwealth. I'm extremely grateful for his attention to this issue and eager for the opportunity to finally get this right. We need strong legislation that fills the gaps in regulatory oversight, creates a requirement to assess the risks associated with both new pipelines and the repurposing of old pipelines, and places the costs of risk assessment and pipeline early detection and warning systems squarely on the pipeline operator, not the taxpayer.

I look forward to the budget debates that will occur in the coming months. I will continue to speak out on behalf of the 155th Legislative District and advocate for the issues that matter most to our community. The full budget proposal is available at [governor.pa.gov](http://governor.pa.gov).

# PIPELINE UPDATE

## Upper Uwchlan Township

In January, the PA Department of Environmental Protection lifted its statewide permit bar, clearing the way for new pipeline permit approvals, drilling, and construction. One new permit now under review is a request for a major modification to a segment of Mariner East in Upper Uwchlan Township. The change in route would bring the pipeline down the middle of Meadow Creek Lane, obstructing residents' access to their driveways and homes during construction and raising concerns about impacts on groundwater and public safety, both during construction and once the pipeline is in operation.

The DEP provided an opportunity for public comment on this proposed route modification. I worked with state Sen. Katie Muth to compile our concerns in a joint statement, which can be viewed at [pahouse.com/Otten/NewsCenter](http://pahouse.com/Otten/NewsCenter). More than 80 community members, including several affected residents of Meadow Creek Lane, signed on, and other residents submitted their own public comment to the DEP.

## PUC Safety Standards

Last summer, the PA Public Utility Commission accepted public comment on its Proposed Rulemaking on Hazardous Liquid Public Utility Safety Standards. My office worked with community members to draft recommendations surrounding all aspects of pipeline safety, including construction methods, leak detection, public notification, liability, and property rights of way. More than 300 constituents and PA residents signed on to our statement. I hope the PUC will take our recommendations into consideration and amend the PA Public Utility Code to allow more comprehensive regulations for utilities that transport petroleum products and other hazardous liquids within our state.

Information regarding the Mariner East pipeline tends to change daily. I regularly share pipeline updates on all my social media pages, on my website, and in my weekly email blasts.



## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

In October, I hosted a Legislative Policy Hearing on youth mental health and its impact on our children, families, schools, communities, and workforce. I was joined by lawmakers from across the state to hear moving stories from students who have lost classmates to suicide and parents who have spent years navigating the mental health system to seek help for their children. Teachers, counselors, therapists, school administrators, physicians, and other community members working to find solutions discussed the need to make help more accessible and affordable to all who need it.

Many different factors play a role in youth mental and behavioral health issues, and panelists noted the toll that poor nutrition, social media, screen time, trauma, and an unsafe or unhealthy environment can take on developing brains. One of the most consistent messages we heard from students was the increased pressure they feel to excel on tests, in classes, in competitive sports, and in multiple extracurricular activities. They are stressed, overscheduled, and never have a break.

As one means of addressing this rising concern, I introduced HB 1949, which requires that students receive at least 40 minutes of recess at elementary schools and 20 minutes at secondary school, plus a minimum of 30 minutes for lunch. Providing a regular period of unstructured time for physical activity, play, and socialization gives children and young adults a necessary break and is critical to their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Our youth mental health crisis is not just a school issue but a community one. Moving forward, we must make sure our communities have the resources to raise awareness, build capacity in our systems, end the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues, and provide the supports that ultimately help our young people lead happy, healthy lives. Leaders of the House Children & Youth Committee felt this issue warranted further conversation, so we are working to plan a joint policy hearing in Harrisburg this year before the House Children & Youth, Education, and Health committees.

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## ADDRESSING FOOD WASTE, FOOD INSECURITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

More food reaches our landfills and incinerators than any other single material in our trash stream. Today, 40 percent of the food produced in the United States goes to waste, and food waste accounts for 20 percent of the material in our landfills. We need to both redefine what we think of as waste and create a more sustainable system for processing the waste we do produce.

This session, I have introduced three bills to reduce food waste, reduce food insecurity, and improve sustainability. HB 1950, Expanding Food Donor Immunity, encourages food donations by

ensuring that restaurants, farms, schools, institutions, and others who donate food to charitable organizations or needy individuals can do so without concerns over potential liability.

HB 1959, Food Date Labeling Requirements, reduces the amount of food unnecessarily thrown away by requiring food manufacturers to include a “use by” date on food labels that indicates the final date at which food is safe for human consumption. I plan to introduce a separate Milk Date Labeling bill with similar goals, accommodating the distinct requirements for the bottling and

sale of dairy products in Pennsylvania.

HB 2023, Making Pennsylvania a Leader in Composting, was first announced as part of the “Zero Waste PA” package of bills introduced in Spring 2019. The bill would both divert organic waste from landfills and create a market for organic waste composting. HB 1950 and HB 1959 are currently in the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, while HB 2023 has been assigned to the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

# IMPORTANT VOTING REFORMS

In October, Governor Wolf signed Act 77 of 2019, which makes the biggest changes to our voting process since the 1930s. These changes will take place ahead of the primary election on April 28, 2020.



## What you need to know:

- **No-excuse mail-in voting:** You can now vote by mail without providing an excuse.
- **Extended voting period:** Request and submit your mail-in or absentee ballot up to 50 days before an election – now the longest vote-by-mail period in the country.
- **Permanent mail-in and absentee ballot list:** Voters can request applications for mail-in or absentee ballots for all primary, general and special elections. Counties will mail applications to voters on the list by the first Monday of each February. Voters who return an application will receive ballots for each election scheduled through the next February.
- **More time to register:** The deadline to register to vote is now 15 days before an election, instead of 30 days. The last day to register before the April 28 primary is April 13.
- **Extended deadlines-** Voters can now submit mail-in and absentee ballots until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

**My office can provide Voter Registration Forms and Mail-in and Absentee Ballot applications.** You may also visit the Chester County Board of Elections (in person or at [www.chesco.org](http://www.chesco.org)), call 1-877-VOTESPA to request a form, or download forms or register online through the PA Department of State website at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).

**Check your registration! As part of Act 77, counties will update their voter databases before the April 28 primary and remove voters considered inactive. Be sure to go to [votespa.com](http://votespa.com) to ensure that your registration is still active and that you are registered at your current address!**

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND OPEN SPACE

As Chester County grows in population, one of the greatest challenges facing our townships is balancing growth and economic development with protection and preservation of the beautiful open spaces that first attracted so many of us to Chester County. This spring, I will host a series of presentations for local elected officials on how to define community identity, plan for sustainable development and open space preservation, and secure grants to help make those plans a reality. My office is always glad to support grant applications for our local municipalities, school districts, and organizations, and I look forward to finding new ways to work together to make the 155th an even better place to live for all of us!



*East Pikeland Township has prioritized open space for decades. In November, their commitment paid off, as the township dedicated 150 acres of preserved land at the recently purchased Crouse property, which community members can now enjoy for generations to come.*

## POLICY HEARING: STATE OF THE CARE WORKFORCE

Chester County is the fastest growing county in Pennsylvania, and our senior population is growing at a faster rate than any other segment. From 2013-2018, the county's overall population grew by 2.3 percent, while our 65+ population grew by 18 percent. Across the state, and particularly right here in our community, we are facing a great need for care workers for senior citizens, as well as for children and adults with disabilities.

On Thursday, March 12, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., I will host a Legislative Policy Hearing on the state of the care workforce in Pennsylvania. The hearing will be held at the Abraham Fetters-White School, 723 North Pottstown Pike, Exton.

Legislators from throughout the region will be invited to hear testimony about the rising need for and shortage of providers, the need to raise wages and reimbursements for home health care workers and direct support professionals, and the need to ensure safe work conditions for all care workers, whether in the home or in a facility setting. The hearing will be open to the public.

## MY DISTRICT OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH...

- Car registrations, special tags, titles, and license applications
- Disability plates and placards
- Questions about REAL ID
- Birth certificate applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Unemployment compensation problems
- Issues with Department of Human Services (SNAP benefits, Medical Assistance)
- Requests for literature of all kinds (bills, regulations, statutes, PA maps, senior citizen information, student aid information, etc.)
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Consumer complaints
- Complaints about state road conditions
- Tours of the State Capitol for individuals or groups
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Complaints and problems with insurance companies
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate questions
- SEPTA Senior Key Cards
- State tax forms
- Free notary services for state-related documents

...and more!

**Please call or visit Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. for help with these and other state-related services.**

**484-200-8259**

## DO YOU NEED A REAL ID?

Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, you will need a federally accepted form of identification to board a commercial flight or visit a military base or secure federal building. These forms include a valid passport, a military ID, or a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or photo ID.

You will not need a REAL ID-compliant license to drive. If you keep your passport current or have a valid military ID, you do not need REAL ID; however, many people find a REAL ID card more convenient to carry than a passport.

If you wish to apply for REAL ID, my office can help you track down the documents you need. Once you have all your documents gathered, the PennDOT Driver License Center at 225 Lancaster Avenue in Malvern can process your application and mail your REAL ID within 15 business days.

Or, to have your documents verified and receive your ID at the time of service, visit one of the three REAL ID Centers in our region:

143 S. Gulph Street, King of Prussia  
1700 Markley Street, Norristown  
2904 South 70th Street, Philadelphia

For more information, please visit [www.penndot.gov/REALID](http://www.penndot.gov/REALID).



## MOBILE OFFICE HOURS

We've added more mobile office times and locations to bring services to every corner of the 155th Legislative District! Stop by a mobile office in your neighborhood or visit my district office in Exton to receive help with state-related services or discuss legislative issues.

### **Crop's Fresh Marketplace** *First Tuesday of every month*

10 a.m. – Noon  
1257 Horseshoe Pike  
Downingtown, PA 19335

### **Spring City Public Library** *First Wednesday of every month*

1 p.m. – 3 p.m.  
245 Broad Street  
Spring City, PA 19475

### **Spring City Food Pantry** *First Thursday of every month*

10 a.m. – noon  
Fellowship room, First United Church of Christ  
145 Chestnut Street  
Spring City, PA 19475

### **Henrietta Hankin Branch Library** *Second Tuesday of every month*

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
Henrietta Hankin Branch Library  
215 Windgate Drive  
Chester Springs, PA 19425

## GET YOUR SEPTA KEY SENIOR ID CARD AT MY OFFICE!

Seniors who present a SEPTA Key Senior ID Card ride for free on all SEPTA service lines within Pennsylvania. Seniors traveling to NJ or DE are eligible for a half-fare discount with their SEPTA Key Senior ID Card.

My district office can process applications and take photos for seniors who need a card. You must be at least 65 years of age. Bring with you a form of ID with a date of birth on it, such as a PA driver's license or non-driver ID, U.S. Passport or birth certificate.



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM HARRISBURG AND THE DISTRICT

Active community members are the heart of our legislative district! I am grateful I had the chance to connect with so many of our neighbors over my first year in office. I look forward to meeting and engaging with many more of you at home or in Harrisburg this year.



In January, state Sen. Katie Muth and I held a town hall in West Brandywine Township on the need for Harrisburg to increase funding for our public schools. More than 100 community members attended, and we were honored to be joined by Michael Churchill, an attorney with the Public Interest Law Center and an expert in state education funding.



Too many communities across our commonwealth are hot spots - areas overburdened by higher levels of pollution. These conditions can create life long health risks, such as cancer, heart disease and lung disease. In November, I attended a policy hearing about PA joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) - a coalition of states working to reduce carbon emissions and reverse climate change. I emphasized that we have a responsibility to invest the revenue generated by RGGI to make hot-spot communities healthier, give them the best chance to thrive, and ensure their quality of life.



I was excited to join in recognizing West Vincent Elementary School for its designation as a National Blue Ribbon School. What a truly amazing facility and environment for learning! It now stands as one of 18 schools throughout the commonwealth distinguished with this honor. Congratulations to all West Vincent Elementary students, staff, administrators, and parents, and thank you for having me!



On October 12, I hosted our first Community Wellness Fair. We were joined by more than 30 local businesses, service providers, and community agencies who shared their wisdom and services. It was great to see so many people from around the community come together to focus on physical and mental health. It is so important that we take the time to ensure we are living healthy, balanced lives.



Last September, I had the opportunity to spend some time with constituents and the DCNR staff from Marsh Creek State Park. I toured the park and the dam and learned so much about the lake's history and the many benefits it brings to our community — such as stormwater management and clean drinking water. We are fortunate to have this beautiful resource here in our district. We all must do our part to help protect and preserve the park, by supporting DEP funding for state parks and volunteering to help with projects that include trail maintenance, wildlife monitoring, and habitat restoration.



**DANIELLE FRIEL** <sup>155</sup> **OTTEN**  
**PA STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

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 Exton, PA 19341

## STAY INFORMED!

Visit [pahouse.com/otten](http://pahouse.com/otten) to join my email list for regular updates from Harrisburg and the district.

lpo.ad.0220



*Dear Neighbor,*

After just over a year as your state representative, I'm proud to share this update on some of the great things we have done together for the 155th Legislative District. While there is much more work ahead of us, we have accomplished so much good, and the work my staff and I are doing would not be possible without our vocal and active community. Your continued feedback and participation help me better serve the interests of our district. Thank you for your commitment to making Chester County and our Commonwealth better and safer for all. I am honored to be your voice in Harrisburg, and I look forward to continuing the work we have begun.

Should you need to contact me regarding a legislative issue or a problem or concern with state government, please feel free to email, write or call our district office. I also encourage you to stop by to say hello, share your views on legislative matters and get help with state-related services. We strive to provide a welcoming, informative and helpful experience to our constituents.

Sincerely,

*Danielle Friel Otten*

Danielle Friel Otten  
 State Representative  
 155th Legislative District

*I am excited to share a snapshot of my first year as your State Representative in the 155th. The chart above provides a brief overview of just some of the work my staff and I have done since I was sworn in on Jan. 1, 2019.*