



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE Donna Bullock

195th Legislative District

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Summer/Fall 2018

## Dear friend,

For the first time in more than 10 years, the state legislature was able to pass a budget in a bipartisan and timely manner – a budget that protects essential services for our most vulnerable citizens; maintains funds for public safety, transportation, and other essential service; and provides significant increased investments in education and job growth. We did this without increasing the tax burden for Pennsylvanians.

We allocated a record high amount for education: \$140 million more for basic, special and early education; and \$40 million for career and technical education – to create new apprenticeship programs and develop STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) careers. Our higher education institutions will see a three percent increase in funding.

As part of the budget package, we created a \$60 million block grant program for school and community safety. I was later appointed to the School Safety and Security Committee established to manage the grant program for schools throughout the commonwealth.

Also, for the first time in nearly a decade, we replenished the Rainy Day Fund, which was empty after balances were spent during the past two recessions. This money is a sign of fiscal responsibility and good health, and it's intended to mitigate the impact of economic downturns on our budget.

The 2018-19 state budget lays a solid foundation to build a better Pennsylvania – a Pennsylvania that welcomes and provides opportunities for ALL.

Donna Bullock



## \$16 million for emergency cleanup and repair of “toxic” schools

A few years ago, I stood with other lawmakers calling for a response to the city's childhood lead poisoning crisis. It was personal. Unfortunately, too many of our children, including my own, are exposed to lead in their homes, playgrounds, and even schools.

To fix the lead problem, we need to put the dollars on the table. Earlier this summer, I joined Governor Tom Wolf to announce a \$7.6 million state investment to begin lead, mold and asbestos cleanup in Philadelphia's schools. Those funds will be matched by the School District of Philadelphia for a total of \$15.7 million. Working hand in hand with the school district, we will be able to impact 59 schools on a combination of issues.

This investment in our schools is an investment in our children's education, health and success. There is more to be done, and I will continue to fight for the well-being of all our families.

**COMMITTEES & CAUCUSES:** Aging and Older Adult Services • Appropriations • Commerce • Environmental Resources & Energy • Policy Committee • State Government • Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus • Hope Caucus • PA SAFE Caucus



# Legislative Update

## Push for pay equality continues

Our state ranks 29th in the United States for pay equity. For every dollar paid to men in the commonwealth, women are paid 79 cents, or less for women of color.

That's why I continuously sponsor legislation to address Pennsylvania's outdated and ineffective equal pay law. I also raise awareness by participating in panel discussions, rallies and other calls for pay equity.

We are starting to see some movement to close the gap. In April, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals held that employers can no longer hide behind salary history to justify pay disparity.

In June, Gov. Wolf signed Executive Order 2018-18-03, ending the practice of state agencies requiring a job applicant to provide their salary history. These two events open the path for my salary history legislation, H.B. 931.



In April, I spoke at the Equal Pay Day Rally at the Capitol.



I stood with Gov. Wolf, colleagues and advocates, as he signed an equal pay Executive Order for state employees.



I provided remarks at an equal pay policy hearing hosted by Rep. Brian Sims and the House Democratic Policy Committee.

## Criminal justice reform is moving forward

Our criminal justice system is complicated, expensive and in many ways, flawed. The case of rapper and north Philadelphia native Meek Mill shined a national spotlight on some of these inadequacies, but there are many other stories of inequity and injustice throughout the commonwealth.

We need comprehensive criminal justice policies that are consistent, uniform and fiscally responsible. Reforms must keep Pennsylvanians safe, end the school to prison pipeline, and improve police-community relations.

We are making major headway in Harrisburg through bipartisan teamwork, dedication and determination. Some reforms are already in place, while others are in the works.

- **Clean Slate legislation signed into law:** The first of its kind in the nation, this legislation allows automatic sealing of records for second or third-degree misdemeanor offenses that included a less than two-year prison sentence if a person has been free from convictions for 10 years, as well as sealing of criminal history records related to charges that resulted in non-convictions. It also allows for individuals to petition the courts for their records to be sealed if they have been free from conviction for 10 years for an offense that resulted in a year or more in prison and have paid all court-ordered financial debts.



- **Legislation to help incarcerated women, parents in Pa.:** I recently joined my colleagues Reps. Morgan Cephas, Patty Kim, Isabella Fitzgerald and Joanna McClinton to unveil a legislative package to support incarcerated women in our commonwealth. Proposals include providing alternative postpartum housing for inmates, requiring state prisons to provide free feminine hygiene products to inmates, creating a system to help inmates register for available benefits before release and offering a free monthly call to parents.



# Preemption threatens our democracy

When the city of Philadelphia enacted a sweetened beverage tax to fund pre-K and other programs, it sparked a citywide debate that made its way to the state Supreme Court. The debate also worked its way into the state legislature, when an Allegheny County representative introduced a preemption bill to take away Philadelphia's power to levy the tax.

The use of preemption to tell Philadelphia what it can or cannot do is problematic. Whether you agree or disagree with the soda tax, that is a decision for Philadelphia, not Harrisburg.

The tobacco and firearm industries lobby for preemption laws to protect their interests over the health and safety of citizens. Conservative state lawmakers also use preemption to attack Philadelphia's progressive policies like paid sick leave and sanctuary city status. By using preemption, non-Philadelphians are preventing local officials from passing laws to take care of our city.

Why should we care? Simply put, preemption is a threat to our democracy. When federal and state lawmakers fail to act, local government steps up to preserve our quality of life, promote public safety, and protect public health. These ill-advised preemption bills are often overbroad, a waste of taxpayer dollars, and unconstitutional. But more importantly, preemption silences your voice.

***"The government closest to the people, serves the people best."***

***– Thomas Jefferson***

## A tribute to the Honorable Frank Oliver

The late Honorable Frank Oliver died on Feb. 1, 2018. Mr. Oliver represented the 195th District for 37 years from 1973 to 2010. He was an advocate for minority hiring and inclusion, affordable housing and criminal justice. He also served as the 29th Ward leader and treasurer of the Philadelphia Democratic Party. Mr. Oliver helped many residents over the years. His hard work and dedication to the people of the 195th will not be forgotten.



## Fighting gun violence as a public health crisis

Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus hosted a roundtable on gun violence with Gov. Wolf. Our goal was to show that gun violence is more than a Second Amendment debate or a criminal justice issue, but also a public health threat. We heard from families, emergency room doctors, funeral directors and community leaders. We also heard the cry for public funding to support community programs that address trauma and encourage the medical community to become more engaged.

As a result, I worked with the PLBC and Gov. Wolf to secure \$1.5 million for the Gun Violence Reduction Initiative. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency recently released \$48 million in grants to organizations serving crime victims across Pennsylvania. Of the \$48 million, seven programs in Philadelphia received a total of \$4.1 million to specifically address victims of gun violence and violent crimes.

While we address the public health implications of gun violence, we must also enact commonsense gun laws that put lives first.

Some of the bills under consideration are:

- **H.B. 1872:** would ban devices such as "bump stocks" that assist in rapid firing.
- **H.B. 2060:** would ensure that domestic abusers be required to relinquish weapons to an appropriate authority.
- **H.B. 2227:** would allow concerned family members and law enforcement to file for extreme risk protective orders to prohibit firearm possession by people who are at risk of causing harm to themselves or others.
- **H.B. 273:** would allow people with mental or physical health concerns to voluntarily surrender their firearms.
- **H.B. 2266 and H.B. 2267:** would require expedited reporting of mental health records to state police.

As co-chair of the PLBC Subcommittee on Gun Violence, I will advocate for real resources, real solutions and real legislation to curb gun violence in Philadelphia and throughout the commonwealth.





**Anti-Bullying Rally**



**Philly Women Visit the State Capitol**

## Stories Alive: Connecting incarcerated parents with their children

Each year, I introduce a resolution recognizing Family Literacy Day on Nov. 1. It is important that we support opportunities to promote family literacy in all settings. Stories Alive offers incarcerated parents an opportunity to read books with their child through live video-conferencing stations set up both in the prison and in local libraries. The video visit takes place on a computer screen, similar to Skype or FaceTime.

These virtual visits help improve family literacy and strengthen connections among family members. The initiative is available at Widener Library, 2808 W. Lehigh Ave., for children with incarcerated parents at Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility (CFCF), Riverside Correctional Facility (RCF), and the House of Corrections (HOC).

The program is FREE. Families can sign up by calling (267) 257-3015. Books will be given to families who participate!

## Apply now to receive Property Tax/Rent Rebate

The deadline to file a 2017 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program is **Dec. 31, 2018!**

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. To find out if you qualify or if you need FREE assistance with filling out your application, please call or visit my office.



## New Tax Foreclosure Prevention Program helps citizens with past due property taxes

Maintaining the stock of affordable housing in Philadelphia is a priority. No one should lose their home because of rising real estate taxes. I am happy to announce two new resources available to help local residents:

- **Free Legal Services** – My office will be working with Community Legal Services to help low-income seniors facing tax foreclosure in Strawberry Mansion and Brewerytown-Sharswood neighborhoods of the 195th District.
- **Affordable Payment Plans** – The city made changes to its Owner-Occupied Payment Agreement (OOPA) program, which offers housing counseling assistance and reasonable installment payment agreements to tax-delinquent homeowners. Some payment agreements can be as low as zero dollars for very low-income homeowners.

To find out if you are eligible for these property tax assistance programs or others, please contact my district office.



**Senior Spring Fling Luncheon**



**Strawberry Mansion Graduate**



# Around the District

## At the playground

My staff and I met with constituents at summer pop-up offices at the 39th and Olive Playground, Mander Playground, Francisville Playground, and Athletic Recreation Center.



## On the corner

The mural dedication of “The Corner” at 29th and Ridge honored fallen officer Sgt. Robert Wilson and kicked off revitalization efforts in the area.



## The 195th goes solar



Defend Our Future and Moms Clean Air Force visited my Harrisburg office. I recently introduced legislation to support community solar programs in Pennsylvania.



I met with students from Youthbuild's Greenbuild program.



29th and Ridge is home to the Philadelphia Streets Department's first solarized bus shelter.



Fairmount homeowner Joan Kimball flipped the switch on her solar installation, the 150th under the Solarize Philly program.





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## Save the Date!

### Girard Avenue Street Festival

**Saturday, Oct. 13**

**Noon – 7 p.m.**

**Girard Ave. (between 26th & 29th streets)**

**Rain date: Saturday, Oct. 20**

A community event full of family fun, live entertainment, and information on state-related programs.



## My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Departments of Health and Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Information about federal, state and local government agencies

***Any problem with state government!***

Stay connected to what's happening in Harrisburg and in the community by signing up for my email updates.

Go to [www.pahouse.com/Bullock](http://www.pahouse.com/Bullock) to sign up. You can also follow me on social media!

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