IMPORTANT TOLL-FREE NUMBERS

State Government
PACE Cardholder Service .................................................. 1-800-225-PACE (7223)
Property Tax/Rent Rebate Info ............................................ 1-888-222-9190
Unemployment Compensation ............................................. 1-800-692-7469
Workers’ Compensation Helpline ......................................... 1-800-482-2363

Emergency & Special Needs
CDC Hotline (AIDS/Immunizations/Autism/STDs) ................... 1-800-342-2437
Coalition Against Rape ...................................................... 1-888-772-PCAR (7227)
Crime Stoppers ................................................................. 1-800-4PA-TIPS (472-8477)
Domestic Violence Hotline ................................................... 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
Elder Abuse Reporting Hotline (care facilities) ....................... 1-800-254-5164
Elder Abuse Reporting Hotline (in-home) ................................ 1-800-490-8505
Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) ............................................... 1-866-857-7095
Legal Aid Locator (AARP national network) ........................ 1-888-687-2277
Mortgage Assistance ............................................................ 1-800-342-2397
PA Department of Health ..................................................... 1-877-724-3258
Poison Control Center ........................................................ 1-800-222-1222
Senior Law Helpline .......................................................... 1-877-727-7529

Children & Youth
Healthy Kids Helpline (PA CHIP) ....................................... 1-800-986-KIDS (5437)
National Runaway Switchboard .......................................... 1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)
PHEAA Student Grants/Loans .............................................. 1-800-692-7392
Special Kids Network (referral service) ............................... 1-800-986-4550
Teeline (crisis intervention) .................................................. 1-800-722-5385
State Representative
W. Curtis Thomas
181st Legislative District

Improving conditions in his community is something to which W. Curtis Thomas has always been committed. First sworn into office in 1988, he has served honorably since then as state representative of the 181st Legislative District. The 181st Legislative District includes parts of North Central Philadelphia, West Poplar, East Poplar, Northern Liberties and Spring Garden.

Upon graduation from Thomas Edison High School, he obtained a B.S. degree in secondary education from Temple University and enrolled in the graduate program, majoring in education administration. Thomas soon became lead teacher in the Get Set Program housed at Ruffin-Nichols A.M.E. Church in North Philadelphia, where he prepared preschool children for entry into school. However, the terror caused by gang violence in the community during the 1970s moved Thomas to co-found the Philadelphia Committee for Services to Youth. Collaborating with the late Edwina Baker and other community activists, Thomas worked to end gang violence in North Philadelphia.

His work with the committee spurred Thomas to continue his education by attending the David A. Clarke School of Law (formerly Antioch School of Law) in Washington, D.C., where he received his law degree. As a second- and third-year student, he taught civil practice, constitutional and property law and served as chairman of the Black American Law Students Association (BALS). During that time, he also worked as a law clerk in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare’s Office of General Counsel, Civil Rights Division. His experience and research at David A. Clarke School of Law inspired him to author “The Breadth & Scope of Title VI, 1964 Civil Rights Act,” which was published in the North Carolina Law Review.

Thomas soon returned to Pennsylvania to serve as a law clerk for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. Always mindful of his responsibility to improve his community, he served as chief executive officer of East Poplar NAC, founded the East Poplar Community Economic Development Corporation and served as chairman of the North Philadelphia Branch of the Consumers Education Protection Association.

In his first term, Thomas founded the Legislative Housing Caucus to address affordable housing issues facing Pennsylvanians. He has since assisted in securing millions for new housing development and housing rehabilitation in the 181st Legislative District. His leadership and advocacy led to a 10-year appropriation for Housing and Development Assistance.

As one who has worked tirelessly to close the digital divide, Thomas created and chaired the Information Technology Subcommittee under the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (1995). Through his leadership, the subcommittee developed a “Digital Excellence Blueprint” for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, which resulted in implementation of major initiatives in the blueprint by Governor Ed Rendell.

Appointments
• Chair, House Commerce Committee (2012)
• Chair, House Urban Affairs Committee (2009)
• Chair, House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (2006)
• Co-chair, Information Technology Subcommittee of the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (1995)
• Executive Board of the National Conference of State Legislatures (chairman of the Internet Caucus)
• Speaker’s Bipartisan Reform Commission
• Joint State Government Commission on Real Property
• Joint State Government Commission on Stroke Prevention
• Board of Trustees, Lincoln University (longest sitting member from Philadelphia County)
• Board of Directors, Philadelphia High School Academies

Biography

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Budget briefing

Budget briefing

2013-2014 Budget Highlights
• Firearm Taskforce
• Witness relocation
• Drug Taskforce
• Keystone Works
• Apprenticeship Program
• Mortgage foreclosure assistance
• PA land bank
• PA blight remediation
• Small business development centers

Taiwan Independence celebration at Joy Tsin Lau

Taiwan Independence celebration at Joy Tsin Lau

Ms. Lenora Carey 103rd birthday

Ms. Lenora Carey 103rd birthday
Thomas’ accomplishments include securing funding, support and/or technical assistance for community-based organizations, businesses and schools in the district.

**Housing**
- Rep. Thomas secured funding, technical, legal and property assistance for the following:
  - Mt. Tabor Cyber Village Senior Development
  - William B. Moore Manor Senior Development
  - Dauphin Arms Apartments
  - Ludow Homes
  - Nehemiah Homes
  - Warnock Homes
  - Lutheran Settlement

**Education**
- Established the State Representative Awards in 1990 that honors students in the district for academic excellence
- Working to re-establish William Penn High School as a career-technical high school
- Provided over 100 laptop computers to college-bound high school seniors
- Established the 181st School to Work Education & Employment Program (SWEEP) that resulted in the William Penn Health Academy, Benjamin Franklin Maritime & Trade Academy, Strawberry Mansion Law & Justice Academy and the Simon Gratz Robotics Academy.
- Established the 181 Public Safety Patrol at district schools (employed 65 district residents)
- Established the 181st Kids Zone to provide information and services to families

**Selected Legislative Accomplishments**
- Sponsor the first statewide Sharing the Wealth Technology Conference to assist minority-owned technology businesses in securing state contracts
- Assisted 17 minority-owned businesses in securing contracts with Pennsylvania gaming operators
- Secured over $5 million for the revitalization of Freedom Theatre and the Blue Horizon
- Provided over $3 million in direct funding to community-based organizations

**Community Economic Development**
- Sponsored $2.5 million in capital redevelopment funding for Fresh Grocer Supermarket in Progress Plaza
- Supported subsidized childcare management companies that brought over $2 million in annual revenues and 50 jobs to the district
- Sponsored the Pennsylvania Housing Trust Fund Law that allows the city to raise funds for restoration of existing housing, new housing and emergency rental assistance. Philadelphia was the only county that did not have a housing trust fund.
- Check-cashing Licensing Law that regulates check-cashing businesses and restricted predatory payday loans
- Tracking of illegal guns
- Drug Nuisance Abatement Law
- Pennsylvania Healthcare Practitioners Loan Repayment Law
- Caregivers Assistance Law
- Nursing License Endorsement Law
- Expanding Worker’s Compensation benefits to police, firefighters, paramedics, rescue, correctional, forensic and emergency personnel who contract Hepatitis C while on duty
- Established the Pennsylvania Human Services Development Fund
- Income Tax check off for breast cancer research and treatment

**Norris Square Community Day**
- Held his annual Christmas Party for children of the 181st Legislative District at St. Paul’s Community Center. The Wallace Street Community Development Corporation and Community Connections were very helpful in making the affair a success. The annual event included music, a magician, cartoon characters, face painting, food and, of course, Santa and his elf. Over 200 children and their families attended. Each family received a bag of gifts for the children. The toys were donated by Drexel University, Marines Toys for Tots, the Mathematics, Civics and Sciences Charter School, 181st District families and his staff.

**SEIU Local 668 Health Fair**
- Pat DeCarlo introduces Rep. Thomas at Norris Square’s annual community day.
North Philly Aztecs

Rep. Thomas is excited about the growth of the North Philly Aztecs, who won a national championship and about the new 21st Century athletic field at the Hunting Park Recreation Center.

Just Us Four back-to-school book giveaway

Rep. Thomas helps unload the books being distributed to district students.

Tribute to the Gambles

Rep. Thomas congratulates Kenny and Fatima Gamble on being honored for their good work in the community.

Men in Motion in the Community (MIMIC)

Rep. Thomas engages youth at a community event sponsored by MIMIC, a group of men who work with youth to avert violence in the community. He joins Councilperson Maria Quinones-Sanchez and a member of MIMIC.

Thanksgiving

Rep. Thomas provided 100 turkeys and 15 baskets to families throughout the district.

Education

Thomas presses for answers to school closings

“I applaud Superintendent Hite for reconsidering 10 of the schools scheduled for closing,” said Rep. W. Curtis Thomas, who has been an outspoken opponent of the SRC’s plan. “Keeping Cooke open and merging the two military academies at Elverson is good. However, I continue to be extremely troubled by Hite’s decision to close Ferguson and Fairhill elementary schools. I don’t understand the need to close those two schools. Several years ago, Fairhill received national attention for the progress it made under a previous principal. The school also recently received a new heater and generator. It’s a waste of money to close the school after these expenditures.”

Thomas raised several questions regarding the reason behind the closings. “What is the real reason for closing these two schools and why are these students being pushed to schools like Julio De Burgos, Hartranft and McKinley elementary schools? Since last year, North Philadelphia seems to be bearing the brunt of the schools scheduled for closing and I’d like to know why.”

Thomas also had questions about William Penn High School that was taken off of the school closure list under Dr. Arlene Ackerman’s administration. “We were promised that William Penn would reopen in 2014 as a career-technical high school,” he explained. “However, we have heard nothing about those plans. The community and I want to know, what’s the status of that proposal?”

Thomas said what’s going on in Philadelphia Public Schools looks like a systematic pattern of de facto segregation. The

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission agreed. A 1971 investigation by the commission into the Philadelphia School District found that the district was illegally segregated and denying minority students their right to equal educational opportunity. After decades of argument over procedure and jurisdiction, Commonwealth Court settled the case in 2009. At that time, PHRC Executive Director Homer Floyd noted that the historic settlement would not have been possible without the dedication and leadership of the late Dr. Arlene Ackerman and the support of ASPIRA. Floyd said that the settlement would ensure that the school district is held accountable for equal distribution of funding and resources so that disadvantaged minority children receive the same opportunities as their peers.

“Unfortunately, that did not happen. Discrimination is still alive and well in the School District of Philadelphia,” Thomas said. “I want to know what the SRC is doing to ensure that quality educational programs are provided to all students, including those in North Philadelphia. Surely, quality education will not take place in the overcrowded classes that will emerge due to the consolidation of schools.”

The 2009 settlement acknowledged the district’s efforts to address racial disparities, while noting that racial disparities persist in spite of those efforts. The settlement required the district to address persistent gaps between the achievement of its white students and that of its Black and Latino students by implementing “Imagine 2014,” the five-year plan developed by Dr. Ackerman.

Rep. Thomas questions the School Reform Commission. Under that plan, the district was to:

- Increase achievement and close the opportunity and achievement gap for all students;
- Ensure the equitable allocation of district resources;
- Hold all adults accountable for student outcomes; and
- Satisfy parents, students and the community.

Thomas questioned why this plan is not being followed. “The settlement sets reporting requirements and annual benchmarks the school district must meet for identifying low-performing schools and allocating financial and other resources to those schools. Said to say, that has not happened. The real question is, who stands to benefit by the closing of these schools? Surely not the students. There is nothing in the SRC’s plans that provide parents and elected officials with the assurance of any real changes for the better.”
Thomas stands for William Penn

State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas has been standing with the William Penn Development Coalition, concerned alumni and area residents in their fight to have William Penn High School reopened in 2014 as a career-technical high school, with a focus on science technology engineering and math (STEM). The William Penn Development Coalition, organized in 2009, is a community-based organization of William Penn Alumni and those concerned about the future of the high school. The coalition and Thomas have been working on this issue for several years. Although the media and others are reporting that the school is up for sale, it is not on the closed list and the School District of Philadelphia does not have it on its list of available properties. Instead, William Penn is on the district’s list of properties for which it is accepting “expressions of interest.” The coalition has submitted a proposal.

Over 20 years of honoring students for excellence

Each year State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas honors graduates of the 181st Legislative District at his annual “State Representative Awards.” Twenty-four students from public, charter and parochial schools in the 181st were honored for academic excellence and contributions to their school and community.

Thomas said the awards ceremony, which is usually held in July, was postponed until December 2013 due to financial concerns. “I am grateful that Dr. Cora Turpin and Operation Lifelines Inc. stepped up to secure funds for the technology gifts this year. Each honoree received a tablet computer. I feel it’s important that the youth who do the right thing are recognized for their accomplishments.”

Camia Freeman, a 1990 recipient of the award who is studying medicine in Poland, was the special guest. The students and their families were treated to a reception following the award presentations.

Since 1990, Thomas has honored over 700 elementary, middle and high school graduates who have been selected by their principals for academic excellence. Each honoree receives a technology gift and a certificate of recognition.

Rep. Thomas discusses re-entry initiatives with Wayne Jacobs, founder of X-Offenders, at the annual 11th Street Reunion.

Affordable Healthcare Program workshop

State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas sponsored a workshop in cooperation with the African American United Fund to inform people about the Affordable Care Act and how to enroll in the new Health Insurance Marketplace. Representatives from Resources for Human Development (RHD) discussed how to choose an insurance plan and how to enroll. A representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare discussed Pennsylvania’s proposed expanded Medicaid plan and who may be eligible to participate. RHD had staff available to enroll people on-site.

Rep. Thomas has been a longtime supporter and active participant with the North Philly Foot Stompers.

Constituents wait to be enrolled in the Affordable Care Act healthcare program.
Outreach In and Around the District

Thomas honored at Pennsylvania Aviation & Aerospace Conference

Rep. Thomas attended the annual Pennsylvania Aviation & Aerospace Conference to discuss expanding the aviation and aerospace industries in the state. He received an award for his support of the aviation industry in Pennsylvania.

Career Day in district schools

Rep. Thomas visited several district schools during the annual Career Day in public schools. He educated the students on the role of a legislator in state government.

The 2013 honorees are:

Alexis Aiken Morrison Elementary School
Anayah Reenes John F. Hartranft Elementary School
Ayooluwa Laniya John Moffet Elementary School
Amoni Turner Kearney Academic Plus
Angel L. Colon Fairhill Elementary School
April Coates Wakisha Charter School
Carenda Brown Wakisha Charter School
Carla Thon St. Peter the Apostle Parochial School
Danya Lyons Hope Partnership for Education School
Dy'mon Pendleton Young Scholars Charter School
Emily Diaz La Salle Academy School
Gianna Miles Dunbar Promise Academy
Hanane Jebrin Al Aqsa Islamic Academy
Janelle Jeter St. Malachy’s Parochial School
Kayla Portes Potter Thomas Elementary School
Nanh Kuock Joseph C. Ferguson Elementary School
Tybria Andrews Clymer Elementary School
Vince Long Jay Cooke Elementary School
Ashley Morgan Little Flower Parochial School
Shaphan L. Durham Walter D. Palmer Leadership Partners Learning Charter School
Roslyn Henley Philadelphia Military Academy at Elverson
Dion Stovall William H. Bodine High School
Elijah Younger William H. Bodine High School
Continuing the Call For Action Against Violence

Thomas calls for action against violence surrounding PHA developments

State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas and concerned residents held a “Call to Action” news conference on June 28 to address the rash of shootings that have occurred in communities surrounding PHA developments in the 181st District. The district has witnessed rampant escalation of violence that resulted in numerous injuries and several murders.

Thomas was joined by representatives from the seven affected housing developments, 181st District Advisory Council, PHA, Pennsylvania State Police, and others. Family members of several victims of gun violence in the 181st also stood with Thomas.

“According to police statistics, there have been shooting victims, including four homicides, in the 181st Legislative District between January and June 23, 2013,” said Thomas during the June news conference. “And those standing with me say that this is unacceptable and we are not going to stand for it. On Wednesday night, a 19-year-old was murdered and another man was wounded in the district on Germantown Avenue. There is something seriously wrong when people have to settle disagreements with violence. This violence is senseless and must be stopped.”

According to police and news reports, a 19-year-old man was murdered at Germantown Avenue and Indiana Avenue on a Wednesday night in June. Later that evening, a 38-year-old male was shot in the stomach on Germantown near Indiana Avenue.

Thomas said a lot of the violence is occurring near PHA housing developments in his district – specifically, Richard Allen Homes, Ludlow Homes, Spring Garden Homes, Warnock Homes, Fairhill Homes, Harrison Homes and Norris Homes. “PHA received federal funds for surveillance cameras. I would like to know where they are located, are they working and if they are being monitored. Community policing is greatly needed. The PHA and Philadelphia Police Departments need to work with the residents to develop community-based strategies to combat the violence.”

Thomas made several recommendations to help stem the violence in the area:

- Develop a comprehensive community policing strategy that includes police mini stations in certain communities;
- Appoint one resident from each of the PHA developments to the Police District Advisory Councils (P-DAC);
- Install surveillance cameras in the area from Germantown and Somerset to 7th and Spring Garden, including PHA developments and recreation centers;
- Make 11th Street between Spring Garden and Huntingdon Streets a Safe Corridor;
- Increase bike and foot patrols along the 11th Street corridor;
- Posters in and near PHA developments citing HUD rules and the consequences of violence on PHA property;
- Develop and implement year-round child-friendly family support programs in every PHA development;
- Develop and implement a media campaign to promote preservation of life; and
- Support proposed legislation. “We must return to community policing as it was under Commissioner Sylvester Johnson,” Thomas said. “If we have to raise funds for bike cops, then we will do that. The bottom line is, we need sustained, increased police visibility and positive interaction with the community.”

Abolishment of Philadelphia Traffic Court

In June, Rep. W. Curtis Thomas expressed his opposition to legislation that abolished the Philadelphia Traffic Court. While the state of affairs at the Philadelphia Traffic Court under both Democratic and Republican administrations hasn’t been acceptable, Thomas felt abolishing it was simply not a workable solution.

Senate Bill 334, introduced by Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi, was signed into law as Act 17 of 2013 and assigned traffic court duties to Philadelphia Municipal Court. Thomas introduced an amendment to the bill that added language requiring the president judge of Philadelphia Municipal Court to file an annual report with the General Assembly regarding the Traffic Division.

Thomas also expressed great concern for the more than 140 traffic court employees who have been adversely affected by its abolishment.

Unfortunately, with the passage of Senate Bill 334, moving violations are now being handled by the new Traffic Division of Municipal Court. For more information go to (http://www.courts.phila.gov/traffic) or call (215) 686-1675.

Thomas legislation focuses on economic development and jobs

As Democratic chair of the House Commerce Committee, Rep. W. Curtis Thomas has focused much of his legislative agenda on improving economic development and job creation in Pennsylvania. During the 2013-2014 Legislative Session, he introduced the following legislation:

- House Bill 360 would create the Keystone Job Training Tax Credit, which would provide tax credits to companies that train and hire displaced workers and those who have been unemployed long term. That bill has been referred to the House Finance Committee for review.
- House Bill 331 would create a youth council within each local workforce investment board in cooperation with the chief elected official for the local area. Young people make up a large portion of the population that is chronically unemployed. Thomas feels that youths should be involved in the workforce investment boards so their needs can be better served. That bill has been referred to the House Labor and Industry Committee.
- House Bill 559 would establish the Surety Bond Guarantee Fund Program in the Department of Community and Economic Development to assist disadvantaged businesses to competitively bid for certain government contracts. That bill has been referred to the House State Government Committee.
- House Bill 333 would establish the Pennsylvania Interagency Council on Inmate Reentry which would assist ex-offenders to reintegrate into the community.

Thomas establishes new caucus

In October, Rep. W. Curtis Thomas co-founded the At-Risk Children and Family Caucus to evaluate truancy, dropout rates and other issues facing youths and their families. The caucus, composed of state representatives and senators from both sides of the aisle, will meet regularly to discuss successful programs and try to replicate that success across the state. Thomas chairs the caucus in the House and Sen. Stewart Greenleaf chairs the caucus in the Senate.
The leaders of two of Philadelphia’s most powerful unions are standing with State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas in opposition to legislation that would reauthorize Act 201 of 2004 and remove its sunset provision. Herman “Peter” Matthews, president of AFSCME District Council 33, the city workers’ blue collar union, and Sam Staten, Jr., business manager of Laborers’ International Union of North America Local 332, voiced their opposition to the pending legislation in letters to Thomas, Democratic chair of the House Commerce Committee.

Act 201 of 2004 regulates Pennsylvania utility companies’ credit practices, shut-off and reconnect policies. As it stands now, the law restricts low-income customers’ ability to enter into a reasonable payment plan and gives utilities the power to terminate service without personally contacting customers three days before and at the time of termination. The law includes a sunset provision that requires it to be reauthorized every 10 years. It is scheduled to expire December 14, 2014 unless further action is taken. However, House Bill 1047, which passed the House in May, would reauthorize Act 201 without the sunset provision and would allow the law to take effect in perpetuity without future review. Thomas said the sunset provision was originally put into the law to force the legislature to re-examine the issue and the impact of the regulations.

Matthews and Staten agree with Thomas and spoke on behalf of their members in letters of support of Thomas’ opposition to House Bill 1047 and support of House Bill 939. Both union leaders support continuing efforts to repeal Act 201.

“Over 430,000 of Philadelphia’s 1.5 million citizens live below the federal poverty line, including 39 percent of our children… and nearly 200,000 survive on incomes that put them in a deep poverty category as less than half the federal poverty limit,” Staten wrote in his letter of support. “To allow utility companies to exercise such arbitrary power, to shut-off utilities in the winter months, on Fridays and require arbitrary deposits and reconnect fees could endanger the lives of many, most important, thousands of children.”

Matthews concurred with Staten in his letter to Thomas. “District Council 33 stands with you and your colleagues in supporting House Bill 939 which would continue the sunset provision and add additional protection for Pennsylvania utility customers,” wrote Matthews. “We also support efforts to repeal Act 201 of 2004. Philadelphia has one of the highest poverty rates among the nation’s top 10 cities. Many of our members live at or below the Federal Poverty Line. House Bill 1047 would be devastating to not only our members, but also to a large portion of the citizens of Philadelphia.”

Matthews and Staten both are urging their union members to make their voices heard on this matter.

“I am glad the unions are supporting our opposition to this law. Hopefully others will join us in this fight. This is an issue that affects everyone whether you are a homeowner, a renter or landlord,” Thomas explained. “It doesn’t matter if you own a home or if you rent an apartment, these are your rights that they are trying to give away to the utility companies.”

Thomas started a petition that can still be signed on his website at http://www.pahouse.com/Thomas/Act_201_petition.asp. “Before the Senate takes up this issue, I want to show them exactly how many people are opposed to this unconscionable annihilation of consumer rights.”

continued

A mandatory 5-10 year sentence for anyone on a bike or in a car that shoots or kills someone. They would also be required to pay restitution to the victim or their family. He also plans to draft a bill to address straw purchasers of guns.

“I want to thank the law-abiding residents in the 181st District who go to work each day and raise good children. This is about preservation and quality of life. Everyone deserves to live in peace without fear for their lives. It’s time for the peace-loving, law-abiding residents to stand up and take back our communities.”

Thomas: Stand your ground against the Castle Doctrine

In June, the American Bar Associations’ Taskforce on Stand Your Ground laws held a public hearing in Philadelphia to review, analyze and assess the Stand Your Ground laws enacted across the nation. State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas, along with former Governor Ed Rendell and representatives from CeaseFire PA, Firearm Owners Against Crime, Mothers in Charge, and Michael Bloomberg’s Second Chance on Shoot First Campaign, among others, provided testimony.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 25 states, including Pennsylvania, have adopted Stand Your Ground laws. These laws began in 1985 with Colorado’s “Make My Day” law. Since then, other states have followed suit. During the 2011-2012 Legislative Session, Pennsylvania adopted an expanded Castle Doctrine law which eliminated the duty to retreat before shooting. Before adoption of this law, citizens were allowed to defend their homes should an intruder enter the dwelling. Under the new law, you do not have to wait for an intruder to enter your home, but with several exceptions of the home if you feel “threatened.” The law also expanded the definition of your “dwelling” to include your car and even the street if you feel “threatened.”

An expanded Castle Doctrine law passed both the state House and Senate during the 2009-2010 Legislative Session. However, Governor Rendell vetoed it because of ambiguous parts of the law pertaining to possession of a loaded firearm. The bill was then reintroduced, passed by both houses and signed into law by Governor Corbett. These laws have had an adverse, rather than positive effect on deterring crime. There is no balance between self-defense and unrestricted use of lethal force. Research from the FBI’s Crime Division (2010) in states with Stand Your Ground laws found that:

- Reduced cost of using lethal force resulted in increased homicides. There were an additional 600 homicides in states with expanded Castle Doctrine laws.
- The notion of self-defense did not deter robberies, burglaries or aggravated assaults.

As a result of these laws, there has been a negative impact on law enforcement, the criminal justice system and on our communities. There is no uniform application of these laws except to expand the right to self-defense.

In the area of law enforcement, the laws have provided citizens with greater defense than law enforcement officers. Most law enforcement personnel have to adhere to rules which govern when lethal force can be used. The Stand Your Ground laws have no such limitations. In the criminal justice system, these laws increase costs by requiring resolution of additional cases of self-defense. They also empower criminals seeking to use the laws as a defense. In communities across the nation, these laws have created tense situations where citizens are actually less safe than before adoption of these laws. There are over 300 million guns in the U.S. With everyone armed, no one is safe.

Thomas urges the American Bar Associations’ Taskforce on Stand Your Ground Laws to:

- Begin working with local legislatures to level the playing field around self-defense
- Train prosecutors and law enforcement personnel on Stand Your Ground laws
- Continue the national dialogue
- Establish regular working groups of progressive legislators to make changes to existing laws
- Network with the National Conference of State Legislatures, Council of State Governments and other national organizations
- Strengthen local prosecutors in dealing with Stand Your Ground claims of immunity
- Educate local law enforcement agencies

While we can’t afford to let crime run rampant in our communities, we can’t afford to allow these laws to stand as they are. Remember Trayvon Martin?
Business and Economic Development

Thomas sponsors annual job fairs

For the past 10 years, Rep. W. Curtis Thomas has sponsored a public sector and a private sector job fair each year. People have been hired on the spot at these annual job fairs. A wide range of public sector agencies and private employers offering jobs and training opportunities attend. The job fairs, which attract hundreds of jobseekers, routinely include workshops on resume writing, interview skills and how to dress for an interview. “I have two job fairs annually – one for private sector jobs and one for public sector jobs,” said Thomas. “I have a public sector job fair each year because public sector jobs, those related to city, state and federal government, provide the best opportunity for long-term employment that will help stabilize families. These job fairs are targeted to those college and high school graduates in my district that have had a hard time finding permanent work. We have a wealth of qualified, skilled and talented people who are willing and able to add value to any agency or organization. The goal of these job fairs is to bring those people together with the opportunities that exist.”

People looking for resources for their small business or thinking about going into business had a chance to access information and resources at Rep. W. Curtis Thomas’ first Small Business Opportunity & Resource Seminar, in celebration of Small Business Month. Hosted by Temple University’s Fox School of Business, the free event provided entrepreneurs with information on resources and opportunities to start and grow their businesses. “This seminar was part of the celebration of Small Business Month in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” explained Thomas, Democratic chair of the House Commerce Committee. “There’s a wealth of resources available to help businesses that people aren’t aware of. This seminar provided information on city, state and federal agencies and organizations that can help folks get on track and take advantage of these opportunities.” Participating agencies included Temple Small Business Development Center, Finanta, PA Department of Community & Economic Development, PA Department of General Services, Governor’s Chief Technology Officer, U.S. Small Business Administration, Philadelphia Commerce Department, Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, Philadelphia Urban Renewal Agency, Reinvestment Fund, Women’s Opportunity Resource Center, Empowerment Group Women’s Business Center, North Philadelphia Financial Partnership, Ben Franklin Technology Partners, Wells Fargo, Beech Business Bank, TruMark Credit Union and American Heritage Credit Union.

Entrepreneurs were able to access information on MBE/WBE/DSBE certification, business tax credits/incentives, Enterprise Zones, Keystone Opportunity Zones and Empowerment Zones, as well as organizations that assist business start-ups. Technology businesses were able to learn about IT certification needed in order to bid on state technology contracts. “Many technology entrepreneurs are not aware that they must also be certified by the Governor’s IT Office in addition to the required Department of General Services certification in order to bid on state technology contracts. Additionally, DGS had representatives from their procurement and construction divisions on hand to explain the bidding process,” Thomas said. Business financing was also a focus of the seminar. “Small businesses traditionally have problems accessing adequate financing,” Thomas said. “That’s why we invited several organizations that provide financing and access to financing. This seminar was a one-stop-shop for business resource information.”

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Business and Economic Development

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Thomas sponsors small business seminar at Fox School of Business

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Dean Moshe Porat, Fox School of Business; members of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Rep. Thomas and Eustace Kangaju, Temple SBDC


Taliaferro, WURD Radio; Eustace Kangaju and his assistant, Temple Small Business Development Center.

Rep. Thomas and presenters at business seminar (l to r) Ben Gilbert, North Philadelphia Financial Partnership; Larry Griffin, Beech Business Bank; Ron Dutton, Wells Fargo; Nick Taliaferro, WURD Radio; Eustace Kangaju, Temple SBDC
Thomas urges support of House Bill 939 instead. That bill, which also passed the House, includes the sunset provision and adds protection for consumers. Both bills await consideration by the Senate.

“Terrorizing the vulnerable is not what we stand for,” Thomas explained. “It’s a shame that this is even before our legislators, who should be focusing on the needs of Pennsylvania’s children. These tweets are a testament to how much we need to improve our law enforcement methods, and to demonstrate to our constituents that we are working hard to make sure that all Pennsylvanians are safe and secure.”

Matthews concurd with Staten in his letter to Thomas. “District Council 33 stands with you and your colleagues in supporting House Bill 939 which would continue the sunset provision and add additional protection for Pennsylvania utility customers,” wrote Matthews. “We also support efforts to repeal Act 201 of 2004. Philadelphia has one of the highest poverty rates among the nation’s top 10 cities. Many of our members live at or below the Federal Poverty Line. House Bill 1047 would be devastating to not only our members, but also to a large portion of the citizens of Philadelphia.”

Matthews and Staten both are urging their union members to make their voices heard on this matter.

“I am glad the unions are supporting our opposition to this law. Hopefully others will join us in this fight. This is an issue that affects everyone whether you are a homeowner, a renter or landlord,” Thomas explained. “It doesn’t matter if you own a home or if you rent an apartment, these are your rights that they are trying to give away to the utility companies.”

Thomas started a petition that can still be signed on his website at http://www.pahouse.com/ Thomas/Act_201_petition.aspx.

“Before the Senate takes up this issue, I want to show them exactly how many people are opposed to this unconscionable annihilation of consumer rights.” Thomas urged the American Bar Associations’ Taskforce on Stand Your Ground laws held a public hearing in Philadelphia to review, analyze and assess the Standing Ground laws enacted across the nation. State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas, along with former Governer Ed Rendell and representatives from CeaseFire PA, Firearm Owners Against Crime, Mothers in Charge, and Michael Bloomberg’s Second Chance on Shoot First Campaign, among others, provided testimony.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 25 states, including Pennsylvania, have adopted Stand Your Ground laws. These laws began in 1985 with Colorado’s “Make My Day” law. Since then, other states have followed suite. During the 2011-2012 Legislative Session, Pennsylvania adopted an expanded Castle Doctrine law which eliminated the duty to retreat before shooting. Before adoption of this law, citizens were allowed to defend their homes should an intruder enter the dwelling. Under the new law, you do not have to wait for an intruder to enter your home, but can stand outside of the home if you feel “threatened.” The law also expanded the definition of your “dwelling” to include your car and even the street if you feel “threatened.” An expanded Castle Doctrine law passed both the state House and Senate during the 2009-2010 Legislative Session. However, Governor Rendell vetoed it because of ambiguous parts of the law pertaining to possession of a loaded firearm. The bill was then reintroduced, passed by both houses and signed into law by Governor Corbett. These laws have had an adverse, rather than positive effect on deterrence crime. There is no balance between self-defense and unrestricted use of lethal force. Research from the FBI’s Crime Division (2010) in states with Stand Your Ground laws found that:

• Reduced cost of using lethal force resulted in increased homicides. There were an additional 600 homicides in states with expanded Castle Doctrine laws.
• The notion of self-defense did not deter robberies, burglaries or aggravated assaults.

As a result of these laws, there has been a negative impact on law enforcement, the criminal justice system and on our communities. There is no uniform application of these laws except to expand the right to self-defense. In the area of law enforcement, the laws have provided citizens with greater defense than law enforcement officers. Most law enforcement personnel have to adhere to rules which govern when lethal force can be used. The Stand Your Ground laws have no such limitations. In the criminal justice system, these laws increase costs by requiring resolution of additional cases of self-defense. They also empower criminals seeking to use the laws as a defense. In communities across the nation, these laws have created tense situations where citizens are actually less safe than before adoption of these laws. There are over 300 million guns in the U.S. With everyone armed, no one is safe.

Thomas urges the American Bar Associations’ Taskforce on Stand Your Ground laws to:
• Begin working with local legislatures to legislate the playing field around self defense
• Train prosecutors and law enforcement personnel on Stand Your Ground laws
• Continue the national dialogue
• Establish regular working groups of progressive legislators to make changes to existing laws
• Network with the National Conference of State Legislatures, Council of State Governments and other national organizations
• Strengthen local prosecutors in dealing with Stand Your Ground claims of immunity
• Educate local law enforcement agencies

While we can’t afford to let crime run rampant in our communities, we can’t afford to allow these laws to stand as they are. Remember Trayvon Martin?
Continuing The Call For Action Against Violence

Thomas calls for action against violence surrounding PHA developments

State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas and concerned residents held a “Call to Action” news conference on June 28 to address the rash of shootings that have occurred in communities surrounding PHA developments in the 181st District. The district has witnessed rampant escalation of violence that resulted in numerous injuries and several murders.

Thomas was joined by representatives from the seven affected housing developments, 181st Coordinating Council, Mother’s in Charge and Men United for a Better Philadelphia, among others. Family members of several victims of gun violence in the 181st also stood with Thomas.

“According to police statistics, there have been shooting victims, including four homicides, in the 181st Legislative District between January and June 23, 2013,” said Thomas during the June news conference. “I and those standing with me say that this is unacceptable and we are not going to stand for it. On Wednesday night, a 19-year-old was murdered and another man was wounded in the district on Germantown Avenue. There is something seriously wrong when people have to settle disagreements with violence. This violence is senseless and must be stopped.”

According to police and news reports, a 19-year-old man was murdered at Germantown and Indiana Avenue on a Wednesday night in June. Later that evening, a 38-year-old male was shot in the stomach on Germantown near Indiana Avenue.

Thomas said a lot of the violence is occurring near PHA housing developments in his district – specifically, Richard Allen Homes, Ludlow Homes, Spring Garden Homes, Warrick Homes, Fairhill Homes, Harrison Homes and Norris Homes. “PHA received federal funds for surveillance cameras. I would like to know where they are located, are they working and if they are being monitored. Community policing is greatly needed. The PHA and Philadelphia Police Departments need to work with the residents to develop community-based strategies to combat the violence.”

Thomas made several recommendations to help stem the violence in the area:

- Develop a comprehensive community policing strategy that includes police mini stations in certain communities;
- Appoint one resident from each of the PHA developments to the Police District Advisory Councils (P-DAC);
- Install surveillance cameras in the area from Germantown and Somerset to 7th and Spring Garden, including PHA developments and recreation centers;
- Make 11th Street between Spring Garden and Huntingdon Streets a Safe Corridor;
- Increase bike and foot patrols along the 11th Street corridor;
- Posters in and near PHA

Abolishment of Philadelphia Traffic Court

In June, Rep. W. Curtis Thomas expressed his opposition to legislation that abolished the Philadelphia Traffic Court. While the state of affairs at the Philadelphia Traffic Court under both Democratic and Republican administrations hasn’t been acceptable, Thomas felt abolishing it simply was not a workable solution.

Senate Bill 334, introduced by Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi, was signed into law as Act 17 of 2013 and assigned traffic court duties to Philadelphia Municipal Court. Thomas introduced an amendment to the bill that added language requiring the president judge of Philadelphia Municipal Court to file an annual report with the General Assembly regarding the Traffic Division.

Thomas also expressed great concern for the more than 140 traffic court employees who have been adversely affected by its abolition.

Unfortunately, with the passage of Senate Bill 334, moving violations are now being handled by the new Traffic Division of Municipal Court. For more information go to (http://www.courts.phila.gov/traffic/) or call (215) 686-1675.

Thomas legislation focuses on economic development and jobs

As Democratic chair of the House Commerce Committee, Rep. W. Curtis Thomas has focused much of his legislative agenda on improving economic development and job creation in Pennsylvania. During the 2013-2014 Legislative Session, he introduced the following legislation:

House Bill 360 would create the Keystone Job Training Tax Credit, which would provide tax credits to companies that train and hire disabled workers and those who have been unemployed long term. That bill has been referred to the House Finance Committee for review.

House Bill 331 would create a youth council within each local workforce investment board in cooperation with the chief elected official for the local area. Young people make up a large portion of the population that is chronically unemployed. Thomas feels that youths should be involved in the workforce investment boards so their needs can be better served. That bill has been referred to the House Labor and Industry Committee.

House Bill 599 would establish the Surety Bond Guarantee Fund Program in the Department of Community and Economic Development to assist disadvantaged businesses to competitively bid for certain government contracts. That bill has been referred to the House State Government Committee.

House Bill 333 would establish the Pennsylvania Interagency Council on Inmate Reentry which would assist ex-offenders to reintegrate into the community.

Thomas establishes new caucus

In October, Rep. W. Curtis Thomas co-founded the At-Risk Children and Family Caucus to evaluate truancy, dropout rates and other issues facing youths and their families. The caucus, composed of state representatives and senators from both sides of the aisle, will meet regularly to discuss successful programs and try to replicate that success across the state. Thomas chairs the caucus in the House and Sen. Stewart Greenleaf chairs the caucus in the Senate.
Outreach In and Around the District

Thomas honored at Pennsylvania Aviation & Aerospace Conference

Rep. Thomas attended the annual Pennsylvania Aviation & Aerospace Conference to discuss expanding the aviation and aerospace industries in the state. He received an award for his support of the aviation industry in Pennsylvania.

Career Day in district schools

Rep. Thomas visited several district schools during the annual Career Day in public schools. He educated the students on the role of a legislator in state government.

The 2013 honorees are:

Alexis Aiken  Morrison Elementary School
Anayah Reenes  John F. Hartranft Elementary School
Ayooluwa Laniya  John Moffet Elementary School
Amoni Turner  Kearney Academic Plus
Angel L. Colon  Fairhill Elementary School
April Coates  Wakisha Charter School
Carenda Brown  Wakisha Charter School
Carla Thon  St. Peter the Apostle Parochial School
Danya Lyons  Hope Partnership for Education School
Dy’mon Pendleton  Young Scholars Charter School
Emily Diao  La Salle Academy School
Gianna Miles  Dunbar Promise Academy
Haneen Jebrin  Al Aqsa Islamic Academy
Janelle Jeter  St. Malachy’s Parochial School
Kayla Portes  Potter Thomas Elementary School
Nanh Kuock  Joseph C. Ferguson Elementary School
Tybria Andrews  Clymer Elementary School
Vince Long  Jay Cooke Elementary School
Ashley Morgan  Little Flower Parochial School
Shaphan L. Durham  Walter D. Palmer Leadership Partners Learning Charter School
Roslyn Henley  Philadelphia Military Academy at Elverson
Dion Stovall  William H. Bodine High School
Elijah Younger  William H. Bodine High School
Thomas stands for William Penn

State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas has been standing with the William Penn Development Coalition, concerned alumni and area residents in their fight to have William Penn High School reopened in 2014 as a career-technical high school, with a focus on science technology engineering and math (STEM). The William Penn Development Coalition, organized in 2009, is a community-based organization of William Penn Alumni and those concerned about the future of the high school. The coalition and Thomas have been working on this issue for several years. Although the media and others are reporting that the school is up for sale, it is not on the closed list and the School District of Philadelphia does not have it on its list of available properties. Instead, William Penn is on the district’s list of properties for which it is accepting “expressions of interest.” The coalition has submitted a proposal.

Over 20 years of honoring students for excellence

Each year State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas honors graduates of the 181st Legislative District at his annual “State Representative Awards.” Twenty-four students from public, charter and parochial schools in the 181st were honored for academic excellence and contributions to their school and community.

Thomas said the awards ceremony, which is usually held in July, was postponed until December 2013 due to financial concerns. “I am grateful that Dr. Cora Turpin and Operation Lifelines Inc. stepped up to secure funds for the technology gifts this year. Each honoree received a tablet computer. I feel it’s important that the youth who do the right thing are recognized for their accomplishments.”

Camia Freeman, a 1990 recipient of the award who is studying medicine in Poland, was the special guest. The students and their families were treated to a reception following the award presentations.

Since 1990, Thomas has honored over 700 elementary, middle and high school graduates who have been selected by their principals for academic excellence. Each honoree receives a technology gift and a certificate of recognition.

Affordable Healthcare Program workshop

State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas sponsored a workshop in cooperation with the African American United Fund to inform people about the Affordable Care Act and how to enroll in the new Health Insurance Marketplace. Representatives from Resources for Human Development (RHD) discussed how to choose an insurance plan and how to enroll. A representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare discussed Pennsylvania’s proposed expanded Medicaid plan and who may be eligible to participate. RHD had staff available to enroll people on-site.

Eleventh Street Reunion

Rep. Thomas discusses re-entry initiatives with Wayne Jacobs, founder of X-Offenders, at the annual 11th Street Reunion.

Rep. Thomas’ North Philly Foot Stompers

Rep. Thomas has been a longtime supporter and active participant with the North Philly Foot Stompers.
Rep. Thomas is excited about the growth of the North Philly Aztecs, who won a national championship and about the new 21st Century athletic field at the Hunting Park Recreation Center.

Rep. Thomas congratulates Kenny and Fatima Gamble on being honored for their good work in the community. He joins Councilperson Maria Quinones-Sanchez and a member of MIMIC, a group of men who work with youth to avert violence in the community.

Rep. Thomas helps unload the books being distributed to district students.

Rep. Thomas engaged youth at MIMIC, a group of men who work with youth to avert violence in the community. He joins Councilperson Maria Quinones-Sanchez and a member of MIMIC.


Tribute to the Gamble

Men in Motion in the Community (MIMIC)

Thanksgiving

North Philly Aztecs

Just Us Four back-to-school book giveaway

Education

Thomas presses for answers to school closings

“I applaud Superintendent Hite for reconsidering 10 of the schools scheduled for closing,” said Rep. W. Curtis Thomas, who has been an outspoken opponent of the SRC’s plan. “Keeping Cooke open and merging the two military academies at Elverson is good. However, I continue to be extremely troubled by Hite’s decision to close Ferguson and Fairhill elementary schools. I don’t understand the need to close these two schools. Several years ago, Fairhill received national attention for the progress it made under a previous principal. The school also recently received a new heater and generator. It’s a waste of money to close the school after these expenditures.”

Thomas raised several questions regarding the reason behind the closings. “What is the real reason for closing these two schools and why are these students being pushed to schools like Julio De Burgos, Hartranft and McKinley elementary schools? Since last year, North Philadelphia seems to be bearing the brunt of the schools scheduled for closing and I’d like to know why.”

Thomas also had questions about William Penn High School that was taken off of the school closure list under Dr. Arlene Ackerman’s administration. “We were promised that William Penn would reopen in 2014 as a career-technical high school,” he explained. “However, we have heard nothing about those plans. The community and I want to know, what’s the status of that proposal?”

Thomas asked why this school was closed. “William Penn is doing to ensure that quality educational programs are provided to all students, including those in North Philadelphia. Surely, quality education will not take place in the overcrowded classes that will emerge due to the consolidation of schools.”

The 2009 settlement required the district to address persistent gaps between the achievement of its white students and that of its Black and Latino students by implementing “Imagine 2014,” the five-year plan developed by Dr. Ackerman.

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission agreed. A 1971 investigation by the commission into the Philadelphia School District found that the district was illegally segregated and denying minority students their right to equal educational opportunity. After decades of argument over procedure and jurisdiction, Commonwealth Court settled the case in 2009. At that time, PHRC Executive Director Homer Floyd noted that the historic settlement would not have been possible without the dedication and leadership of the late Dr. Arlene Ackerman and the support of ASPIRA. Floyd said that the settlement would ensure that the school district is held accountable for equal distribution of funding and resources so that disadvantaged minority children receive the same opportunities as their peers.

Under that plan, the district was to:

- Increase achievement and close the opportunity and achievement gap for all students;
- Ensure the equitable allocation of district resources;
- Hold all adults accountable for student outcomes; and
- Satisfy parents, students and the community.

Thomas questioned why this plan is not being followed. “The settlement sets reporting requirements and annual benchmarks the school district must meet for identifying low-performing schools and allocating financial and other resources to those schools. Said to say, that has not happened. The real question is, who stands to benefit by the closing of these schools? Surely not the students. There is nothing in the SRC’s plans that provide parents and elected officials with the assurance of any real changes for the better.”

November 16, 2018
Thomas’ accomplishments include securing funding, support and/or technical assistance for community-based organizations, businesses and schools in the district.

Housing
Rep. Thomas secured funding, technical, legal and property assistance for the following:
- Mt. Tabor Cyber Village Senior Development
- William B. Moore Manor Senior Development
- Dauphin Arms Apartments
- Ludow Homes
- Nehemiah Homes
- Warnock Homes
- Lutheran Settlement

Education
- Established the State Representative Awards in 1990 that honors students in the district for academic excellence
- Working to re-establish William Penn High School as a career-technical high school
- Provided over 100 laptop computers to college-bound high school seniors
- Established the 181st School to Work Education & Employment Program (SWEEP) that resulted in the William Penn Health Academy, Benjamin Franklin Maritime & Trade Academy, Strawberry Mansion Law & Justice Academy and the Simon Gratz Robotics Academy.
- Established the 181st Public Safety Patrol at district schools (employed 65 district residents)
- Established the 181 Kids Zone to provide information and services to families
- Secured funds for new libraries at Harrison and Dunbar Elementary schools
- Secured a computer lab for Kearney Elementary School
- Assisted 20 students in getting admitted to Lincoln University
- Secured funding for a Parent Advocacy Program in the 181st
- Established the Edwina Baker Cyber Learning Center for preschool children

Seniors
- Assisted over 123,000 seniors in securing property tax rebates from gaming revenues
- Sponsors the Annual Senior to Senior Connections Expo
- Established the 181st Senior Electronic Surveillance Program that funded new security systems for Guild House West, Guild House East and Casa Carmen Aponte Senior Developments
- Secured funds for a security guard at Gray Manor Senior Development
- Established the Electronic Shopping Opportunities Program (ESOP) at William B. Moore Manor, the first of its kind in the nation. In 2001, ESOP was visited by a delegation of legislators from Germany.
- Provided computers for William B. Moore Manor and Guild House East under the ESOP

Community Economic Development
- Sponsored $2.5 million in capital redevelopment funding for Fresh Grocer Supermarket in Progress Plaza
- Supported subsidized childcare management companies that brought over $2 million in annual revenues and 50 jobs to the district
- Sponsored the first statewide Sharing the Wealth Technology Conference to assist minority-owned technology businesses in securing state contracts
- Assisted 17 minority-owned businesses in securing contracts with Pennsylvania gaming operators
- Secured over $5 million for the revitalization of Freedom Theatre and the Blue Horizon
- Provided over $3 million in direct funding to community-based organizations

Selected Legislative Accomplishments
(Legislation introduced by Thomas signed into law)
- Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund Law that allows the city to raise funds for restoration of existing housing, new housing and emergency rental assistance. Philadelphia was the only county that did not have a housing trust fund.
- Check-cashing Licensing Law that regulates check-cashing businesses and restricted predatory payday loans
- Tracking of illegal guns
- Drug Nuisance Abatement Law
- Pennsylvania Healthcare Practitioners Loan Repayment Law
- Caregivers Assistance Law
- Nursing License Endorsement Law
- Expanding Worker’s Compensation benefits to police, firefighters, paramedics, rescue, correctional, forensic and emergency personnel who contract Hepatitis C while on duty
- Established the Pennsylvania Human Services Development Fund
- Income Tax check off for breast cancer research and treatment

Norris Square Community Day

Christmas Party
State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas, held his annual Christmas Party for children of the 181st Legislative District at St. Paul’s Community Center. The Wallace Street Community Development Corporation and Community Connections were very helpful in making the affair a success. The annual event included music, a magician, cartoon characters, face painting, food and, of course, Santa and his elf. Over 200 children and their families attended. Each family received a bag of gifts for the children. The toys were donated by Drexel University, Marines Toys for Tots, the Mathematics, Civics and Sciences Charter School, 181st District families and his staff.

SEIU Local 668 Health Fair
Pat DeCarlo introduces Rep. Thomas at Norris Square’s annual community day.
Improving conditions in his community is something to which W. Curtis Thomas has always been committed. First sworn into office in 1988, he has served honorably since then as state representative of the 181st Legislative District. The 181st Legislative District includes parts of North Central Philadelphia, West Poplar, East Poplar, Northern Liberties and Spring Garden.

Upon graduation from Thomas Edison High School, he obtained a B.S. degree in secondary education from Temple University and enrolled in the graduate program, majoring in education administration. Thomas soon became lead teacher in the Get Set Program housed at Ruffin-Nichols A.M.E. Church in North Philadelphia, where he prepared preschool children for entry into school. However, the terror caused by gang violence in the community during the 1970s moved Thomas to co-found the Philadelphia Committee for Services to Youth. Collaborating with the late Edwina Baker and other community activists, Thomas worked to end gang violence in North Philadelphia.

His work with the committee spurred Thomas to continue his education by attending the David A. Clarke School of Law (formerly Antioch School of Law) in Washington, D.C., where he received his law degree. As a second- and third-year student, he taught civil practice, constitutional and property law and served as chairman of the Black American Law Students Association (BALS). During that time, he also worked as a law clerk in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare’s Office of General Counsel, Civil Rights Division. His experience and research at David A. Clarke School of Law inspired him to author “The Breadth & Scope of Title VI, 1964 Civil Rights Act,” which was published in the North Carolina Law Review.

Thomas soon returned to Pennsylvania to serve as a law clerk for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. Always mindful of his responsibility to improve his community, he served as chief executive officer of East Poplar NAC, founded the East Poplar Community Economic Development Corporation and served as chairman of the North Philadelphia Branch of the Consumers Education Protection Association.

In his first term, Thomas founded the Legislative Housing Caucus to address affordable housing issues facing Pennsylvanians. He has since assisted in securing millions for new housing development and housing rehabilitation in the 181st Legislative District. His leadership and advocacy led to a 10-year appropriation for Housing and Development Assistance.

As one who has worked tirelessly to close the digital divide, Thomas created and chaired the Information Technology Subcommittee under the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (1995). Through his leadership, the subcommittee developed a “Digital Excellence Blueprint” for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, which resulted in implementation of major initiatives in the blueprint by Governor Ed Rendell.

Appointments
- Chair, House Commerce Committee (2012)
- Chair, House Urban Affairs Committee (2009)
- Chair, House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (2006)
- Co-chair, Information Technology Subcommittee of the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (1995)
- Executive Board of the National Conference of State Legislatures (chairman of the Internet Caucus)
- Speaker’s Bipartisan Reform Commission
- Joint State Government Commission on Real Property
- Joint State Government Commission on Stroke Prevention
- Board of Trustees, Lincoln University (longest sitting member from Philadelphia County)
- Board of Directors, Philadelphia High School Academies
IMPORTANT TOLL-FREE NUMBERS

State Government
PACE Cardholder Service ..................................... 1-800-225-PACE (7223)
Property Tax/Rent Rebate Info .............................. 1-888-222-9190
Unemployment Compensation .............................. 1-800-692-7469
Workers’ Compensation Helpline ......................... 1-800-482-2363

Emergency & Special Needs
CDC Hotline (AIDS/Immunizations/Autism/STDs) ......... 1-800-342-2437
Coalition Against Rape ...................................... 1-888-772-PCAR (7227)
Crime Stoppers .............................................. 1-800-4PA-TIPS (472-8477)
Domestic Violence Hotline .................................. 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
Elder Abuse Reporting Hotline (care facilities) .......... 1-800-254-5164
Elder Abuse Reporting Hotline (in-home) .................. 1-800-490-8505
Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) ............................... 1-866-857-7095
Legal Aid Locator (AARP national network) .............. 1-888-687-2277
Mortgage Assistance ......................................... 1-800-342-2397
PA Department of Health .................................... 1-877-724-3258
Poison Control Center ........................................ 1-800-222-1222
Senior Law Helpline ......................................... 1-877-727-7529

Children & Youth
Healthy Kids Helpline (PA CHIP) ......................... 1-800-986-KIDS (5437)
National Runaway Switchboard ......................... 1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)
PHEAA Student Grants/Loans ............................... 1-800-692-7392
Special Kids Network (referral service) ................. 1-800-986-4550
Teeline (crisis intervention) .............................. 1-800-722-5385