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One budget complete; another on the horizon

We completed the 2017-18 state budget in October, months after the deadline. And it won’t be long until we’re back to work on the budget for next year.

The final package for the current year had some positive aspects – a significant increase in education funding, as well as additional funds to fight the opioid epidemic, for example.

But the budget didn’t address the biggest issue we face: the need for sustainable revenue that will help put Pennsylvania back on solid financial footing.

There are commonsense steps we can take to bring in that recurring revenue – namely raising the minimum wage and adopting a reasonable severance tax on natural gas drilling.

Those measures are part of the House Democrats’ Plan for PA, an effort to reduce the burden on working people and middle-class families.

We saw debate begin on a severance tax in the latter part of 2017, but unfortunately there have been efforts to hamper the bill with provisions that would be detrimental to our environment. I am hopeful that we can make progress on this important issue as our session continues.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Breast Cancer Screenings

Thursday, March 15

Appointments available starting at 9 a.m.
Screenings will be provided by Fox Chase Cancer Center’s Mobile Screening Van

Rep. Daley’s district office
815 Fayette St., Suite 200, Conshohocken, PA 19428

6th Annual Senior Fair

Friday, June 22 • 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Plymouth Whitemarsh High School
201 E. Germantown Pike, Plymouth Meeting PA 19462

Watch for more details on this event!

SEPTA Key cards

Last month, SEPTA stopped accepting Medicare Cards for free and reduced-fare rides.

At my district office in Conshohocken, we can help you apply for a SEPTA Key Senior Photo ID. Stop into the office to complete the application and have your photo taken – SEPTA will mail the card directly to you. Please call us at (610) 832-1679 if you have any questions. You can also apply for a Key card at SEPTA Headquarters, 1224 Market St., Philadelphia.

To recap what has changed:

- Medicare Cards and Railroad Retirement Cards are no longer accepted for senior rides.
- SEPTA will continue to accept Pennsylvania Driver’s License/Non-Driver ID Cards with magnetic strips.
- Paper Pennsylvania Reduced Transit Fare ID Cards will continue to be accepted for half-fare until further notice.
- Paper Senior Citizen Transit ID Cards will also continue to be accepted for senior rides until further notice.

Find more information at www.septa.org.

2017 Property Tax/Rent Rebate

June 30 is the deadline to apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, which could entitle you to a rebate of hundreds of dollars from last year’s taxes or rent.

The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 or older; widows and widowers age 50 or older; and people with disabilities age 18 or older. The income limit is $35,000 a year for homeowners and $15,000 annually for renters. Half of Social Security income is excluded.

The maximum standard rebate is $650, but supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to $975. My office can assist you with the application process. Please call (610) 832-1679.
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You'll hear more about this plan as we put forward legislation to address these goals and especially as we work on next year's budget.

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Fighting to help women and protect victims of sexual violence

In recent months, it has become clear that we need to place more of a priority on women’s voices as we make policy decisions.

The #MeToo movement has drawn attention to women’s struggles to simply do their jobs without being harassed, and the General Assembly passed a measure that would have severely limited women’s rights to make decisions about their own pregnancies – a bill Gov. Tom Wolf thankfully vetoed.

We have to do more to help women and their families. I’ve been working on several bills that will help better protect the rights of women, as well as victims of sexual violence, and I’ll be working to make them a priority as session continues through November.

Helping new mothers: The Pennsylvania Campaign for Women’s Health reports that a major reason Pennsylvania women do not breastfeed as long as they would like is that their employers do not allow unpaid break time and a private, sanitary space to pump milk.

Study after study makes it clear that breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby, and we need to ensure that Pennsylvania’s laws allow women sensible accommodations to continue nursing as long as they wish.

I’ve introduced the Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act, which would require all Pennsylvania employers to provide a private, sanitary space for employees who need to express breast milk. It would close loopholes in the similar federal law, which does not apply to all employees and only applies as they wish.

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The bill mirrors a Philadelphia law that has been in effect since 2014. My legislation would afford all