



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Budget impasse unacceptable for Pennsylvania

As a businesswoman and a taxpayer, I believe the state legislature has a responsibility to pass a fair and balanced budget that is honest and transparent, adequately funds schools, supports seniors and human services, and begins to address the growing structural budget deficit.

Unfortunately, I spent much of my time during my first six months in office responding to a state budget crisis that began two months before I was even sworn in.

The ongoing stalemate in Pennsylvania hit a low point at the end of December. Shortly before Christmas, we believed an agreement had been reached that would end this protracted ordeal. A bipartisan group of legislators, including Gov. Tom Wolf, House Republicans and Democrats, and Senate Republicans and Democrats, agreed to a budget framework that would fund Pennsylvania's education system. It didn't have everything that everyone wanted, which made it a true compromise budget.

A series of procedural votes on Dec. 22nd proved we had enough votes to pass the compromise budget with bipartisan support. On Dec. 23rd, we were seemingly hours away from a final vote that would have given Pennsylvania a proper budget without the smoke and mirrors used over the past four years to pass an unbalanced budget. Inexplicably, instead of bringing it for a final vote, Speaker of the House Mike Turzai cancelled the rest of session for the day and sent everyone home for the holidays.

I participated in a press conference with my colleagues where we asked the Speaker to come back to work – urging him to gavel us back into session and let us do our job to finish the budget. Sadly, our cries went unheard. Because the Speaker sent everyone home instead, the Senate was forced to hurriedly send a poorly planned budget bill to the governor, simply to avoid closure of our cash-strapped schools and human service providers following the holidays.

Rightfully, the governor vetoed large chunks of the budget bill he was handed because it had a \$300 million hole in it. That budget was determined to be “structurally unbalanced” by Standard & Poors, an independent, national credit-rating agency, saying it would lead to a \$2 billion deficit in the 2016-2017 budget, making the

problem even worse. Gov. Wolf approved enough money to keep our schools open and hoped his veto would force everyone back to the negotiating table. But that didn't happen and there has been no real attempt to finish the budget in January or February.

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After Speaker of the House Mike Turzai abruptly adjourned the House right before Christmas without calling a vote on the compromise budget, I joined many of my colleagues at a press conference demanding he call us back into session to get the job done.

Budget impasse

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On February 9th, I was in the House Chamber as Gov. Wolf gave his budget address for next year, with this year's budget still undone. He proposed an 18-month budget that would settle the budget crisis and get us back on track. I applaud his focus on honest and responsible policies that work, including: enacting a severance tax in Pennsylvania, closing corporate tax loopholes

for large multinational companies, and instituting tax reform, including improving the arrangement of the commonwealth's property and income taxes

As we move forward, I will continue to fight for what so many people of the 161st Legislative District have told me they want to see: reduced property taxes, an investment in our

children's futures by properly funding education, and, most importantly, true governing in Harrisburg.

If you have any questions or want to voice your opinion of our current budget situation, please do not hesitate to contact my office by emailing me at RepKruegerBraneky@pahouse.net or calling us at 610-534-6880.

First piece of legislation signed into law

Less than four months after I took office, I'm proud to report that Gov. Tom Wolf signed my first piece of legislation into law.

Act 96 of 2015, which was signed by the governor at the end of December, will raise additional revenue for our state by ensuring that the proper taxes are being paid on roll-your-own cigarettes. Before this legislation became law, taxes only applied to pre-rolled and pre-packaged cigarettes.

The bill passed the House and the Senate with overwhelmingly bipartisan support. At a time when our state is facing such a severe structural deficit, it's important that big tobacco companies pay their fair share to our communities. It is estimated that this law will bring an additional \$6 million to Pennsylvania.

This law will also enhance Pennsylvania's compliance with the Master Settlement Agreement with big tobacco companies – an agreement that provides billions of dollars to Pennsylvania for a variety of health-related programs for seniors and other Pennsylvania residents.

Considering these payments help fund programs such as anti-smoking campaigns and smoking cessation efforts around our state, this will be an important benefit to help curb rising health care costs associated with tobacco use.



It was an honor for my family to join me as Gov. Tom Wolf signed my first piece of legislation into law.



I had a great visit with Principal Theresa Waters and Advancement Director Linda Rooney at Mother of Providence Regional Catholic School to honor Catholic Schools Week.



2016 Trout opener on the way

My office has information on the upcoming first day of Trout Season, which will be Saturday, April 2nd in our area. **Please contact us at 610-534-6880 for more info.**



\$189,000 in grants headed to our district

In January, I was proud to announce that \$189,000 in state grants were awarded to two municipalities in the 161st Legislative District. Both grants come from the Community Conservation Partnership Program, administered by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Aston Township will receive a \$164,000 grant to rehabilitate Valley View Park. Work will include renovating a baseball field and basketball court, building a pedestrian walkway, stormwater management structures, installing play equipment, disability access, landscaping, site amenities and other related site improvements.

Nether Providence Township will receive a \$35,000 grant to rehabilitate Bullens Lane Park. The project will include installing play equipment with required safety surfacing, lighting and bleachers, building a pedestrian walkway, picnic area, parking area and rain garden improvements, disability access, landscaping, site amenities and other related site improvements.

Both of these grants will go a long way in helping improve the already beautiful outdoor recreation opportunities we have in our district. I look forward to seeing the completed work and how it will improve our community.



I enjoyed recognizing local Eagle Scouts, including Casey Berardi of Troop 225 in Aston, Anthony Foglio and Andy Connell of Swarthmore Troop 112, Nicholas Kracht of Wallingford Troop 277, and Jonathon Kopsick, Alex Menezes, Noah Pallmeyer, Colin Gillespie, Trey Snyder, Zach and Case Liga, and Ryan Dostillio of Rose Valley Troop 272.



Honoring our local school district board of directors

January was School Board Director Recognition Month, and I was honored to attend local school board meetings around our district to present citations to our school board directors in honor of their hard work and dedication to ensuring that our students receive the best education possible.

I spoke with the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District

Board of Directors, the Penn-Delco Board of Directors and the Ridley School District Board of Directors. Volunteer board members serve the community and put countless hours of planning into the budgetary and staffing decisions that impact our children's education experience.

I'm extremely thankful for all the work they do and I look forward to working with them in the future.



I was proud to be able to recognize many local school district boards of directors – including the Ridley School District Board of Directors – by presenting them with a citation for School Board Director Recognition Month.



It was an honor to celebrate Father Ed Hallinan and St. John Chrysostom Catholic Church of Wallingford with a citation recognizing them as the 2015 winner of the Loyola Press Opening Doors Award. This award, given by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, recognizes the amazing work St. John's has done to become a fully equipped church dedicating themselves to serving the needs of those with disabilities. Congrats to coordinator Kristina Vacha and all the volunteers who serve the parish. It's an honor to have them in our district!



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Save the date for my upcoming shred event!

Do you have unwanted sensitive documents in your house and need to securely dispose of them? If so, you're invited to a shred event I'm sponsoring from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 16th at the Strath Haven High School, 205 S. Providence Road, Wallingford, PA 19086.

Common types of unwanted items that should be shredded include credit card statements, credit card applications, bank statements, canceled checks, income tax information, insurance records and retirement or pension fund information.

Get your FREE SEPTA Key Senior ID card!

Senior citizens, 65 or older, can use SEPTA service, and my office will help you get your picture taken and obtain your FREE SEPTA Senior ID card. Join us on Tuesday, March 22nd from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at my district office, located at 701 E. MacDade Blvd. (Corner of MacDade Blvd. and Fernwood Ave.) in Folsom.

Please contact my office at 610-534-6880 to reserve your spot. SEPTA will send your card to you in the mail shortly after you visit my office.



Join the Pennsylvania American Legion Auxiliary Youth Leadership Program

Young men and women across Pennsylvania have the unique opportunity to take part in a program managed by the American Legion that aims to teach high school juniors the ideals and objectives of American government. Students will have the chance to learn how government functions at the local, state and federal level, as well as meet with local politicians to discuss the issues they face on a daily basis and the inner workings of the legislative process.

This weeklong program is available to high school juniors, both male and female, who are recommended by high school

counselors, coaches, clergy, community leaders, businesses or veterans. Those selected will take part in the educational experience for one week in June at Shippensburg University.

Applicants will be selected on the basis of leadership, character, scholarship, merit, loyalty and service in their school and community. For more information, please contact my office at 610-534-6880 or your local American Legion post. The application deadline for the 2016 Youth Leadership Program, which will be held June 19-24, is April 22nd.

