



Winter
2022

DANIELLE FRIEL ¹⁵⁵ OTTEN

PA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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2022-2023 BUDGET PRIORITIES

On February 8, Governor Wolf presented his proposed budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This proposal arrives at a time when the pandemic continues to deeply affect the lives and livelihoods of Pennsylvanians, even as our ongoing economic recovery has fueled state revenues that exceed estimates by billions of dollars.

With this historic state revenue surplus, plus billions remaining in federal American Rescue Plan funds, this year's budget gives us a chance to rectify last year's missed opportunities and address urgent needs across our state—without raising taxes or drawing down the state's Rainy-Day Fund. Governor Wolf's proposed budget calls for investments in better schools, better jobs, and stronger communities to help secure the future of our commonwealth.

Prior to Governor Wolf's budget address, I sent a letter urging him to prioritize:

- Access to high-quality health care, including mental and behavioral health care.
- Investments in education, to alleviate the burden on property-tax payers and ensure that all public schools are fully and fairly funded.
- Investments in human services, to clear the home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver system waitlist while creating jobs that stay in Pennsylvania.
- Investments in our care workforce, including raising wages and reimbursement rates so that care workers can afford to stay in the profession.
- Investments in tourism, hospitality, and local business.
- Investments in safe, affordable housing, school facilities, and public spaces.

I am grateful to see the governor's support for several of our district's priorities, and now the real work of budget negotiation begins. The General Assembly has both an opportunity and an obligation this year to improve the lives of Pennsylvanians, and I will continue to fight for a budget that makes meaningful investments in our neighbors, our families, and our local workforce. For more about my budget priorities, visit www.RepDanielle.com.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

In October 2021, following the announcement that Jennersville Hospital would close, and with the fate of Brandywine Hospital then uncertain, I cohosted a policy hearing on protecting access to quality health care in our communities. Since then, I have worked with fellow legislators, community organizations, and stakeholders at the state, county, and local levels, including reaching out to the Office of Attorney General and the Department of Health to ensure that our state agencies were pursuing every possible legal means of preserving our access to care.

On February 14, a county judge ruled that Tower Health must honor its sales agreement with a previously announced buyer, Canyon Atlantic Partners. The situation is still unfolding as we send this newsletter to print, and reopening plans for either hospital remain unclear.

The needs of our community must be the first consideration as this process moves forward. I remain fully committed to working toward a sustainable solution that restores our access to primary, emergency, behavioral, and mental health services and prioritizes the interests of residents, rather than chasing profit-driven motives. For ongoing updates, visit my website, www.RepDanielle.com.

WHERE SHOULD YOU GO FOR CARE?

With Brandywine Hospital currently closed, please take some time now, before an emergency arises, to determine where your nearest ER or urgent care center is located.

Visit www.chesco.org/hospitals to find local emergency providers and behavioral and mental health resources.

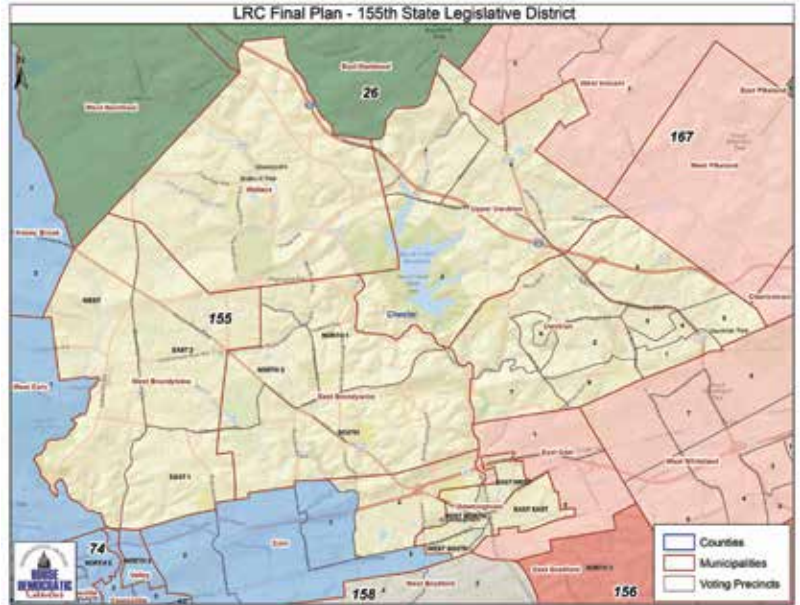
LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

The Pennsylvania constitution requires that legislative districts for the state Senate and the state House of Representatives be redrawn each decade, based on U.S. Census data. On February 4, the Pennsylvania Legislative Reapportionment Commission approved new state House and Senate maps to account for recent population shifts. The new maps may be appealed within 30 days, in which case the PA Supreme Court would have the final say.

As of this writing, the new 155th Legislative District will consist of:

- Uwchlan Township
- Upper Uwchlan Township
- East Brandywine Township
- West Brandywine Township
- Wallace Township
- Downingtown Borough
- Caln Township, Precinct 4 only

The new configuration adds Wallace Township, Downingtown Borough, and Precinct 4 of Caln Township, and removes East Pikeland Township, West Vincent Township, the Borough of Spring City, and the Borough of Phoenixville. Uwchlan, Upper Uwchlan, East Brandywine, and West Brandywine townships remain in the 155th.



All changes to district representation will take effect AFTER the 2022 general election. To view the final maps and learn more about the redistricting process, visit: www.redistricting.state.pa.us.

DEFENDING OUR DEMOCRACY

We know that every single vote makes a difference in Pennsylvania, not only in presidential elections, but in our state and local elections. Recent elections right here in Chester County and across the commonwealth have been decided by just a few ballots.

Our right to vote is among our most sacred right as Americans. This is why I am proud to cosponsor House Bill 2090, a comprehensive election reform bill that would protect access to voting, ensure the security of our elections, and modernize our commonwealth's election code.

Here are just a few of the measures this bill seeks to accomplish:

- Establish early voting locations for 15 days leading up to Election Day to allow voters to cast their ballots as their work and family schedules allow.
- Allow for same-day voter registration on Election Day.
- Require each county to have at least two ballot drop boxes and require public colleges/universities to have one on or near campus.
- Increase poll worker pay to improve participation and retention of poll workers.
- Allow 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote.

I am doing all that I can in Harrisburg to uphold our democracy and ensure that our elections are fair and accessible to every eligible voter. The best thing we can all do is get out and vote during every election. I encourage you to remain active, informed, and engaged. Our democracy depends on it.



HOW I VOTED

As your elected representative in Harrisburg, I am committed to maintaining transparency surrounding the legislative process.

While state legislators' votes are always public record, the reasons behind those votes may not always be clear. In 2021, I added a new "How I Voted" section to my website, with the goal of keeping constituents informed about the bills that come before the House, my positions on those bills, and why I voted the way I did. We strive to update this page as quickly as possible following the end of each session week to make it easy for you to stay up to date.

Look for the "How I Voted" tab at the top right-hand corner of my website, www.RepDanielle.com.

EMERGENCY HOUSING ASSISTANCE

PA Homeowner Assistance Fund

Pennsylvania was awarded more than \$350 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds to launch the PA Homeowner Assistance Fund. PAHAF will help Pennsylvania homeowners facing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide them access to financial relief.

PAHAF opened for applications on February 1. Learn more about PAHAF, who's eligible, and what it covers: pahaf.org

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

The Emergency Utility and Rental Assistance Program serves Chester County residents who pay rent to a landlord and have fallen behind on their bills. It can only be accessed by dialing 2-1-1 and selecting the prompt for "Housing Crisis."

Please contact my office for assistance or for more information about these programs.

SCHOOL FUNDING LAWSUIT

The Pennsylvania constitution requires the General Assembly to "provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth." This requirement is at the heart of the PA School Funding Lawsuit, which was first filed in 2014 and finally went to trial in November 2021.

The reality in Pennsylvania is that Harrisburg provides only about 38 percent of school funding, with 59 percent of all funding coming from local property taxes. (The small remaining portion comes from federal funds.) This leaves Pennsylvania with the largest disparity in funding between wealthy and low-income districts of any state in the nation. Districts in wealthy communities are able to offset the lack of state funding with property taxes on their high-value homes. But in low-income districts with lower home values, the over-reliance on property

taxes is both an untenable burden on homeowners and an inadequate source of revenue for schools.

The plaintiffs in the school funding lawsuit assert that Pennsylvania has failed to uphold its constitutional requirement, leaving hundreds of districts — particularly in majority Black and brown urban areas and poor, white rural communities — severely underfunded. Since November, the court has heard testimony from superintendents, teachers, parents, former students, economists, and legal scholars about the impacts of inadequate and inequitable school funding. The trial is expected to continue into February. Updates and additional background can be found at: www.fundourschoolspa.org.



MARINER UPDATE

On October 5, 2021, Attorney General Josh Shapiro came to Marsh Creek State Park to announce the filing of 48 criminal charges against Energy Transfer for violations of the Clean Streams Law, including one felony count of unlawful conduct for willfully failing to report incidents to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Then in early December, DEP ordered Sunoco to pay \$4 million in damages to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and pay \$341,000 in civil penalties to DEP for permit violations. Included in this settlement was a requirement for Sunoco to dredge and remediate the lake beginning in April 2022.

However, the December settlement also included an approval for permit applications for Sunoco to continue Mariner East 2 construction at the site of their August 2020 spill, which sent 27,000 gallons of drilling mud into the lake at Marsh Creek. While Sunoco faces criminal charges for violations of the Clean Streams Law, while dozens of Pennsylvania families across

their 350-mile path are left without clean drinking water, and while drilling fluid of still-undisclosed composition sits on the bottom of the lake, Sunoco was permitted to pay a fine, restart construction, and continue polluting.

While I applaud DCNR for its planned use of the \$4 million from Sunoco to restore the park, improve ADA access, and protect aquatic and terrestrial habitats, there is no victory in DEP's announcement of yet another example of the slap-on-the-wrist fines and pay-to-pollute policies that have become business as usual in Pennsylvania.

In January, I joined my colleagues Senator Katie Muth and Representative Dianne Herrin in sending a letter to the Attorney General requesting that he invoke his authority under the Clean Streams Law to file an emergency injunction to halt construction on Mariner East.

Please visit my website or follow me on Facebook for Mariner East updates affecting our community.

YEAR IN REVIEW

The past year was unlike any other. While it was a year filled with challenges, I am certain there is nothing we cannot accomplish when we work together as a community for the common good of all. My staff and I have been hard at work serving the 155th Legislative District from Harrisburg to right here in our community.



In October, my team hosted an E-Recycling event. Together, we responsibly recycled more than 1,000 pounds of electronic waste!



For this year's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, we participated in a children's literacy book drive and helped collect diverse titles for a range of ages, interests, and reading levels.



This holiday season, our team hosted a Toys for Tots drive and helped sort toys for distribution to Chester County families. Thank you to everyone who donated toys to the drive!



My staff and I work hard to help as many constituents as possible from all corners of the 155th. Last summer, we supported our community and met our neighbors at events throughout the district.



Our vocal community is the driving factor in the work we do. In 2021, my staff and I were busy meeting our neighbors in all corners of the 155th District!



In September, I was proud to join my colleagues during Climate Week to reintroduce Go100PA legislation in the House and Senate. Good climate policy is good economic policy. That means investing in 100 percent renewable energy for Pennsylvania by 2050 and standing up to the corporate interests that are holding us back from fighting climate change.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

As your elected official in Harrisburg, I've been hard at work on the issues important to you. Two bills that I co-sponsored last year have recently been signed into law. Read below about these acts benefiting both Pennsylvania caregivers and seniors. You can find a complete list of my sponsored legislation under the News tab on my website.

Act 20 of 2021, Updating the Family Caregiver Support Act: Caregivers play an invaluable role in people's lives. Whether you're a grandparent raising your grandchild or taking care of a loved one living with Alzheimer's, navigating the related state statutes, federal laws and regulations can be a daunting feat. Act 20 of 2021 remedied this issue by streamlining these three sets of requirements by amending the Family Caregiver Support Act. This law provides important protections and assistance to Pennsylvania caregivers that align with federal standards. This includes removing provisions that limit available support for home

modifications and assistive devices and prohibiting primary caregivers from receiving benefits if they are a perpetrator in a substantiated case of abuse.

Act 94 of 2021, Affordable Rx for Seniors: Older Pennsylvanians living on fixed incomes should never have to choose between affording medicine and affording food or rent or heat. Pennsylvania's prescription assistance programs for older adults, PACE and PACENET, offer low-cost prescription medication to qualified residents, age 65 and older. This law expands access to life-saving medication by raising PACENET income limits to \$33,500 for a single person and to \$41,500 for a married couple.



LIHEAP

The application process for the 2021-2022 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is open!



LIHEAP provides help with home heating bills so that Pennsylvanians can stay warm and safe during the winter months. Assistance is available for both renters and homeowners.

LIHWAP

The Pennsylvania Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is now accepting applicants.

LIHWAP is a temporary emergency program to help families with low incomes pay overdue water bills. LIHWAP is a grant. You do not have to repay it.

LIHWAP crisis grants may be available if you have an emergency situation and are in jeopardy of losing your water service. You can receive one crisis grant for your drinking water service and one crisis grant for your wastewater service, up to \$2,500 each. Crisis situations include:

- Past-due water bills.
- Termination of utility service.
- Danger of having utility service terminated (received a notice that service will be shut off within the next 60 days).



You may apply for LIHEAP and LIHWAP online at www.compass.state.pa.us or through the MyCOMPASS PA mobile app. Paper applications are available through local county assistance offices, or interested applicants can download and print applications from dhs.pa.gov/LIHEAP or dhs.pa.gov/WaterHelp. For further assistance, please contact my office.

UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

The Pennsylvania Treasury is seeking the owners of billions of dollars in unclaimed property. My office has received a list of constituents in the district with property yet to be claimed, and we are working to get your rightful property back to you. Unclaimed property may include checks from employers, insurers, or utility companies; dividends and interest from savings accounts and stocks; and credit balances on forgotten accounts.

Visit www.patreasury.gov to see if the state is holding any property that belongs to you. My staff is here to help you search for and claim property in your name.

SEPTA KEY SENIOR ID CARDS

Seniors who present a SEPTA Key Senior ID Card are able to 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.

Signing up for a card is simple! If you are at least 65 years of age, stop by my district office with a form of ID with a date of birth on it, such as a PA driver's license, non-driver photo ID, U.S. passport, or birth certificate. We will take your photo and electronically submit your application to SEPTA, and you'll receive your card in the mail.

My staff has received many questions about the renewal process for senior SEPTA cards. Legislative offices do not yet have the ability to process senior card renewals, but **SEPTA has extended its expiration dates** for all Senior Key ID Cards that were originally set to expire in 2020, 2021, or 2022.

Senior Key Cards with printed expiration dates of 2020, 2021, and 2022 will now remain effective through the end of the month printed on the card in 2023. For example: a card with a May 2022 (5/22) expiration date will continue to be valid for travel through May 2023.





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STAY INFORMED!

Visit RepDanielle.com/emailsSignup to join my email list for regular updates from Harrisburg and the district.

lpo.km.0222

MOBILE OFFICE HOURS

Spring City Public Library

245 Broad St.

Spring City, PA 19475

First Wednesday of every month

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Henrietta Hankin Branch Library

215 Windgate Dr.

Chester Springs, PA 19425

Second Tuesday of every month

9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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CONSTITUENT SERVICES

- PennDOT documents
- Disability plates and placards
- Questions about REAL ID
- Birth certificate applications
- Unemployment Compensation issues
- Department of Human Services benefits (SNAP, Medical Assistance, Rent & Utility Assistance)
- Consumer complaints
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Concerns about state road conditions
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications
- **And more!**

