

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# Margo L. Davidson

## 164TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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SUMMER 2014

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Monday 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

## Corbett Underfunds Education Again – Davidson Votes NO

The 2014-15 state budget again fails to adequately fund public education. Upper Darby School District and William Penn School District were given the same amount of state funding that they received in the 2013-14 budget, which based on inflation is essentially a cut.

In addition to flat funding, the popular Accountability Block Grants have been eliminated and replaced by Gov. Tom Corbett's new Ready to Learn Block Grants. We were given very little information about this grant money, including, most importantly, how the money is to be distributed. It is also unclear exactly how this money can be used. Upper Darby will receive \$1.59 million in grant funding, which is \$1.24 million less than the governor's budget proposal. William Penn will get \$905,768, which is \$570,000 less than the governor proposed.

After \$1 billion in education cuts from Corbett, school districts have cut all they can and they desperately need additional funding to fill budget gaps this year. In his budget address in February, the governor said there would be additional state funding to assist schools but that promise was not kept, leaving schools to make more cuts and to increase

property taxes on homeowners.

The state could provide additional funding for schools without enacting a tax increase on hardworking Pennsylvanians by implementing a natural gas extraction tax, which could generate an estimated \$500 million to \$600 million, and by closing the Delaware Tax loophole. I also proposed a Marcellus Shale tax, which is explained below.

The state also could have expanded Medicaid under the federal Affordable Care Act to add \$500 million to the state's coffers, while providing an additional 500,000 low-income Pennsylvanians with health insurance.

This budget, which was completed without any Democratic input, fails the people of Pennsylvania. The governor and Republican majorities in the legislature did not adequately fund important programs in this budget and by using gimmicks to bring it into balance, the state will very likely face a large deficit next year.



*Rep. Davidson demands more funding for education, specifically Pre-K, at a recent press conference.*

## Davidson Introduces Bill to Tax Marcellus Shale and Fund Education

I am introducing two bills to enact a severance tax on the extraction of natural gas. The bills would enact a 5-percent tax on each 1,000 cubic feet of natural gas extracted, plus five cents per 1,000 cubic feet, with the revenue generated to be allocated as follows:

Department of Education	32 percent
Environmental Stewardship Fund	29.6 percent
Department of Health	17.3 percent
General Fund	16 percent
Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund	4.3 percent
State Dam Removal Program	0.8 percent

It is imperative that a dedicated source of funding be established to properly fund education in Pennsylvania, which is why that item would receive the most funding.

# DAVIDSON FIGHTING FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL SECURITY

As the Democratic leader of the Ladies of the House Caucus, I have made fighting for women's rights one of my biggest priorities. This session, I have tried to improve the lives of all women in Pennsylvania by addressing the following three issues.

## Increasing the minimum wage

The current minimum wage, \$7.25 per hour, simply does not provide a livable wage. For example, a single mother with two children who works 40 hours per week, for 52 weeks a year, makes \$15,080. This is \$4,450 below the poverty line, which is \$19,530 for a household of three.

The effects of the low wage are especially felt by women, who account for two-thirds of workers earning minimum wage.

That is why I am co-sponsoring a bill to increase the minimum wage to \$9 per hour immediately and then to \$10.10 per hour in a year. This bill would help an estimated 855,000 low-wage workers, including 514,000 women. Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour would boost the earnings of a full-time worker by more than \$5,900 to \$21,008, which would be enough to move a family of three out of poverty.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 20 of the 21 states that have a higher minimum wage than Pennsylvania's \$7.25 an hour are growing jobs faster than Pennsylvania. This shows that increasing the wage isn't the job killer that some claim.

Raising the minimum wage will do what Gov. Tom Corbett's corporate welfare agenda hasn't done – spark new life in our economy and create more jobs. Raising the minimum wage puts more money in the pockets of working families when they need it most, boosting their spending power and our economy.

## Instituting pay equity

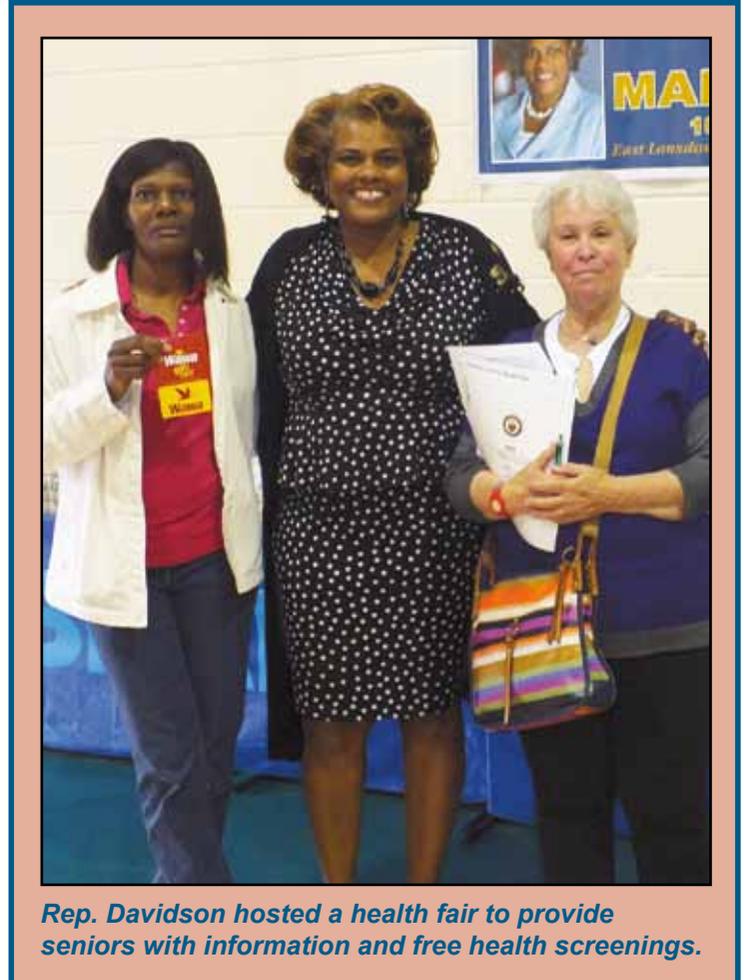
In June, the House of Representatives adopted an amendment I wrote that greatly improves the likelihood that the chamber will pass a bill this year to address the issue of workplace pay disparity for women. The resolution I amended, H.R. 716, requires the Joint State Government Commission to complete a definitive study on the issue of "workplace pay disparity" in Pennsylvania. The commission will then make recommendations to the General Assembly based on its findings. Under the language of the resolution, the commission was required to issue its report to the General Assembly by Nov. 30, 2014. My amendment moves the completion date up to Sept. 1, 2014. This change was necessary because as the resolution was originally drafted, the report would be done the last day of session. Putting off the report until next session doesn't help address this issue at all. If we can get this report completed by Sept. 1, we still have three months to address pay disparity this session. The women of the commonwealth, who make 77 cents for every dollar a man makes according to numerous studies, deserve quick action on this issue from their elected officials.

## Combating human trafficking

In late April, I spoke at a meeting of the Delaware County Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition at St. Laurence Catholic Church in the Highland Park section of Upper Darby. I discussed legislative efforts to combat the growing problem of human trafficking in Pennsylvania, including Senate Bill 75 and House Bill 1283. S.B. 75 would strengthen the existing statute on "trafficking of persons" by more clearly defining sex and labor trafficking, increasing the fines and penalties for trafficking and involuntary servitude, adding penalties for business entities, including license revocation and forfeiture of contracts. The bill would also create the Pennsylvania Council for the Prevention of Human Trafficking, and expand resources available to victim service providers.

I am co-sponsoring H.B. 1283, legislation that would target those who exploit children for financial or sexual gain, specifically the promoters and patrons of child prostitutes. The bill would increase the classifications of these crimes and would create strict financial penalties for those convicted.

The issue of sexual exploitation is a serious problem in Pennsylvania, and we must do all we can to protect women and children. These two proposals would help ensure that they receive the protection from sex trafficking that they deserve.



*Rep. Davidson hosted a health fair to provide seniors with information and free health screenings.*

# Davidson Tackles Mental Health Issue – Proposes Package of Bills

I am introducing a package of four bills aimed at ensuring that individuals who suffer from a serious mental illness receive the long-term treatment they need and deserve.

The first bill would amend the Mental Health Procedures Act, providing for assisted outpatient treatment, which includes: Assertive Community Treatment (this should be voluntary); case management services; medication; periodic blood tests; individual or group therapy; day or partial programming activities; educational and vocational training and activities; alcohol or substance abuse treatment and counseling; supervision of living arrangements; and any other services within an individualized treatment plan.

The second bill would amend the Insurance Company Law to require insurance companies to provide health insurance coverage for Assisted Outpatient Treatment for serious mental

illness.

The third bill would amend the Mental Health Procedures Act to require facilities to notify an individual's next of kin, including their spouse, parents, or children, in the event that their relative has been admitted to a mental health facility as a result of a mental health incident.

The final bill would amend the Pennsylvania Amber Alert System to require the Pennsylvania State Police to operate the Missing Endangered Person Advisory System, similar to the Amber Alert System, and require coordination with various state and federal authorities for the recovery of missing children and missing at-risk individuals.

This package of legislation will help individuals living with serious mental illnesses in our communities thrive and lead productive lives. It will also help families financially by requiring the coverage of long-term treatment



*Rep. Davidson and her husband Robert participated in the 2014 Lansdowne Memorial Day Walk/Run honoring our heroes.*

services, and provide peace of mind by putting safeguards in place to protect their loved ones with mental illness.

The reform package has already gained bipartisan support. The first public hearing on the bills was held on Aug. 27 at the Upper Darby Township Building in Upper Darby.

## CORBETT-BACKED PENSION PLAN IS DEEPLY FLAWED

Gov. Tom Corbett is blaming pension costs for increased school property taxes. This blame game is incredibly misleading and false.

Property taxes have been rising throughout Corbett's tenure, driven by his \$1 billion in education funding cuts. With just months to go before an election, he's suddenly looking to deflect the blame elsewhere.

Pennsylvania's problem is pension debt, not the cost of pension benefits. The failure of the state to help school districts fully contribute to the pension funds in good times led to massive debt when bad times arrived in the mid-2000s. If we want to fix the pension problem, we need to pay off the pension debt.

Pennsylvania has a plan in place to reduce the debt. In 2010, the General Assembly passed Act 120 with bipartisan support. It protects the state and school districts from huge pension payment spikes by setting out a schedule for paying off the debt gradually over the next several decades.

The pension plan the governor is pushing does not reduce the pension debt any faster than Act 120. His assertion that placing new public employees in a hybrid pension plan will save money and reduce property taxes in the near term is simply false.

The governor and other Republicans want to gradually transition new teachers and other public workers to a 401(k)-

style retirement plan. The Corbett pension plan has absolutely nothing to do with saving money for current state and school district budgets, or reducing property taxes for homeowners today. It's clearer than ever that Corbett sees public-sector workers as the enemy, but they are regular Pennsylvanians and they have earned the right to a secure retirement. The pension plan sought by the governor would cut retirement benefits for many future employees by 40 percent or more. We need to boost household incomes, not slash them.

For all of these reasons, all 92 House Democrats, including me, stood strong with a group of like-minded Republicans to oppose this proposal.



*Rep. Davidson hosted a veterans fair in June to provide veterans with information on benefits available to them.*



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**Margo L. Davidson**

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MOBILE OFFICES

All mobile office events are held on the first Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. to noon.

**October 4, 2014**

Sellers Library/Highland Park  
76 South State Rd., Upper Darby

**November 1, 2014**

Millbourne Borough Hall  
9 Park Ave., Millbourne

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## DISTRICT EVENTS



**SEPTEMBER 6, 2014**

**Book Bag Giveaway**

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Second Ward Playground

Church Lane and Greenwood Ave., Upper Darby

**OCTOBER 16, 2014**

**Public Safety Forum –**

**Protecting Your Children From Internet Predators**

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Twentieth Century Club, 84 S. Lansdowne Ave., Lansdowne

**NOVEMBER 13, 2014**

**Small Business Expo**

Upper Darby campus of  
Delaware County Community College  
1570 Garrett Rd., Upper Darby

*Rep. Davidson hosted a family fun day in Yeadon to promote alternatives to violence for youth.*



*Rep. Davidson with Girl Scout Troop #5200 at Highland Park Library, Upper Darby.*