



State Representative

BILL KORTZ

REPORT
to the 38th

BALDWIN OFFICE:
5101 OLD CLAIRTON ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15236
(412) 886-2870

DRAVOSBURG OFFICE:
751 PITTSBURGH-MCKEESPORT BLVD.
DRAVOSBURG, PA 15034
(412) 466-1940

Website: www.pahouse.com/Kortz

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RepKortz

Working Hard for West Mifflin, Dravosburg, McKeesport, Glassport, Port Vue, Liberty, Pleasant Hills and South Baldwin

Amid transportation bill sabotage, Kortz fights for bus route restoration

Rep. Kortz serves on the House Transportation Committee, tasked with developing a transportation plan that would actually fix our roads and bridges.

The Senate passed a bipartisan transportation bill that would have provided about \$2.5 billion in funding. However, Republicans in the House Transportation Committee reduced the bill to \$1.84 billion, much of it by cutting mass transit funding which is important to Allegheny County.

That amended bill was never voted on by the House, because the House majority leader insisted on selling off the state stores before taking up transportation.

The transportation needs are many; they have been ignored for far too long, and it will now cost more than \$4 billion to get caught up on road and bridge repairs. That figure grows every day.

The lack of action is leading to new weight limits on some of the smaller, older bridges in our area. Transit is also in jeopardy because of the stalemate on transportation funding.

There is some good news on the transportation front, however. The Port Authority resumed bus service for the Mon Valley on Sept. 1. Rep. Kortz fought these cuts vehemently several years ago meeting with then-CEO Steve

Bland. His pleas went unanswered. Continued dialogue with PAT's legislative liaison and management has led to the restoration. Daily service on the new 55 Glassport route will connect Century Square and the North Versailles Wal-Mart with hourly runs through the day.

Stops along the route will include Century Square, West Mifflin Wal-Mart, Southland Shopping Center, Community College of Allegheny County's South Campus, Jefferson Regional Medical Center, Clairton, Glassport, McKeesport, the Port Authority Transportation Center, UPMC McKeesport, Port Perry and the Great Valley Shopping Center.

Buses leaving from the North Versailles Wal-Mart begin their hourly service at 7 a.m. daily through 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 p.m. Sunday.

Specific details on this and all bus and T routes can be found on the Port Authority website - www.PortAuthority.org - or by calling the PAT customer service hotline at (412) 442-2000.



Pleasant Hills National Night Out Parade L-R Lt. Richard Kelly, Sen. Matt Smith, Mayor Warren Bourgeois, Chief Ed Cunningham, Rep. Kortz. This was their last National Night Out Parade as Kelly, Bourgeois and Cunningham will all be retiring this year.

Mark Your Calendars

- **Shredding Event – Saturday, Sept. 14, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., West Mifflin #3 Volunteer Fire Company. Bring documents you no longer need that contain personal financial information.**
- **Senior Fair – Thursday, Oct. 10, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Homeville Volunteer Fire Company.**
- **Veterans Recognition Ceremony – Thursday, Nov. 7, 11 a.m. Penn State Greater Allegheny (McKeesport). Pre-registration required. More details on page 4.**

2013-14 budget continues to put big businesses ahead of students

Earlier this summer, Rep. Kortz and the House Democrats voted against the Corbett-Republican 2013-14 state budget because it maintained most of the drastic cuts to local schools, higher education and services for children, women and seniors.

Education cuts

This budget continues to lock in devastating cuts to our entire educational system, from kindergarten through 12th grade and higher education. The Corbett administration has burned down our educational house in Pennsylvania as we know it. Our children will be the collateral damage in this war of budget priorities, and that is absolutely unacceptable. As we know, Good Schools = Good Communities.

Public education was cut nearly \$1 billion by Governor Corbett in 2011 and this budget institutionalized these massive cuts. Local school districts are already struggling to maintain adequate educational programs, and now they will be forced to furlough or layoff more teachers and support staff. In addition, this governor has forced most of Pennsylvania's local school districts to raise property taxes and do his dirty work so he can uphold a NO TAX pledge. He has just shifted the tax burden to the local authorities.

The 2010 budget was a high-water mark for public education funding. The monies lost again in this year's budget compared to 2010 are as follows:

West Mifflin - \$602,000

McKeesport - \$2,500,000

South Allegheny - \$840,000

Baldwin-Whitehall - \$994,000

West Jefferson Hills - \$539,000

These five schools will lose \$5.4 million this year because of Governor Corbett's cuts.

Rep. Kortz supports public education by personally donating his annual cost-of-living raise to our five local school districts. This raise is set by law and cannot be refused.

Higher Education

The state funds schools such as the University of Pittsburgh, Penn State, Temple and Lincoln to lower tuition for in-state students. The cuts made in the past have not been restored – making the dream of a college education completely unaffordable for some middle- and low-income families.

The state now contributes only 14 percent of Penn State's annual funding, down from more than 60 percent in 1970. Tuition there has increased 12 percent just since 2008-09.

Additionally, past cuts to the State System of Higher Education's 14 facilities, including IUP, Slippery Rock, Edinboro and others have not been restored and will result in tuition increases.

Locally, the Community College of Allegheny County has lost \$3.5 million in funding over the last two years and that money has yet to be restored.

'No Tax' Budget

House Republicans also are claiming this is a no-tax budget, but it's simply untrue. This merely continues shifting the burden to middle-class homeowners and seniors who will be forced to pick up the tab through higher local property taxes.

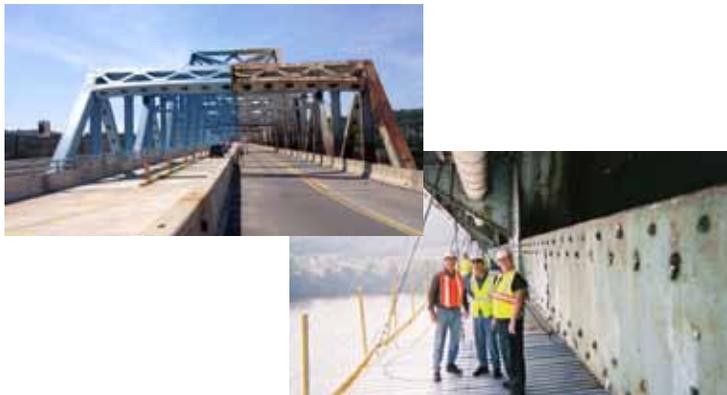


In January, dozens of local residents joined Rep. Kortz to ask the U.S. Postal Service to reconsider its plan to reduce hours, or even close, the Dravosburg post office. Because we worked together, the post office is staying open, although with some reduced hours. The post office will be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Roads and Bridges Updates

W.D. Mansfield Bridge – Dravosburg

- \$34 million project is halfway complete; final phase under way
- New ramps on McKeesport and Glassport side are complete
- Two-lane traffic limit remains, so drive cautiously across structure
- Expected completion date: December 2014



Homeville (Thompson Run) Bridge – West Mifflin

- County bridge project scheduled to close early 2015 through summer 2016
- Cost estimate: \$10 million

Route 885 Resurfacing

- Project completed
- Final cost: \$2 million

Bettis Road resurfacing

- Resurface 2-mile section from intersection of Pittsburgh-McKeesport Blvd. to Homestead-Duquesne Road
- Estimated start date: fall 2013

Skyline Drive, West Mifflin

- Shoring up and repaving section of Skyline Drive at the crest of hill; in addition, the associated guiderails will be repaired
- Estimated start date: fall 2013

Rt. 837 (River Road)

- Repairs will be made to severe dip in the road 1/2 mile from the Clairton border.
- Estimated start date: fall 2013

Curry Hollow Bridge (Route 2040) Intersects Arbor Lane – Pleasant Hills

- A \$5.6 million project to replace a bridge on Curry Hollow Road (Route 2040) in Pleasant Hills Borough started March 14, 2012. The project includes replacing an existing three-span encased I-beam bridge over railroad tracks west of Arbor Lane with a single-span adjacent box beam structure, widening the existing roadway to add a turning lane, traffic signals, resurfacing and other improvements on Curry Hollow Road.
- Status: On budget at \$5.57 million with expected completion date of November 2013



Governor continues to fight for businesses over people

As with the liquor plan mentioned on page 1, Governor Corbett has made it very clear who he views as his constituents, and it is not the residents of Pennsylvania.

Remember his plan to privatize the Pennsylvania Lottery?

He single-handedly offered a contract to Camelot Global Services, which runs the British Lottery.

Fortunately, the contract has been ruled unconstitutional by the Attorney General.

The lottery raises \$1 billion every year for senior citizens, and recently reported record sales of \$3.7 billion for the last fiscal year. Administrative costs take only 2.07 percent of the sales.

Yet the governor has spent more than \$3 million in lottery profits meant for our seniors to defend the deal and continues to try to send the management of this important asset overseas.

This entire budget process proves the governor's priorities are just plain wrong. Selling off money-making state assets and under-funding education doesn't work.

Governor takes money from promised tax relief to balance his budget

Rep. Kortz voted – twice – to defeat S.B. 691, a key part of the Corbett budget, as it took \$100 million from slot machine license fees, which is meant to provide property tax relief, to be applied to this year's General Fund. This was a way of taking money out of property owners' pockets to protect big out-of-state corporations, instead of endorsing plans such as Rep. Dave Reed's plan to close the Delaware Loophole.

A second vote, on July 15, was necessary because at the budget deadline of June 30, House Republicans slipped a plan to promote payday lending into the bill, and the Senate rightly removed that. The House was forced to come back and accept the Senate changes.

Kortz in the Community



On Father's Day, June 16, Rep. Kortz participated in the Greater Pittsburgh Soap Box Derby, held on Eden Park Boulevard in McKeesport. Trevor Brain, age 6, stands in front of the pace car, one of two cars sponsored by Rep. Kortz. Jade Long, age 5, stands behind the car. The other car sponsored by Rep. Kortz (not pictured), No. 7 racer, was driven by 10-year-old Evan Airhart, a first-time driver and a student at St. Maria Goretti.

CHAMPIONSHIP NOTE: On July 28, Local champ Macaila Ziolkowski won the national championship in Akron, Ohio, in the Soap Box Derby stock division. Congratulations Macaila!



On July 30, Rep. Kortz spoke at a Medicare birthday celebration hosted by USW Local 2227. As part of the celebration, Rep. Kortz and his staff served ice cream.



In March, Rep. Kortz attended the annual Civil War Ball in the Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg. This year is the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, and the ball raises money to restore monuments on the battlefield. An Abraham Lincoln impersonator attended the ball as well.



In June, Rep. Kortz hosted a "Boy and Girl Scouts Day" at his district office. Girl Scout Troops 50428 and 54219 from Pleasant Hills and 50333, 51168, 50676 from West Mifflin attended to learn more about how our state government works.



Rep. Kortz presented a citation to Ruth Whirl on her 99th birthday during her celebration at the Glassport Senior Center!



Rep. Kortz spent a day teaching in Mr. Rost's civics class at West Mifflin High School.

Veterans Corner

Rep. Kortz is a member of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee.

There are currently two bills before the committee which would provide needed support for our veterans:

■ **H.B. 536** – Would provide a \$50 per month increase in the pensions Pennsylvania provides to blind and paralyzed veterans. The monthly pension for these veterans has not increased since 1999, and the small increase is long overdue.

■ **H.B. 1294** – Would provide a one-time bonus of \$500 to Pennsylvania veterans who served in the Global War on Terrorism. Similar bonuses have been granted in the past to veterans of the first Persian Gulf War and World War II.

■ On May 10, Rep. Kortz held an open house in Dravosburg to celebrate the beginning of a new partnership with the American Legion to assist with veterans' benefits. Chico Ficerai, a department service officer with the Pennsylvania American Legion, is in Rep. Kortz's district once a month to answer veterans' questions about benefits. The service is available for all veterans, whether a member of the American Legion or not. Contact Rep. Kortz's office to make an appointment.



Are you a veteran? Well, WE WANT YOU! Call Rep. Kortz's Dravosburg office and register for his 1st annual Veteran's Recognition Ceremony, "Honor. Remembrance. Appreciation." Pre-registration is required for this event. Deadline for registration is Oct. 1.

Rep. Kortz's Current Legislation

Below is a highlight of some of the important bills and resolutions Rep. Kortz authored this session. For a complete list of bills Rep. Kortz has authored and co-sponsored, please visit <http://www.legis.state.pa.us>.

H.R. 399 – Adopted June 29 – Urges the inclusion of the word “accessible attics” to the sellers disclosure form by the Real Estate Commission.

H.R. 150 – Adopted unanimously April 16 – Urges the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to protect police by building in a time delay before dissemination of information before arrests.

H.B. 539 – Would allow grandparents to petition courts for custody of children if a court rules the parents or guardians should no longer have custody. Currently being considered by the House Judiciary Committee.

H.B. 535 – Would grant municipalities the authority to offer active volunteer firefighters a tax credit of up to 20 percent of their municipal tax liability. Currently being considered by the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee.

H.B. 1292 – Would require a non-binding referendum on a future election ballot asking whether Pennsylvanians support a constitutional convention to consider the function and structure of the General Assembly. The goal is to address the size of the Legislature. Currently being considered by the House State Government Committee.

H.B. 1291 – Would require retail establishments that provide restrooms for employees to allow anyone with a medical need to access them. This would help those suffering from Crohn's disease and other inflammatory bowel diseases provided the customer can provide medical documentation. Currently being considered by the House Consumer Affairs Committee.

H.B. 540 – Would require all manufacturers selling covered drugs in the commonwealth to participate in a pharmaceutical stewardship program. These programs would provide safe disposal of old or unneeded medications, keeping them out of the hands of people they were not prescribed for, as well as keeping them out of our environment. These programs include collection sites, mail-back options, safe-handling systems, and environmentally sound disposal methods for unwanted covered drugs from residential sources. Currently being considered by the House Health Committee.

H.B. 978 – Would prohibit any driver from using a hand-held wireless communications device to make or

receive phone calls or text messages while operating a vehicle in a designated work zone. A conviction would carry a \$100 fine. However, it would not constitute a moving violation unless the offense involves an accident or is the second or subsequent violation in less than one calendar year. Currently being considered by the House Transportation Committee.

In addition to the above bills, Rep. Kortz is strongly supporting and co-sponsoring many bills, including the following:

H.B. 1234 (Introduced by Speaker of the House Sam Smith) – Would reduce the number of House members, to 153. Currently being considered by the House State Government Committee.

H.B. 440 (Introduced by Rep. Dave Reed, Indiana County) – Would close the so-called Delaware Loophole for businesses, which allows a company to avoid paying Pennsylvania business taxes by maintaining an “office” in Delaware, frequently nothing more than a post office box. In exchange for closing the loophole, business taxes would be reduced over a six-year period.

This bill passed the House unanimously in May, has been reported out of the Senate Finance Committee and is awaiting a vote in the full Senate.

Member of the Steel, Coal and Manufacturing Caucuses



These caucuses look to support Pennsylvania industries in a bipartisan method. Rep. Kortz tours the Longview Power Plant, one of the newest coal-fired electrical generation plants in the nation.



State Representative
BILL KORTZ
 P.O. Box 202038
 Harrisburg, PA 17120-2038

Check inside for info on:

- Upcoming local events
- Details on Rep. Kortz's legislative proposals
- Pictures from local and Harrisburg events

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Rep. Kortz received two awards on Aug. 13th. One was the Recognition & Appreciation Service Award presented to him by Glassport Citizens Hose #1 VFC, and in this photo he receives the 2013 Political Service Award presented to him by Western PA Fireman's Association.

Internet Essentials program helps low-income students

Home Internet access helps many of us conveniently search for all kinds of information that is helpful to our daily lives. It also gives our children a leg up with school assignments and projects. But for thousands of families in our area, access for their children is something they cannot afford.

Please help me to spread the word about Internet Essentials, which provides the families of children who receive free or reduced price lunch the ability to access home Internet service and even a computer at greatly discounted rates.

No tax dollars are spent on this program.

More information about the program, including eligibility guidelines, is available by calling 1-855-846-8376.

GRANTS AWARDED

CITF grant awarded to Pleasant Hills Borough for Pleasant Kingdom Park



Rep. Kortz and Sen. Matt Smith helped Pleasant Hills Borough receive a \$157,000 Allegheny County Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund grant.

The CITF program is funded through state gaming revenues.

The money will be used to upgrade the Pleasant Kingdom playground and tennis and basketball courts in Mowry Park.

ARLE Grant for Glassport

In April, the Borough of Glassport received a \$53,200 grant from PennDOT for a safety improvement project to upgrade traffic signals on Monongahela Avenue. The grant was one of five awarded to Allegheny County communities as part of the Automated Red Light Enforcement funding program.

Under Pennsylvania law, fines from infractions at 21 intersections featuring red-light cameras in Philadelphia supply the grant funding.