

State Representative

Anthony A. Bellmon

District Office: 7215B Rising Sun Ave. | Philadelphia, PA 19111
(215) 560-1315 | Fax: (215) 549-8965

Capitol Office: 26B East Wing | P.O. Box 202203 | Harrisburg, PA 17120-2203
(717) 783-4111 | Fax: (717) 772-9996

www.RepBellmon.com | [f](#) [t](#) @RepBellmon



The governor's 2023-24 budget proposal

I was honored to sit in the House chamber watching Gov. Josh Shapiro deliver his first official budget address. His proposal prioritizes so many issues for our community, and I look forward to voting in favor of fair education funding, programs for gun violence prevention and raising the minimum wage, just to name a few. This commitment builds on the 2022-23 budget that was enacted with bipartisan support.

In addition to the budget, a new day was ushered into Pennsylvania state government when the first female speaker and the first Black lieutenant governor were sworn in.

The governor's budget plan makes sound investments while maintaining fiscal responsibility by assuring our Rainy Day Fund remains at \$5 billion, all while leaving the commonwealth with a healthy multi-billion-dollar surplus.

Here is a brief breakdown of the proposal:

Education

Under this proposal, basic and special education would share a \$671 million increase in funding. Higher education receives a \$60 million increase, including community colleges. Head Start would see a \$2.7 million increase, while Pre-K Counts would see a \$30 million increase. \$100 million would go to school safety and security, with another \$100 million for environmental repairs. The environment in which our children exist all day during the school year

matters. Crumbling schools that are asbestos-laden or have poor drinking water, no drinking water or lead paint falling from the walls are unacceptable and deplorable conditions that we need to change now.

Investing in our workforce

In order to bring in employees that are licensed and ready for some of our most critical jobs, a new Individual Recruitment and Retention Tax Credit - \$24.7 million - would be included for those vital professions facing shortages like first responders, nurses, teachers, and public policing. Current Pennsylvania residents could qualify for a credit against their personal income tax of up to \$2,500 per year for three years if they acquire a license or certification in one of those areas.

\$20 million would go to a pandemic-era federally funded program to support historically disadvantaged small businesses.

Stronger, Safer Communities

At this moment in time, our community safety is at the top of everyone's mind. Guns are too accessible, and we routinely are not feeling safe in many of our communities. \$105 million would go for the Violence Intervention and Prevention Program and \$5 million for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program. Additionally, the plan would call for hiring 384 state troopers and providing \$20 million for equipment upgrades.

Continued on next page

Hello neighbor,

Welcome to the new 203rd Legislative District encompassing Burholme, Lawncrest, Lawndale, Oxford Circle, Olney and Castor Gardens. Thank you for your trust in me. It is an honor to represent our community in Harrisburg.

This is an exciting time to be in Harrisburg with so many changes both to the balance of power and also to the direction we are headed. With the new Democratic majority, we will work to increase the minimum wage, provide access to affordable health care, keep our communities safe and improve the overall quality of life for Pennsylvanians across the commonwealth. I am committed to making sure state government programs are available, sustainable, and working for you at all times. If you need assistance in completing applications or simply want to hear all that is available to you, please stop by my office at 7215-B Rising Sun Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111 or call for an appointment or inquiry at (215) 560-1315.

I look forward to running into you around the district. In the meantime, I've compiled a short newsletter of my first few months in office and have listed all that we can do for you on the back panel.

Be sure to follow me on Facebook and Twitter @RepBellmon or contact me directly at RepBellmon@pahouse.net.

Sincerely,

Anthony Bellmon

The governor's 2023-24 budget proposal Continued

Property Tax/Rent Rebate

If you qualify for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, this information will be important to you. The governor's plan would increase the income cap for homeowners from \$35,000 to \$45,000. It also increases the income cap for renters from \$15,000 to \$45,000 to match the cap for homeowners. It would allow the maximum income threshold to grow with inflation rather than legislative vote beginning in claim year 2024. And it would increase the maximum rebate to \$1,000 from the current \$650.

Reducing Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is real, and it boggles the mind to think here in the commonwealth it exists. But an annual review from 2019 shows that more than 1.3 million Pennsylvanians didn't always know where their next meal was coming from. So, in this budget, the governor proposes a \$16 million state investment in SNAP benefits, which increases the minimum monthly benefit from \$23 to \$35. Another \$2 million for the Fresh Food Financing Initiative would be an investment in lower-income communities and food retail businesses that are Black/indigenous/people-of-color owned.

Criminal Justice Reform

\$10 million is included in the budget to ensure access to constitutionally required legal defense and ensure that public defenders have the resources they need to provide legal representation to defendants who cannot pay for it on their own.

Minimum Wage

A conversation we continue to have and hope to accomplish is the proposal to increase the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$15 per hour effective Jan. 1, 2024.

Adult Use Cannabis

The governor is serious about a new Adult Use Cannabis Tax at a rate of 20% of the wholesale price of products sold through the regulated framework. This would include making adult-use cannabis legal in the commonwealth.

In Summary

In order for this proposal to become reality, it must be vetted through the legislative process and both the House and Senate need to vote on it. I will do all I can on my end to ensure we see these favorable proposals become law and help to move the commonwealth in a more positive, prosperous and safe direction for now and many years to come.



Committee Assignments

Each of these committees focuses on issues that can greatly benefit our community and communities across the commonwealth, and I look forward to serving on them.

In addition to these committees, I also serve as co-chair of the PA Safe Caucus, which addresses gun violence, gun safety and expanding mental health resources.



Herstory Made

I proudly voted for my colleague Joanna McClinton as Speaker of the PA House – the first woman to ever serve in this role. She's done a great job so far, and I have no doubt that she will continue to do so!

Legislation

In my first six months in Harrisburg, I have voted to pass multiple pieces of legislation to do things such as: provide no-cost cancer screenings for high-risk patients (I'm pictured to the right at the press conference where Gov. Shapiro signed this legislation into law), address the teacher shortage, keep our communities safe from gun violence, and much more.

I have also introduced legislation to:

- Curb the illegal dumping of waste tires.
- Ensure all property owners in Philadelphia are made aware of future development projects near them.
- Establish the Freedom School Grant Program.
- Require bullying prevention education to be taught in schools across all grade levels.
- Promote access to Advanced Placement courses.
- Bring drivers education to schools.
- Urge Congress and the president to direct additional aid and support to Haiti.



Gun Safety Bills

Recently, we passed two bills in the House to help address gun violence. Those bills were:

- H.B. 1018 to create Extreme Risk Protection Orders.
- H.B. 714 to enact universal background checks.

As co-chair of the PA Safe Caucus, it is my No. 1 focus to pass sensible gun safety legislation. I applaud my

colleagues who joined us in voting for these bills in the House. We are in the midst of a gun violence crisis in Philadelphia and across the commonwealth. Passing these bills in the House was a step in the right direction to making our communities safer. The bills are now in the Senate for consideration, and I urge the Senate to act immediately.

Women's History Month



I was proud to join state Sen. Christine Tartaglione for a Women's History Month event in March.

Rallying Against Gun Violence



In March, I joined students, activists, and violence prevention organizations on the Capitol steps in Harrisburg for a rally against gun violence. Far too many times, I've had to hug grieving parents and/or guardians due to the loss of a loved one from gun violence. I stand committed in the fight to keep our communities safe!



Meeting with City Council Members

I joined my colleagues of the Philadelphia Delegation in Harrisburg as we discussed funding our school facilities with city council members. Multiple schools across Philadelphia have closed due to environmental hazards. I will continue fighting for funding so that our children can attend school in quality buildings that provide a safe learning environment.

PLBC James R. Roebuck Scholarship Recipient

I had the honor joining Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus Chairwoman Donna Bullock and state Sen. Sharif Street to present the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus James R. Roebuck Scholarship to Milaj Robinson from Olney. Milaj is a graduate of Philadelphia Electrical & Technology High School and currently attends Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA. Congratulations to Milaj and best of luck in your future endeavors!



Bringing Grants to the District

Throughout the first several months of this year, we have already seen state funding being awarded in our district. Much of it has gone to Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association (OCCDA), and I have been lucky to be at two check presentations for them. Those presentations took place on:

April 27, 2023, where OCCDA was awarded:

- \$100,000 in Neighborhood Assistant Funds (NPP).
- \$30,000 Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Street Cleaning Grant.

Thursday, March 2, 2023, DCED gave OCCDA:

- \$100,000 to the Big Bellies for business corridor improvements.

Speaking with Older Adults



It was great to host a town hall with Congressman Brendan Boyle at the Philadelphia Protestant Home discussing issues affecting older Pennsylvanians.



I had the honor of attending the Philadelphia Protestant Home's Centenarian Celebration where we celebrated 18 senior citizens who were 100 years old or older.

Out and about in the District

Office Grand Opening



I was proud to open my office space and welcome the community to our new home on 7215-B Rising Sun Ave. Please be sure to stop in anytime or call (215) 560-1315 for an appointment to meet with me and my staff regarding any state government issue you may have.

Visiting Businesses



On my Rising Sun Avenue Business Corridor Walk I had the chance to talk with many of our friends and business owners along the way. Here I am pictured with a few.

Library Visits

During National Library Week, I stopped by Lawncrest Branch Library and Bushrod Branch Library to visit with students and faculty. Our libraries open up a world of possibilities for young people and should be fully funded. It was a fun and educational experience as I got to see the positive impact libraries have on our community. I will continue to work to bring resources to our local libraries.





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Philadelphia, PA 19111

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How can my office help you?

- ➔ Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications
- ➔ PennDOT services, such as car registrations, handicap placards or titles
- ➔ Unemployment Compensation issues
- ➔ Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- ➔ Birth and death certificates
- ➔ Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- ➔ Pennsylvania income tax questions
- ➔ Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- ➔ Consumer complaints
- ➔ Notary services for state documents
- ➔ PACE cards for senior citizens
- ➔ Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications

Any other question about state government!



2023

Senior Fair

HOSTED BY

STATE REP. ANTHONY A. BELLMON

JUNE 16

10 A.M. – 2 P.M.

SAINT THOMAS INDIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH
1009 UNRUH AVE.
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19111

Please join Rep. Bellmon for his first senior fair! Come and learn about all the resources and services available to our older community members. This **FREE** event is open to the public.

SEPTA • PA Dept. of Aging • PA Game Commission
Fox Chase Cancer Center • Aetna

Lunch will be provided. We look forward to seeing you there!