

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE MIKE HANNA

DEMOCRATIC WHIP



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## FALL 2011 SPECIAL REPORT TO THE 76TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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### UNFAIR STATE BUDGET DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS

I made the decision to vote “no” on the state budget this year because it will hurt middle-class families. It will hurt college students, seniors and all of those who rely on valuable health and human services.

This budget is unnecessarily harsh, especially because we had more than \$785 million in surpluses that could have been used to restore these painful cuts. This budget is NOT a no-tax budget, as Gov. Corbett has claimed. It is a TAX-SHIFT budget, with middle-class homeowners and seniors being forced to pick up the tab through higher local property tax hikes.

The surplus is TAXPAYER money and belongs to the PEOPLE. As taxpayers, you deserve to get what you paid for: full funding of our public schools, our public universities, and our Medicaid health care programs for seniors, the disabled and the chronically ill.

One area of particular concern is the ever-increasing fleet of state vehicles. As Whip, I have voted to phase out all leased vehicles for House members by the end of this session. When Gov. Corbett campaigned last year, he spoke of reducing the state vehicle fleet, yet that fleet is now estimated to be almost 16,000, with a cost to taxpayers of at least \$72 million. And the worst hypocrisy of all is that the governor authorized the purchase of four new SUVs for himself and his wife, and the lieutenant governor and his wife – all while making drastic cuts to vital programs across the state.

In addition, the record profits of big business and the gas companies drilling in Pennsylvania have been protected in this budget while, instead of shared pain and sacrifice, hardworking families like yours are being forced to shoulder the entire burden.

### HIGHER EDUCATION ONE OF BIGGEST VICTIMS OF BUDGET AXE

With its unprecedented and devastating cuts to higher education – \$200 million – the 2011-12 state budget shows an incredible lack of foresight into the best interests of Pennsylvania’s future and a shocking misplacement of priorities.

I was so impressed with students from all across Pennsylvania who participated in rallies at the Capitol and at campuses statewide to speak up and call on the

governor to stop putting the burden of the state budget on the backs of working, middle-class families and college students. I especially want to acknowledge the team of cross country and track and field team members, students and professors from Lock Haven University who made what is perhaps the boldest and most memorable statement by running – yes, RUNNING – all the way to the Capitol in Harrisburg from Lock Haven to fight against deep cuts to higher education. Their dedication to this fight was inspiring. Their efforts helped trim the governor’s 50 percent proposed cuts to the 18 percent cut in the final budget.

These historic cuts could dismantle the framework of public higher education in Pennsylvania. This simply isn’t the place to cut back. Cuts to higher education, as well as basic education (see chart below) could imperil the economic future of our region and our state.

In fact, the budget was barely even 12 hours old and the pain was already being felt in a big way. First, the State System of Higher Education, which includes Lock Haven University, announced a tuition increase of 7.5 percent. Temple University followed with 9.9 percent increase, then the University of Pittsburgh followed with an 8.5 percent increase and Penn State University with a 4.9 percent increase for in-state students.

Without a well-educated workforce, Pennsylvania does not have a bright future when it comes to attracting new business investment. But it didn’t have to be this way, not when most of the \$785 million budget surplus still sits untouched.



*A team of students from Lock Haven University ran 100 miles from their campus to the state Capitol to protest deep cuts in funding for higher education. Rep. Hanna met the team and ran the last leg of their journey with them.*

#### Local School District Funding Decreases in 2011-12 State Budget

- Bald Eagle Area, Centre County  
\$968,613 decrease, or 11 percent
- Bellefonte Area, Centre County  
\$1.08 million decrease, or 12 percent
- Penns Valley Area, Centre County  
\$750,786 decrease, or 14.6 percent
- Keystone Central, Clinton County  
\$2.89 million decrease, or 13 percent



For video of me speaking about the budget, scan with your smartphone’s QR reader.

## REFORM EFFORTS IN THE HOUSE

As the House Democratic Whip, one of my duties is to sit on the Bipartisan Management Committee (BMC). The committee is composed of the five top elected leaders of the Pennsylvania House and decides many of the perks and benefits of the legislature. During my tenure in the House, I have advocated for reforms in the General Assembly and I was successful in getting the committee to implement several changes that will help save taxpayer money:

- As of July 1, 2011, for the first time, House members now pay a portion of the cost of their health benefits.
- There will be no more vehicles leased for House members after the current leases run out in 2012.
- Documentation of an overnight stay will be required for House members to receive per diem payments for lodging.

In addition, with my support the House passed legislation to address the state pension crisis by making sensible changes to benefits for future employees. The proposal avoids steep property tax hikes by making two important changes to the

pension system. The state and school districts lower their annual payments to the funds by spreading the payments over more years. Plus, benefits for new state workers and public school employees starting Jan. 1, 2011 or later are reduced.

Full retirement age for those workers is 65 and workers are not fully vested until 10 years, up from the current five. The multiplier that determines income also is rolled back from 2.5 percent to 2 percent.

Our comprehensive pension reform tempers the dramatic spike in pension costs faced by the state and school districts and creates new rules for future employees in an effort to stabilize the finances of public pension funds in future decades.

These are landmark changes reflecting a new direction and culture of reform within the Pennsylvania House, which is reflective of the new leadership team that I proud to be a part of.



*Rep. Hanna welcomes the coaches and team members from the championship Central Mountain Wrestling Team to the state Capitol.*



*Rep. Hanna visits with fourth-grade students from Mill Hall Elementary School in Lock Haven.*

## MORE THAN \$6.3 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR CLINTON AND CENTRE COUNTIES SO FAR THIS YEAR

I was happy to announce millions of dollars in state grants and funding for communities and municipalities throughout Clinton and Centre counties during the first half of 2011:

- \$4 million H2O PA grant to the City of Lock Haven to assist with upgrades to the Lock Haven Sewage Treatment Plant, including influent pumping and influent screening facilities, as well as replacement of the treated effluent chlorine disinfection facilities with ultraviolet disinfection to meet compliance requirements set by the state Department of Environmental Protection
- \$1.2 million H2O PA grant to the Suburban Lock Haven Water Authority to construct a new finished water transmission main and water booster station in Colebrook Township. The project includes the construction of a new water main, new booster station and new water meters for the Whiskey Run Water System
- \$502,794 H2O PA grant to the Western Clinton County Municipal Authority to replace the existing pump station (no. 4) in Chapman Township, which is hydraulically overloaded during wet weather
- \$463,623 H2O PA grant to the Woodward Township Authority to assist with the Woodward Heights Sanitary Sewer Lines Rehab Project, which includes upgrading sanitary sewers, manholes and sewer pipes
- \$56,250 county planning grant to Centre County to reimburse up to 80 percent of the costs incurred to revise its solid waste management plan
- \$51,000 grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection to Boggs Township for construction of a stream restoration project along Wallace Run that will stabilize 700 feet of severely eroded stream channel
- \$50,945 recycling performance grant to the Clinton County Solid Waste Authority for recycling 4,864 tons in 2008
- \$12,513 recycling performance grant to City of Lock Haven for recycling 811 tons in 2009
- \$12,007 Small Business and Household Pollution Prevention Grant to the Clinton County Solid Waste Authority to reimburse 50 percent of the costs for developing and operating household hazardous waste collection events
- \$6,456 sewage facilities grant to the Centre Region Council of Governments to reimburse 50 percent of the cost of performing enforcement provisions outlined in state law
- \$4,665 Small Business and Household Pollution Prevention Grant to the Clinton County Solid Waste Authority to reimburse 50 percent of the costs for developing and operating a household hazardous waste collection event
- \$3,812 Small Business and Household Pollution Prevention Grant to the Centre County Solid Waste Authority to reimburse 50 percent of the costs for developing and operating household hazardous waste collection events