



State Representative

Eddie Day Pashinski

121st Legislative District

FALL 2022

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Dear Neighbor,

I hope that you and your family had a wonderful summer and you are all ready for a spectacular fall! In July, I worked with my colleagues to negotiate and pass a bipartisan budget for 2022-23 that utilizes one-time federal funds and extra state revenue to boost funding for our schools, property tax relief, human services and much more that will benefit Northeast Pennsylvanians in the coming year.

Altogether, Luzerne County schools will receive an additional \$35.4 million in state funding – 18.1% more than last year. These are the funding increases that my fellow House Democrats and I have fought for and thankfully were able to accomplish.

These are serious investments to help our kids and provide relief to property taxpayers, with an extra focus on the school districts and students most in need. That's because in Pennsylvania, local property taxes account for 58% of education funding, which has created funding inequities between school districts. By reducing our local school districts' dependence on property tax dollars and instead equitably funding our schools on the state level, we can provide every student with a high-quality education while also helping property taxpayers.

Here are some of the highlights from the 2022-23 budget. The figures provided are increases compared to the 2021-22 state budget.

Education:

- Basic education funding will receive a 11.4% or \$750 million increase over last year from the state. \$225 million of these funds will go towards the "Level Up" program for traditionally underfunded school districts, including Wilkes-Barre Area School District. Local school districts will see significant funding boosts, including:
 - o Over \$9 million more in basic education funding for Wilkes-Barre Area School District, a 26.7% increase to one of the most historically underfunded districts in the state & almost \$725,000 more for special education.
 - o Nearly \$2 million more in basic education funding for Hanover Area School District, a 21.4% increase & \$232,000 more for special education.
 - o Almost \$500,000 more in basic education funding for Crestwood School District, a 5.5% increase & almost \$90,000 more for special education.



(continued on page 4)

Remember to Vote in the November 8 General Election

Make your voice heard on November 8, 2022, be sure to vote!

Remember— all Pennsylvania voters can now vote by mail without needing to provide an excuse. This safe and convenient option ensures that your vote is counted without having to worry about your safety, the weather or schedule on Election Day.

October 24, 2022 – Last day to **REGISTER** and be able to vote in the November 8, 2022, election.

November 1, 2022 – Last day to apply for a **mail-in or civilian absentee ballot** – * However, you should apply at least ten days to two weeks earlier to ensure enough time for your application to be processed, then your ballot mailed, and then time for you to complete your ballot and return it by November 8.

November 8, 2022 – Last day for County Boards of Elections to receive voted mail-in and civilian absentee ballots (must be received by 8 P.M.).

November 8, 2022 – **GENERAL ELECTION DAY:** Polls are open from 7 A.M. to 8 P.M.

To register, apply for an absentee or mail ballot or for more information, please visit www.vote.pa.gov.

Please make sure you are registered to vote, study the issues and the candidates, base your vote on facts, truth, and love for our democracy. It's your sacred duty, it's your power, it's the basis of our democracy Of, By, And For, the People. And your words mean little or nothing if you don't vote.

More Than \$6 Million in State Grants Awarded to Improve Life in Luzerne County

It has been my pleasure to work with state, county, and local officials to acquire investment dollars to help all those who work to make our lives better. One of the most enjoyable parts of my job is helping others whenever and wherever I can. The true joy is helping local organizations, groups and governments receive grant funding necessary to improve the quality of life throughout the district and region. Since the beginning of 2022, I'm proud to have announced millions of dollars in grants for our area, including:

- Wilkes-Barre – \$2,500,000 to the Greater Wilkes-Barre Industrial Fund for the Gateway Project 3.0 from two RACP grants.
- Wilkes-Barre – \$1.1 million to Domestic Violence Service Center Inc., to expand its existing Wilkes-Barre facility.
- Hanover Township – \$1 million for Hanover Township to update the railroad alignment of the former Lehigh Valley Railroad between Mountain Top and Laurel Run Borough.
- Wilkes-Barre – \$350,000 on behalf of Luzerne County Transportation Authority, for the construction of a centralized transit facility in the city.
- Ashley Borough – \$238,909 for a new roof and gutters as part of the Ashley Borough Municipal Building Roof Replacement Project.
- Fairview Township – \$166,689 for roadway improvements along Spruce Street and Kirby Avenue, including repairs to the existing manholes and swales and installation of storm inlets, along with milling and repaving roads.
- Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority - \$175,000 on behalf of Allied Services Center City Skilled Nursing, for the conversion of the 3rd and 4th floors of a building into a dual licensed Medicare/Medicaid skilled nursing facility.
- Wilkes-Barre – \$50,000 toward improvements and renovations to the WVVAL building.
- Wilkes-Barre – \$225,000 for Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA Facility Locker Rooms Transformation, including a transformation of the locker room, a whirlpool, steam room, and a massage and lounge area.
- Wilkes-Barre – \$350,000 on behalf of Wilkes University, for equipment for a Cannabis Certification Program.
- Wilkes-Barre – \$234,527 on behalf of the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts, to assist with HVAC system upgrades and a façade stabilization at the Kirby Center.
- Wilkes-Barre – \$479,965 for interior and exterior renovations to the existing City Hall building.
- Wilkes-Barre – \$200,029 for renovations to the city-owned Department of Public Works building.

In addition to the projects listed above for the 121st Legislative District, the following project was awarded covering parts of the 121st and 119th Legislative Districts, which are represented by myself and Representative Gerald Mullery:

- Hanover Township – \$450,000 for Solomon's Creek Interceptor Phase 4, which will rehabilitate 600 feet of the Solomon Creek Interceptor along Ferry Road.

Don't forget: My district office is here to help if you or your organization are interested in applying for state funding.

Celebrating Urban Ag Week in Wilkes-Barre

In July, PA celebrated Urban Ag week. As the Democratic Chairman of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, I joined PA Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding for a tour of urban agricultural operations in Northeast PA – including Wilkes-Barre Community Garden.

No matter who you are or whether you live in a rural, suburban, or urban community, if there's food available to eat, it's thanks to agriculture. Urban Ag Week is a time to highlight the diverse growers and producers providing quality, locally grown food in our urban areas.

Urban Ag Week was also a chance to emphasize how the historic PA Farm Bill and PA Department of Agriculture have helped support and grow urban farming in Pennsylvania. Passed in 2019, this historic, first of its kind package of legislation has invested \$54.4 million into Pennsylvania agriculture - including \$1.5 million for the Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program, helping support 93 urban agriculture projects across 19 counties – including Luzerne.

Thank you to Secretary Redding and the Department of Agriculture for hosting this tour and a special thanks to everyone involved in urban ag across the state who are helping to highlight its necessity and importance in Pennsylvania!

And remember... One thing we can ALL do to support our PA farmers and producers across the commonwealth is to purchase our PA grown and produced products. Just look for the PA Preferred label. Remember that label means: Grown in PA. Buy PA. PA Preferred – PA Proud!



Honored to Receive Legislator of the Year Award from Pa. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

On April 23, I was humbled to receive the Legislator of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (PAND)! The award was presented in the Renaissance Hotel in Allentown at PAND's Annual Meeting and Expo.

It's an honor to have received this recognition from an organization as well-respected as PAND. A dietician is someone who is educated in the science of food components to determine the highest of quality and most nutritious and healthy foods to consume. Their education is powerful and vital in developing menus and the most nutritious meals for children and adults alike. Good nutrition is essential to good health, which is why I have steadfastly supported the Northeast District of the PA Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics events and PAND's legislation in Harrisburg. I want to thank PAND and their members for this wonderful recognition and more importantly for their commitment to serving the public through the promotion of optimal nutrition, health and well-being.

PAND based their unanimous decision on Legislator of the Year for my support of critical bills in the state House and participation in NEPAND events. Specifically, I have co-sponsored and supported all of PAND's licensure legislation since 2017, including House Bills 2721, 1802 and 1020. In addition to legislative support, I have also attended and participated in all of NEPAND's official live Legislative Breakfast Interviews since 2017. I am most grateful for this honor and I offer my most sincere thanks to all PAND members.



(Welcome letter continued from page 1)

Property Tax Relief for Seniors and Housing:

- A \$140 million expansion of the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.
- \$250 million for affordable housing construction.

Health & Human Services:

- \$547 million increase in the Community Waiver Program for individuals with disabilities, reducing the wait list for services.
- Mental Health Programs: \$100 million plus \$15 million for county mental health services.
- Creates a state child care tax credit based on federal program eligibility to help families with child care costs and ensure more individuals can return to the workforce.

Transportation:

- Highway & Safety Improvements - \$310 million.
- Highway Maintenance - \$63.12 million.
- Local Road Maintenance & Construction Payments - \$25.63 million.
- Municipal Traffic Signals - \$5 million.

Environment:

- The Department of Environmental Protection will be receiving a \$7 million increase to help preserve and protect our environment, while the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is getting an additional \$12.9 million to maintain our natural open space and landscapes.

Other environmental highlights include:

- \$220 million appropriated into the Clean Streams Fund to help restore local streams and protect our watersheds for years to come.
- \$100 million to bolster our state parks and recreation activities.
- \$320 million to water and sewer projects to ensure Pennsylvania residents have clean drinking water and proper sewage systems that are resistant to failure and protect the natural environment.

Veterans:

- \$3.2 million (12% increase) for general operations, including suicide prevention.
- Veterans Homes - \$29.6 million (26.1% increase).
- Veterans Outreach Services - \$3.8 million (14.5% increase).

Keep reading to learn more about the 2022-23 state budget, state investments in Luzerne County, important 2022 General Election Dates, and much more!

Let us continue to stay strong, stay safe and stay well. Together we will build a stronger and safer America by searching for the truth, searching for the facts, and then letting that information guide our actions, our words, and our vote.

The future of our great country depends on all of us participating in and protecting the basis of our democracy – our Constitution, the rule of law and the power – Of, By and For the People. God Bless America.

Sincerely,

Eddie Ray Pasinski



Pictures from Around the District & Commonwealth



One of my favorite parts of being the Co-Chair of the PA Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus is bringing my colleagues on both sides of the aisle together through the love of hunting and fishing to promote our incredible forests, lakes, and waterways we are all blessed with in PA. That's why I helped organize our annual reception in Enola in June to support our Hunters Sharing the Harvest (HSH) project. In addition to bringing awareness to the HSH program by hosting the event, the Caucus presented HSH with a generous \$4,500 check in support of helping PA hunters donate their venison to families in need. Over 187,000 pounds of venison was donated last year!



Earlier this summer, I attended the Pennsylvania State Education Association – Retired (PSEA-Retired) luncheon held at Luzerne County Community College. It was great to see so many of the teachers I had the pleasure of working with during my time as a music teacher in the Greater Nanticoke Area School District.



July 20 was "Pennsylvania Day," celebrating all the wonderful things about our beloved Commonwealth annually since 2017! Pennsylvanians have always been generous and charitable, which is why it was most appropriate to mark the holiday by joining America250PA and Feeding Pennsylvania for a day of action to help food banks across the state – including the Weinberg Food Bank where I spent the morning helping to fill the boxes with food.



In June, I attended the opening day for the Latinos Working Together in NEPA Softball League, along with Wilkes-Barre City Mayor George Brown, Chief Joe Coffay, and Sen. Marty Flynn at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park.



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Look inside for information about:

- How the 2022-23 Budget Helps Luzerne County
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Recipients to See Boost
- Grants for The District
- Important Nov. 8, 2022, General Election Dates
- And much, much more!

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2022-23 PA Budget Benefits Pennsylvanians



Supplemental Payments for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Recipients

Property tax relief has long been a priority of mine, especially for seniors and low-income residents. As part of the budget negotiations, I supported increasing the amount of the Property Tax/Rent rebates using extra federal dollars. I am happy to tell you that the new budget includes \$140 million to boost the 2021 rebates by 70%.

Those who filed for the 2021 rebate can expect to receive an additional one-time payout between \$175 - \$455 in the coming months. You don't need to do anything to receive this additional payment, and you will receive the one-time payment by direct deposit or by check based upon how you received your original rebate.



New Child Tax Credit

The high cost of child care continues to burden families with the impossible choice between work and their child. That's why I was proud to help support the Pennsylvania Dependent and Child Care Enhancement Program included in this year's budget. In order to help families with children, the program offers a newly created state tax credit. Eligibility for this tax credit is based on guidelines for the federal child care tax credit. Families earning over \$42,000 a year can expect \$180 for one child and \$360 for two children. For families earning \$15,000 or less, the credit would be \$315 for one child and \$630 for two or more children.



Whole-Home Repair Program

Affording the cost of needed home repairs is challenging for many homeowners. To help, this year's budget included the Whole-Home Repair Program, utilizing \$125 million in one-time federal funding for grants for homeowners and loans to landlords to make necessary improvements to their properties. To ensure this funding reaches those most in need, only homeowners who make less than 80% of their area's median income can apply, and landlords will need to meet a set of criteria to be eligible. Look for more information on this first of its kind program in the coming weeks and months!