

# Margo L. Davidson

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

164TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

WWW.PAHOUSE.COM/DAVIDSON



FALL 2013

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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

### Budget fails to fund education, costs taxpayers

I was happy to support an additional \$500,000 for the Upper Darby School District over last year's appropriation and an additional \$1 million for the William Penn School District in the state's current 2013-14 fiscal year budget package.

However, I remain disappointed that the overall budget failed to adequately or fully fund public education as a whole. While the state legislature completed the budget process in early July, sadly, it did not restore the \$1 billion in education funding cuts that Gov. Tom Corbett has delivered and retained in his last two budget cycles.

It is a shame to me that school districts were shortchanged again because of Gov. Corbett's refusal to enact at least a nominal, competitive extraction tax on drilling companies. Every other state in the nation that allows natural gas drilling provides for a tax on that drilling, and for the governor to refuse to do so in Pennsylvania is irresponsible. I will continue to fight for this commonsense solution and to ensure that the

proceeds are dedicated to school funding. With a reasonable tax on Marcellus Shale drilling and a temporary halt in the phase out of the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax, we could have provided our schools with adequate funding or restored the \$1 billion in cuts.

Children and their families are adversely affected when school districts are underfunded. This lack of funding, which has been a hallmark of the state budgets under Gov. Corbett, caused many school districts to make hard choices. I don't support teacher lay-offs or cuts in vital programs such as music and art while property taxes continue to rise. This double-edged sword of diminishing educational programs and rising taxes is unsustainable.

I will continue to work on both sides of the aisle to create a dedicated funding source for public education. I have created legislation to address this issue and I am working diligently to have my colleagues support this effort.

### New legislative districts will take effect in 2014

In May, the state Supreme Court approved new House and Senate legislative districts that will take effect starting with the 2014 election cycle. The process is required every 10 years with the new Census, but in Pennsylvania, redistricting is a broken system that allows politicians to pick their voters as opposed to voters choosing their elected officials. The current process undoubtedly leads to polarization within our political system, and I would like to see it taken out of politicians' hands.

Following the 2014 November general election, the new 164th District will consist of all of the Upper Darby zip codes, including the Highland Park, Bywood and Stonehurst sections. It will also include all of Lansdowne Borough, East Lansdowne, Millbourne and a small part of Yeadon. The 19026 zip code will no longer be in the 164th District.



Rep. Davidson visited the Step By Step Learning Center and Child Care in June to read with the children and to learn about the center's program from the staff.

# Davidson co-chairs local hearing on education funding

Since education funding and quality are my legislative top priorities, I hosted and co-chaired a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing in Drexel Hill in May. This forum brought in other legislators from around the state representing similar and diverse school districts.

At that hearing, the committee heard from stakeholders, including superintendents and education advocates, who outlined efforts to manage state funding cuts.

William Penn School District Superintendent Joseph Bruni said school districts are struggling and they need the support of legislators at both the state and federal levels. He said the lack of support from government leaders in Harrisburg sends the signal that school districts are on their own.

"It's an American tragedy that we're turning our backs on the poor, black and minority students," Bruni said. "We're frustrated. To label the William Penn School District a failing school district is outrageous because we have many students who do just fine."

Angela Alvarado, a parent living in Upper Darby School District, said that state education funding cuts have her greatly concerned because her daughter will start kindergarten soon. She fears that without properly funded preschool or kindergarten, her daughter will start behind other children in the state and will never be able to catch up.

Rhonda Brownstein, executive director of the Education Law Center, explained that since 2010-11, the average classroom in Pennsylvania public schools has lost \$11,575 in annual funding, and the poorest school districts have lost more than \$20,000. She said schools need adequate funding and a funding formula based on the real needs of students.

The governor's unrelenting cuts to basic education the last two years will have an impact on the commonwealth's students for the rest of their lives. My hearing documented the fact that school districts have learned to do more with less, but they've reached the point where there is no more left to cut.

When our state ought to be investing in our next generation, the insufficient funding for our schools will have long-term negative consequences on many students and our communities as a whole.



**Rep. Davidson co-chairs a policy hearing on education funding in Upper Darby on May 29, 2013.**

## Lottery privatization fails our seniors

For reasons that aren't completely clear, Gov. Corbett has spent the first half of 2013 trying to privatize the Pennsylvania Lottery. Luckily for the state's seniors, the attorney general stepped in and said the deal was illegal. However, Gov. Corbett is undeterred and is still trying to privatize the system.

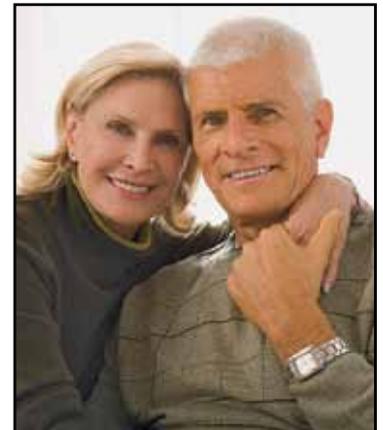
When it comes to the lottery, I believe that, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." The lottery has proven to be a critical asset for senior citizens across Pennsylvania for nearly 50 years.

As a state representative, I've gained a greater appreciation of all the lottery does for the citizens of Delaware County, including: \$11.1 million for PACE/PACENET prescription-drug assistance, \$8.2 million for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, \$7.7 million for the operation of Area Agency on Aging programs and senior centers, \$9.4 million in long-term living services, and \$7 million for the Shared/Free Ride Transportation Program. The lottery also distributed \$72 million in prizes in the county.

The Pennsylvania Lottery had a record year in 2011-12, with sales of nearly \$3.5 billion and profits of more than \$1 billion. For this fiscal year, lottery sales are on pace for another record, with profits nearly 10 percent higher than they were a year ago.

I believe that Pennsylvania should not risk its lottery nor should the administration have the power to make this change without legislative approval, so I joined a lawsuit to stop this power grab. The governor has so far failed to make the case that their lottery vendor can deliver on increased revenues to our commonwealth, which would justify the action. Before I could support

a change of this magnitude I would have to be sure beyond a reasonable doubt that there would be a significant increase in funds to seniors' programs and a reduction in property taxes for seniors beyond what is currently provided under the gaming laws.



# Liquor-privatization bill will lead to job losses, more underage drinking

The liquor-privatization bill that went through the House is not a business-friendly bill, in fact, it has the potential to destroy small businesses and ravage communities. It will result in the loss of thousands of family-sustaining jobs for Pennsylvania workers.

The proposal favors the interests of giant retailers and corporate interests over those of small businesses and tax-paying citizens and will kill 4,500 jobs at state wine and spirits shops and put small family-owned beer distributors out of business. Family-owned restaurants here in our community are also at risk.

The confusing licensing scheme in the bill would triple the number of wine and spirits stores and more than quadruple the number of wine retailers, which could result in more underage children having increased access to alcohol. We cannot create a new system that makes it easier for children to obtain alcohol. The Chiefs of Police and the Fraternal Order of Police expressed concern about the effect of this proposal, and what it means to their already overtaxed departments.

There will be serious consequences if we expand access to alcohol, which has led Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the state DUI Association, fraternal and veterans' organizations and others to oppose this plan.

In addition, the bill ignores the \$500 million annual contribution from the sale of wine and spirits to the State Treasury. The estimated revenue from selling the state's 619 liquor stores could be as low as \$425 million. It makes no sense to sell this asset for a one-time payment that is less than what that asset provides the state every year.

This bill constitutes a disservice to Pennsylvania families who are struggling with increased property taxes. With Gov. Corbett's \$1 billion in education cuts over the past two years, it doesn't make sense to lose \$500 million from the state's coffers.

I understand that the public is looking for greater access and convenience when buying alcohol but the proposal that passed the House does not provide it. With all its rules and licensing variations, it would create confusion and less convenience because people would have a hard time figuring out which licensee offered what types of alcohol at what volume.

I voted against this proposal because it offered consumers nothing they wanted and everything they don't.



**Rep. Davidson celebrates the legacy of former Congressman Bob Edgar on the floor of the House of Representatives.**



**Rep. Davidson honors Sikh community in light of shooting tragedy in Wisconsin.**



**Rep. Davidson speaks at a rally calling for the elimination of property taxes and dedicated public education funding.**



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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## UPCOMING EVENT



# 4TH ANNUAL EGGNOG SIP and OPEN HOUSE



Drop in between 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

**Monday, Dec. 30**

**REP. DAVIDSON'S CONSTITUENT SERVICE OFFICE**

Barclay Square Shopping Center • 1500 Garrett Road • Upper Darby, PA 19082

## Rep. Davidson's mobile office brings state services to you

You're invited to discuss your state-related concerns at my Mobile Office each month.

2014 Mobile Office dates are as follows (locations to be announced):

**January 4**

**May 3**

**September 6**

**February 1**

**June 7**

**October 4**

**March 1**

**July 5**

**November 1**

**April 5**

**August 2**

**December 6**

Staff will be available to provide information on state services and help with state forms, and free notary services are usually available.

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