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## Governor's proposed budget for 2014/15 is unsustainable

On February 4, Governor Tom Corbett presented his budget proposal for 2014/15, which included \$29.4 billion in spending, an increase of \$926.8 million, or 3.3 percent. His election-year budget plan relies on roughly \$1.2 billion worth of one-time revenue sources, transfers and other unsustainable funding gimmicks that will leave the following year's budget in dire shape.

### Education: Cuts remain largely in place

The governor's first budget cut education funding by \$1 billion. Three years later, those recurring cuts remain largely in place. Because of these cuts, school districts across the state have been forced to increase class sizes, eliminate education programs and activities, furlough teachers and raise property taxes. The governor's proposal includes no increase to the basic education subsidy, which is the largest appropriation in the education budget. Instead, he proposes to create a new block grant, a competitive grant for highest-achieving school districts, and another grant program available to only 100 schools. He also proposes modest increases in an early learning program and special education.

The governor proposes no increases for the state's institutions of higher education, which is an effective cut when you consider inflationary cost increases. State funding for higher education remains lower today than 10 years ago.

### Fiscal challenges: Other states recovering faster

The commonwealth is facing a budget gap of more than a billion dollars. The National Association of State Budget Officers reports that almost every state will end this fiscal year with a budget surplus, including neighboring states like New York. Governor Corbett's policies are not working and are taking us in the wrong direction. This is the governor's fourth budget; therefore, he can no longer pass the buck and blame previous governors and the federal government for the state's fiscal challenges.

The governor chose to cut business taxes by \$2.1 billion,

rather than investing in our schools. It would be one thing if those business tax cuts resulted in a significant number of new family-sustaining jobs, but that hasn't happened. The governor likes to tout the number of private sector jobs he's created; however, when you subtract the tens of thousands of public sector jobs lost (for example, teachers and other school employees), the number of jobs created over the last three years is far fewer. In national rankings, Pennsylvania is consistently at the bottom in job growth and projected growth – behind most of our neighboring states. During most of the recession, Pennsylvania's unemployment rate was lower than the national rate. However, in August 2012, our unemployment rate moved above the national average, and has remained there in 14 of the last 16 months.

### June 30 budget deadline

As Democratic chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, I participated in 36 budget hearings in February. During those public hearings, state agencies, row offices and other institutions appeared before the committee for a thorough review of their budgets and future initiatives.

Over the course of the next couple of months leading up to the June 30 budget deadline, I will continue to review all aspects of the governor's proposal and advocate for a responsible spending plan that restores the funding cuts of the past without resorting to one-time spending gimmicks. The General Assembly will then enact a new spending plan and submit it to the governor for his signature.

For more information on the budget, visit the House Appropriations Committee website at [www.hacd.net](http://www.hacd.net). Under the "Budget" tab, you will find a comprehensive analysis of the budget proposal.



## Markosek named IUP's Legislative Fellow

I am honored to have been named the 2013 Legislative Fellow by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) faculty members and administrators, and the union that represents those faculty members, the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF).

APSCUF representatives, IUP administrators, and students designed the program, in which the Fellow serves as a guest speaker in classes and meets with students, faculty and staff members. I share the program organizers' belief that, in addition to the sharing of expertise, on-campus contact among students, faculty members, and state legislators will result in greater understanding of the roles each plays in higher education.

I am, and always have been, a strong supporter of higher education and I look forward to this opportunity to learn and to share my insight with IUP students, faculty and staff in the upcoming year.



## New state laws protect children from abusers

This session I was proud to support 10 recently enacted laws that will help to protect the commonwealth's most precious asset – our children.

The new laws follow the recommendations of a November 2012 report by the Pennsylvania Task Force on Child Protection, established through joint resolutions in the state House and Senate.

The new laws:

- Lower the threshold for child abuse from serious bodily injury to bodily injury;
- Recognize that perpetrators of child abuse can be as young as 18 and create new protections that address false reports and intimidation;
- Provide immunity for reporters of child abuse from liability, provide penalties for false reporting and improve appeals processes;
- Expand the basis for disciplinary action against teachers to include findings of child abuse;
- Encourage joint child abuse investigations between county children and youth agencies and law enforcement;
- Instruct the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing to provide guidelines for offenses involving child pornography;
- Require judges, when awarding custody, to consider a parent's involvement with cases of child abuse and provide information sharing on child protective services and general protective services to the court jurisdiction determining custody;
- Prevent the records and name of minor victims of sexual or physical abuse from being available for public review; and
- Establish the offense of luring a child into a motor vehicle or structure.

## I voted to cut the size of the Pa. legislature, reduce costs

Pennsylvania has one of the largest legislatures in the country, and I believe we need to cut costs.

That's why I recently voted for two bills – one that would reduce the state House of Representatives from 203 to 153 members and another that would reduce the state Senate from 50 to 38 members. By reducing the number of members in both chambers, we could save taxpayer money.

Reducing the size of the legislature requires an amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution. To change the constitution, the bills must pass the House and Senate in two consecutive legislative sessions and receive approval by voter referendum.



# Public dollars returned to the 25th District

<b>Fire, Ambulance Service Grant Recipients</b>	
Plum Emergency Medical Service Inc.	\$6,585
Monroeville EMS	\$7,091
Pitcairn Ambulance Association	\$7,091
Murrysville Medic No. 1	\$7,091
Trafford Emergency Medical Service Co. No. 1	\$7,091
Crestas Volunteer Fire Co. No. 4	\$12,000
Monroeville Fire Co. No. 6	\$12,000
Pitcairn Fire Co. No. 1	\$12,000
Trafford Fire Co. No. 1	\$12,318
Pitcairn Relief Fire Co. No. 2	\$12,486
Holiday Park Volunteer Fire Department	\$12,647
Renton Volunteer Fire Department	\$12,972
Monroeville Volunteer Fire Co. No. 4	\$13,363
Monroeville Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1	\$13,619
Monroeville Volunteer Fire Co. No. 5	\$13,619
Murrysville Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1	\$13,619
Unity Volunteer Fire Department	\$13,619
Fire Department of North Versailles (Fire & EMS)	\$20,701

<b>Unconventional Gas Well Fee 2013/14 Disbursements (Act 13)</b>	
<b>Commonwealth Financing Authority – Greenways, Trails and Recreation Grants</b>	
Plum Borough – Plum Playground/Ball Fields	\$51,500
Trafford Borough – Westmoreland Park	\$215,120
<b>Municipality Well Payment (Based on proximity to a gas well)</b>	
North Versailles Township	\$502
Monroeville Borough	\$1,271
Plum Borough	\$5,037
Trafford Borough	\$3,091
Murrysville Borough	\$53,133

<b>Recycling Awards</b>	
<b>Recycling Performance Grant Program – Based on the tons recycled in 2011 and the municipality’s population</b>	
Monroeville Borough	\$18,097
Murrysville Borough	\$19,806
<b>Host Municipal Inspector Grant Program</b>	
Monroeville Borough	\$7,465

<b>Other Grants and Awards</b>	
<b>Community Conservation Partnerships Program</b>	
Development of a rail trail along Turtle Creek industrial railroad corridor	<b>\$457,000</b>
<b>Allegheny County Gaming Economic Development and Tourism Fund</b>	
YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh – Plum Borough	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>Environmental Education and Stewardship</b>	
Municipality of Monroeville	<b>\$3,000</b>
Forbes Road Career and Technology Center	<b>\$7,500</b>

## Some welcome news: Plum among nation’s safest communities

It seems as if every time we turn on the television, there’s a steady stream of news about crime and violence.

Last year, however, we received some refreshing and welcome news when Plum Borough was ranked the nation’s sixth safest city.

It was my pleasure to co-sponsor a resolution the state House adopted that recognized the borough’s achievement.

I’d like to extend my congratulations again to Mayor Richard Hrivnak, borough officials, police and residents for making Plum a safe place. Please keep up the good work!



## Does the state have your unclaimed property?

Every year, the state Treasurer's Office obtains millions of dollars in unclaimed property and if any of it is yours, I want to make sure you get it back.

Unclaimed property is any financial asset that has been left with a bank, insurance company, or business or organization without any activity for five years. Those entities are required by law to transfer abandoned property to the state Treasurer's Office, which maintains custody of the property until it is claimed by the owner.

Unclaimed property may include:

- Closed bank accounts;
- Uncashed checks, including paychecks;
- Lost stocks and bonds;
- Contents of safe deposit boxes;
- Life insurance policies; and/or
- Expired gift cards/gift certificates.

Treasury keeps an online database, which you may search for free, to see if you have any unclaimed property. It can be accessed at [www.patreasury.gov/unclaimedProperty.html](http://www.patreasury.gov/unclaimedProperty.html). My office is also available to help you in your search.

## Property Tax/Rent Rebate, tax forms available in my office

One of the most important aspects of my job as a state representative is helping people deal with state government.

One of the more popular services my office has to offer is helping people apply to the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. The program provides assistance with property taxes and rent to Pennsylvanians 65 and older, widows and widowers 50 and older, and people with disabilities 18 and older.

Forms are available in my office. My staff will be happy to help you apply for free!

In addition, state and federal income tax forms are available in my office. While my office can provide the tax forms, we cannot assist you in completing the forms.

However, free tax preparation is available through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program for taxpayers who qualify. The VITA program offers free basic tax return preparation with electronic filing to people who make \$52,000 or less. In our area, a VITA site is located at the Community College of Allegheny County, Boyce Campus. Appointments are required and can be made by calling (412) 255-1155. To find additional sites or for more information visit [www.irs.gov/Individuals/Free-Tax-Return-Preparation-for-You-by-Volunteers](http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Free-Tax-Return-Preparation-for-You-by-Volunteers).

## Redistricting reshapes the 25th Legislative District

In 2013, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld a redistricting plan that redraws the boundaries of all 203 state House and 50 state Senate districts.

Once the new plan is in effect, the 25th Legislative District, which I have represented since 1983, will be entirely in Allegheny County.

It will consist of the boroughs of East McKeesport, East Pittsburgh, Monroeville, Pitcairn, Plum (Districts 5 through 17), the Allegheny County portion of Trafford, Wall and Wilmerding, along with North Versailles Township.

East, South and West Murrysville and the Westmoreland County Portion of Trafford will be removed from the 25th District.

All of Murrysville will be part of the 54th District. The Westmoreland County portion of Trafford will be part of the 56th District.

For now, nothing has changed.

You can contact my office for help with any state-related matter.

**The new boundaries will be in effect for the 2014 election and thereafter.** These changes do not affect your township or school district affiliation.

If you are unsure of what ward and precinct you live in, please visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) or call my office.

The process of redrawing the boundaries of Pennsylvania's House and Senate districts takes place every 10 years following the Census to equalize populations in legislative districts.



# Around the 25th District



Ribbon cutting for Plum Borough Public Works Department and groundbreaking ceremony for Plum EMS & Renton Volunteer Fire Department building



Pediatric Healthcare grand opening in North Versailles



Visit to Compunetix Inc. in Monroeville to honor Dr. Giorgio Coraluppi who was named CEO of the Year by Pittsburgh Technology Council

Grand opening of the Cinemark Movie Theater in Monroeville



Tour of REL-TEK Corporation's new Safety Technology Center in Monroeville



Tour of the Monroeville landfill



Murrysville Community Days

Trafford Bridge reopening and dedication with Sen. Brewster



Monroeville Arts Council's arts show





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**Update on Route 286 road  
 widening project**

According to PA Department of Transportation District 11 leaders, bids for the first phase of the Route 286 road widening project in Monroeville and Plum opened on January 30 and construction will begin in the spring.

Plans to widen and repave the section of Route 286, also known as the Golden Mile Highway, between U.S. Route 22 and Sagamore Hill Road in Monroeville were included in the Southwestern PA Commission’s Transportation Improvement Program. However, the project has been at a standstill for many years because there has been little money available statewide for new construction projects.

Improving Route 286 will help expedite traffic; therefore, it will benefit residents who travel the Golden Mile Highway every day, as well as businesses.

I will continue to update you on the road widening project as more details become available on phases two and three.

**Port Authority opens new park  
 and ride lot on Route 286**

The Port Authority of Allegheny County, in partnership with PennDOT and Plum Borough, recently opened a new 64-space park and ride lot on Route 286. The lot is located on Route 286 at New Texas Road in Plum and is served by existing inbound and outbound stops on the P12 Holiday Park Flyer bus route. The new lot features three spaces for people with disabilities and is paved, striped and lighted.

For more information on the new lot, visit the Port Authority of Allegheny County’s website at [www.portauthority.org](http://www.portauthority.org).

**Markosek maintains record of  
 perfect attendance: 31 years**

It’s quite an honor to serve a region that has always recognized the importance of a day’s work. With that comes a responsibility to represent the area in a manner that reflects our strong work ethic.

Several years ago, I set the record for perfect attendance by never missing a day when the House was in session since I was first elected in 1982, and I am proud to continue to build on that record. I take the responsibility of being an elected voice of the people seriously.

I also hope my accomplishments in Harrisburg over the past 31 years – rising through the ranks to become chairman of the House Transportation Committee and then being elected by my colleagues to serve as their chairman on the House Appropriations Committee – demonstrates that hard work results in success.