



State Representative

Joseph F.

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Dear Friend,  
It's my honor to represent the 25th Legislative District in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for a 16th term.  
During my 30-plus years in office, I have never missed a day when the House was in session. I intend to continue to add to that record



Rep. Markosek is sworn in for a 16th term in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on New Year's Day.

of perfect attendance. It's my duty to be your voice in the Capitol, and it's a responsibility that I take very seriously.  
For a second term, I have been elected by my peers to serve as Democratic chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. In this role, my priority is to ensure that money in the state budget is distributed fairly and we do our best to meet the needs of all Pennsylvanians.  
You can follow my work on my legislative website, [www.pahouse.com/Markosek](http://www.pahouse.com/Markosek), and on the Appropriations Committee website, [www.hacd.net](http://www.hacd.net). You can also follow me on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/RepMarkosek](http://www.facebook.com/RepMarkosek) and on Twitter @RepJoeMarkosek.

Sincerely,

Joe Markosek

Rep. Joseph Markosek



## 2013/14 PA budget process underway

On Tuesday, Feb. 5, Governor Corbett laid out his 2013/14 budget proposal to the General Assembly. My staff has completed a comprehensive analysis of the governor's proposed budget, called *Budget at a Glance*. It is available online at [www.hacd.net](http://www.hacd.net).

As Democratic chairman of House Appropriations Committee, I participated in 36 budget hearings. During those public hearings, statewide agencies, institutions and departments appeared before the committee for a thorough review of their proposed budget plans and to discuss any future initiatives.

A few key points about Gov. Corbett's proposed budget:

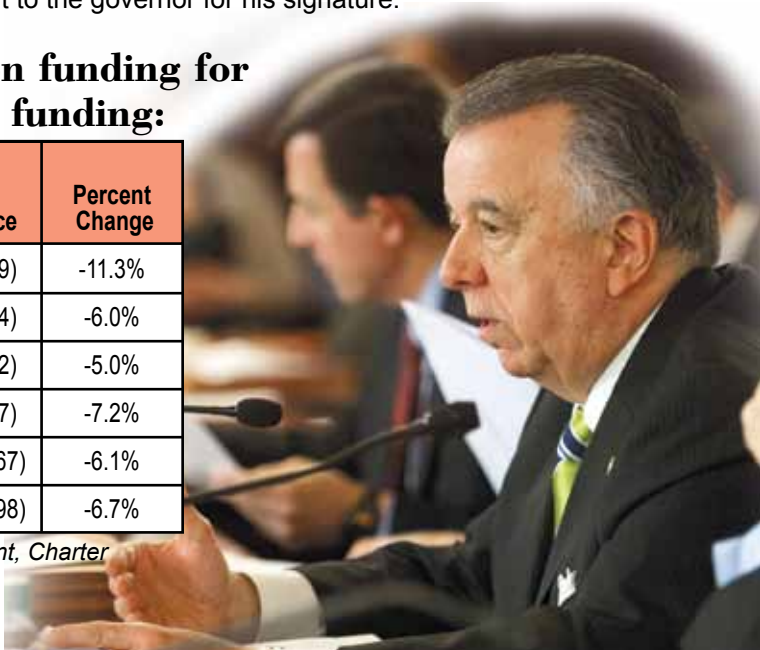
- **Education:** In the governor's first budget, he cut education funding by approximately \$1 billion. In the current budget proposal, he is only proposing to increase the basic education subsidy by \$90 million, or about 1.7 percent. This very small increase in funding does not come close to restoring the devastating cuts he made to our public schools.
- **Higher education:** No change in funding for higher education; therefore, the governor's proposed budget does nothing to restore any of the spending cuts he made in his first two budgets.
- **Transportation:** A \$1.4 billion spending plan that is woefully short of the \$4.5 billion needed to adequately address Pennsylvania's crumbling transportation infrastructure of highways, bridges and mass transit.
- **Pension reform:** Changes to plans for current and future public servants, including moving to a defined contribution plan. Changing to a different style pension plan will likely cost more and does nothing to resolve the unfunded pension liability; therefore, shifting the burden to future generations. In 2010, the state enacted a strongly bipartisan, long-term pension reform plan. It resolves the issue if given time to work.
- **Medicaid expansion:** Not addressed in the proposal. We are missing out on a huge opportunity to provide health insurance to more than 500,000 working Pennsylvanians without health insurance. The federal government will pay 100 percent of the costs for the first three years and no less than 90 percent after that.

Over the course of the next couple of months leading up to the June 30 budget deadline, we will review all aspects of the governor's spending plan for 2013/14. The General Assembly will then enact a new state spending plan and submit it to the governor for his signature.

## Gov. Corbett's proposed 2013/14 education funding for the 25th District, as compared to 2010/11 funding:

School District	County	2013/14 Proposed Funding	2010/11 Enacted Funding	Difference	Percent Change
East Allegheny	Allegheny	\$7,356,149	\$8,294,488	(\$938,339)	-11.3%
Gateway	Allegheny	\$9,068,910	\$9,649,044	(\$580,134)	-6.0%
Plum Borough	Allegheny	\$14,942,853	\$15,724,595	(\$781,742)	-5.0%
Franklin Regional	Westmoreland	\$8,471,008	\$9,126,425	(\$655,417)	-7.2%
Penn-Trafford	Westmoreland	\$16,302,706	\$17,355,573	(\$1,052,867)	-6.1%
Total		\$56,141,626	\$60,150,124	(\$4,008,498)	-6.7%

Includes Basic and Special Education Funding, PA Accountability Block Grant, Charter School Reimbursement and Educational Assistance Program.



# Flawed plan to privatize state liquor system moves to the Senate

On March 21, the PA House voted 105-90 to pass House Bill 790, a liquor privatization bill, and sent it to the Senate for consideration. I voted against H.B. 790. **The bottom line is the bill has numerous flaws which are harmful to Pennsylvanians and our district.**

This bill would:

- Create a confusing liquor sale licensing system which would result in higher prices and provide less convenience and selection for Pennsylvanians looking to purchase beer, wine and liquor;
- Cost thousands their jobs and local mom-and-pop beer distributors their businesses; and
- Reduce money in the state budget available for funding critical state services.

As Appropriations chairman, I am concerned about the fiscal uncertainties in the bill. From what we can estimate, the bill would result in a net loss of about \$170 million to the

state budget every year. The one-time money from the sale of the liquor stores is estimated to be between \$400 million and \$1.1 billion, which is a huge disparity and not a lot of money for such a valuable state asset. Also, the governor originally proposed using the one-time money for education; however, H.B. 790 does not earmark any money for education.

**Instead, I support modernizing the state's antiquated laws on alcohol sales.** For example, we can improve the state store system by allowing the PA Liquor Control Board to open more stores on Sundays and keep the stores open longer and by allowing wineries to directly ship wine to consumers. We could also give beer distributors the flexibility to sell beer in smaller quantities (e.g. 6-packs and 12-packs), rather than limiting them to selling cases. It is possible to give consumers more convenience, while retaining thousands of jobs and increasing liquor store profits that benefit all taxpayers.

## Working to reduce distracted driving

I have again introduced a bill that would prohibit drivers in Pennsylvania from using handheld communication devices. A recent report from the Governors Highway Safety Association on teenage driver fatalities drives home the need to enact this legislation now.

Motor vehicle accidents continue to be the leading cause of death for teenagers, and six Pennsylvania teen drivers were killed in the first half of 2012, according to the report.

Our current ban on texting while driving is a step in the right direction toward reducing accidents, but it fails to protect people from drivers, especially teens, who are distracted by handheld devices.

Under my legislation, H.B. 693, all drivers would be prohibited from using handheld devices. Exceptions to the prohibitions would include the use of a GPS system, when the vehicle is stopped due to a traffic obstruction or when the driver is initiating a phone call. Novice drivers would be prohibited from using any device while driving. Additionally, this legislation would require PennDOT to develop a campaign to educate the public about the danger of distracted driving.

## Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program now accepting applications

Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is now accepting applications, and my staff is ready to help you apply.

The program provides state rebates on property taxes or rent paid in 2012 to eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. The income limit is \$35,000 annually for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. However, only half of your Social Security, Supplemental Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I income is considered when calculating your income.

Some companies are charging a fee to help file Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications. **If you received an offer like that, please ignore it.** The state does not require you to pay a fee to submit the application, and my staff will help you **FOR FREE**. My local office is located at Commerce Bldg., Suite 303, 4232 Northern Pike, Monroeville. The phone number is 412-856-8284.

The deadline to apply for a rebate is June 30, and rebates will be distributed beginning July 1.



## Trafford Bridge project on track to be completed in November

The Trafford Bridge project, started in April 2012, involves replacing the existing bridge at the Allegheny/Westmoreland County line that carries Route 130 over Turtle Creek and a Spur Line of Norfolk Southern Railroad in Trafford Borough.

The existing bridge demolition is complete. The bridge remains closed and a detour is in place as construction continues on the new bridge. Please use caution while traveling through the construction site.

The contractor on this \$11 million project is Mosites Construction Company of Pittsburgh. The Trafford Bridge project is on schedule to be completed in November 2013.



# Tax dollars returned to the 25th District in 2012/13

It is always a pleasure to see local taxpayer dollars returned to the area for worthwhile projects through various state grant programs.

## Fire, Ambulance Service Grant Recipients

Fire Department of North Versailles (Fire & EMS)	\$19,767
Monroeville EMS	\$4,519
Monroeville Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1	\$13,116
Monroeville Volunteer Fire Co. No. 4	\$11,500
Monroeville Volunteer Fire Co. No. 5	\$13,116
Pitcairn Fire Co. No. 1	\$11,500
Pitcairn Relief Fire Co. No. 2	\$11,661
Murrysville Medic No. 1	\$6,651
Murrysville Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1	\$13,116
Sardis Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1	\$12,562
Trafford Emergency Medical Service Co. No. 1	\$6,651
Trafford Fire Co. No. 1	\$11,984

## Community Conservation Partnerships Program

Murrysville Municipality	\$42,000	Further development of Townsend Park
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## County Recycling Coordinator Grant Program

Westmoreland County	\$24,103
Allegheny County	\$37,265

## Environmental Education and Stewardship

Westmoreland County Conservation District	\$7,348
Allegheny County Conservation District	\$10,411

## Other Grants and Awards

Monroeville Borough	\$8,257	Host Municipality Inspector Grant	Reimbursement of 50 percent of the cost of employing a host municipal inspector
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	\$137,500	Neighborhood Assistance Program	
Allegheny County Conservation District	\$2,000	Pollution Prevention Educational Mini-grants	Agricultural alternative project
Westmoreland County Conservation District	\$2,000	Pollution Prevention Educational Mini-grants	Pollution prevention in the Loyalhanna Watershed
PA Resources Council Allegheny County	\$26,018	PA Small Business and Household Pollution Prevention Grant Program	Reimbursement of half of the costs for developing and operating a household hazardous waste collection event
Municipalities of Monroeville and Murrysville	\$19,621	Recycling Performance Grant Program	Based on the tons recycled in 2010 and the municipality's population
	\$17,322		

# New voter ID law still on hold

If you are going to the polls for the May 21 primary, you will not be required to show ID, unless you are a first-time voter in the precinct.

Lawyers on both sides of a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Pennsylvania's voter ID law signed an agreement on February 14 that the law will not be enforced for the May 21 primary election.

The law is on hold until the courts determine if it is constitutional. A trial is scheduled to begin July 15 in Commonwealth Court.

Information on the voter ID law can be found at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).

## IMPORTANT 2013 PRIMARY ELECTION DATES:

**April 22**

Last day to register to vote

**May 14**

Last day to apply for an absentee ballot

**May 17**

Last day for Bureau of Elections to receive absentee ballots

**May 21**

Primary election



# Does the commonwealth have something that belongs to you?

The Pennsylvania Treasury Department has more than \$1.5 billion in lost, forgotten and abandoned property, and it could be worthwhile to see if it has any in your name. Just last year, the Treasury returned more than \$83 million in unclaimed property.

Examples of unclaimed property include:

- Closed bank accounts.
- Uncashed checks.
- Certificates of deposit.
- Lost stocks and bonds.

Some companies are charging a fee to search the records, but Treasury never charges a fee. **So, if you received an offer like that, please ignore it.**

You can check if you have any unclaimed property online at [www.patreasury.gov/Unclaimed](http://www.patreasury.gov/Unclaimed) or by calling the agency toll free at 800-222-2046 during weekdays. My district office can also help you check to see if you have unclaimed property.



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# Shopping for electricity suppliers

Some helpful information from the PA Public Utility Commission (PUC) on shopping for an electricity supplier:

Just as you shop for other services like cell phone, cable or insurance, you can shop for electricity. You may be able to save money by shopping for the generation portion of your bill. In many areas where rate caps have expired, competitive suppliers are making offers to electric customers for the generation portion of their bill.

You can shop based on price, environmental preferences or special services and deals. Consumers are encouraged to seek out competitive suppliers – generation supplier prices are unregulated by the PUC – to obtain pricing information for the generation portion of their bill. Competitive offers may not be available in all areas.

If you decide on a new supplier, all you need to do is contact the supplier and they will help you in the process of switching over. Some suppliers allow you to do this online or by phone.

The PUC has worksheets available at [www.PAPowerSwitch.com](http://www.PAPowerSwitch.com) to help you follow along when contacting suppliers as well as a list of questions you should ask the competitive suppliers to help make certain you are getting the full picture and have the tools to help you make an informed choice.

The PUC also has a similar website where you can shop for natural gas suppliers: [www.PAGasSwitch.com](http://www.PAGasSwitch.com).

*State Representative*  
**Joseph F. Markosek**

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**JOIN MY EMAIL UPDATE LIST**

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates from me about state programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. If you would like to be added to that list, please visit my website at [www.pahouse.com/Markosek](http://www.pahouse.com/Markosek) and sign-up for email alerts.

# Beware of telemarketers and door-to-door salespeople claiming to be energy supplier employees

According to the attorney general, in recent months, there has been a rash of overly aggressive and dishonest sales pitches in several Pennsylvania communities. Be diligent when weighing offers for electricity from door-to-door and telephone solicitors.

Carefully weigh the offer and make sure you are dealing with legitimate energy suppliers before sharing account information and agreeing to switch providers.

If you encounter this type of solicitation, file a complaint with the Attorney General's Office or the PUC. If you feel your safety is threatened, immediately call the local police.

Tips to help protect you from these types of scams and protect you if you decide to switch energy providers:

**Door-to-door**

- Utilities do not normally come to your door, unless you have called them.
- Ask for identification.
- Call the utility company to verify if they have a salesman in the area, especially if the person claims to be a utility representative needing to get inside your home.
- Supplier representatives are required to prominently display a photo ID showing their name and the name of the supplier for whom they are working.
- Suppliers will only need your account information when you are ready to make the switch.

**Telemarketing**

- Ask for the name of the supplier.
- Ask for the price and other terms and conditions. Know and understand how it compares to your utility price.
- Only share account information over the phone if you are ready to make a switch.
- Do not feel pressured to make any decisions over the phone or immediately.