



# State Representative **BILL KORTZ** **REPORT**

[www.pahouse.com/Kortz](http://www.pahouse.com/Kortz)

*to the 38th*

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2675 BROWNSVILLE ROAD  
SOUTH PARK, PA

9 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.  
SECOND THURSDAY  
OF EACH MONTH

[www.facebook.com/RepKortz](https://www.facebook.com/RepKortz)

[@RepBillKortz](https://twitter.com/RepBillKortz)

**Summer 2016**

## My bill would require students to pass a civics exam to graduate

In December, I introduced a bill along with Republican state Rep. Karen Boback that would require high school students to pass a test on basic civics before graduating.

Understanding the basics of our government is necessary to become fully engaged in our political process. It is essential that all Americans understand such concepts as the Electoral College, which will play an important part in this year's presidential election.

House Bill 1858 would require that, by the 2020-21 school year, all students attending public, private, charter or cyber schools, or taking a G.E.D. exam, score at least 60 percent on a 100-question civics exam currently used by the U.S. Citizens and Immigration Services for its citizenship test.

I believe our own students should be expected to understand our government at least as well as we expect of an immigrant who is applying to become a citizen.

The bill is currently in the House Education Committee for further review.



## EITC Program receives additional funding in new budget

During the state budget discussions, the legislature agreed to expand the state's Educational Improvement Tax Credit program by \$25 million.

This educational funding program gives Pennsylvania businesses tax credits for contributing to a scholarship organization, educational improvement organization or a Pre-K scholarship organization. The donations may be made to either public or private organizations.

## This year's budget was a small win for our schools

The legislature and the governor worked together this year to complete a bipartisan, on-time budget that invested more money in early childhood, K-12, and higher education.

While the budget is not perfect, it represented a compromise between the many different factions of both the Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate, as well as Gov. Tom Wolf.

Most importantly, our schools will not need to borrow money to stay open this year, and the budget provides some increases in the school subsidies for our local districts. As part of my ongoing commitment to education, I continue to donate my annual salary cost-of-living adjustment to our local schools. **Last year, the General Assembly didn't receive a COLA, so I provided a donation to the schools from my personal funds.**

### State funding for the school districts in the Mon Valley is as follows:

#### West Mifflin School District

*\*Total below does not include the approximate \$3 million for Duquesne students*

Basic Ed.	\$7.17 million	Increase over last year	\$360,424 or 5.3%
Special Ed.	\$1.98 million	Increase over last year	\$45,494 or 2.3%
Ready to Learn Block Grant	\$489,803		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9.65 million</b>	<b>Increase over last year</b>	<b>\$405,918</b>

#### South Allegheny School District

Basic Ed.	\$9.66 million	Increase over last year	\$183,598 or 1.9%
Special Ed.	\$1.178 million	Increase over last year	\$35,392 or 3.1%
Ready to Learn Block Grant	\$343,234		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11.18 million</b>	<b>Increase over last year</b>	<b>\$218,990</b>

#### McKeesport Area School District

Basic Ed.	\$24.65 million	Increase over last year	\$756,312 or 3.2%
Special Ed.	\$3.15 million	Increase over last year	\$63,714 or 2.1%
Ready to Learn Block Grant	\$888,223		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28.69 million</b>	<b>Increase over last year</b>	<b>\$820,026</b>

This program is an indirect way to get more funding to our schools and help support our educational programs, especially for younger students.

## Important 2016 Election Dates

**Oct. 11** – Last day to register to vote

**Nov. 1** – Last day to apply for an absentee ballot

**Nov. 4** – Last day for county election offices to receive absentee ballots

**Nov. 8** – Election Day  
Polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.



## Does the state have your money?

The state treasury holds more than \$2 billion in unclaimed property that it wants to return to its owners.

Examples of unclaimed property include:

- Closed bank accounts;
- Uncashed checks, including paychecks;
- Lost stocks and bonds;
- Contents of safe deposit boxes; and
- Expired gift cards/certificates.

The state maintains a website that lets you search by name, but I want to make it even easier for you. Contact my constituent service office and schedule a time so we can help you search.

If you are owed anything of value, we can also help you file the paperwork to have it returned.

**To date, we have helped area residents reclaim \$196,968.**



## Internet Essentials program helps low-income students

Home internet access helps many of us conveniently search for all kinds of information 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, internet access for their children is something they cannot afford.

Please help me spread the word about Internet Essentials, which offers families who receive housing support through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development the ability to receive high-speed home internet service and even a computer at greatly discounted rates.

This is an expansion of the program previously available to families with students who qualified for free or discounted lunches.

HUD estimates as many as 20,000 households in the Pittsburgh area may qualify for this program.

No tax dollars are spent on this program.

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



*In October, I was honored to welcome students from the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf to Harrisburg.*



# Road and Bridge Updates

## Skyline Drive in West Mifflin

- Milling, resurfacing, shoulder repair, drainage improvements and line painting
- Concluded by Aug. 31, 2016
- Estimated cost: \$1.1 million
- Final cost: \$714,198 (under budget)



*Skyline Drive*

## Route 51 – Lebanon Church Road to Bausman

- Northern section (Route 88 to the Liberty Tubes) features road milling and resurfacing, as well as curb replacement
- Southern section (Route 88 to Lebanon Church Road) focuses on draining improvements, curb work and eventual roadway rebuilding
- Project wrapped in early August, but light clean-up may continue
- Final cost: \$15.9 million



*Route 51 repaving project*

## S.R. 885 Bridge over Union Railroad in West Mifflin Borough

- Replacement of concrete arch bridge over Union Railroad with a single-span bridge
- Project has been completed
- Final cost was reduced by about \$1.2 million, to \$4.76 million



*Bridge over the Union Railroad*

## Route 51/88 intersection

- Work completed April 30, 2016
- Final cost: \$19.73 million



*Route 51/88 intersection*

## Homeville (Thompson Run) Bridge – West Mifflin

- Complete rehabilitation of structure, including new concrete deck, sidewalk, painting, structural steel repairs, and repairs to piers and abutments
- Anticipated completion: November 2016



*Homeville Bridge*

- Cost estimate: \$10.2 million

## Route 885 repaving (by CCAC)



*Route 885 repaving project*

- Milling, resurfacing, base and shoulder repair, drainage improvements, pavement markings
- June through August 2016
- Estimated cost: \$1.46 million

## Streets Run Road Bridge project (private/public partnership)

- JV 431 - Streets Run Road near Brentwood Road completed Jan. 2, 2016
- JV 432 – 1/10 of a mile north of the completed project JV 431, near Lutz Hollow Road – construction scheduled to begin April 2017 and will require a five-week detour
- JV 430 at the intersection of East Willock Road – construction scheduled to begin mid-May 2017 and will require a 10-week closure



*Streets Run Road project*

## Old Clairton Road

- Reconstruction of 1.2 miles of roadway, from Route 51 near the cloverleaf to Gill Hall Road
- Completed November 2015
- Cost: \$2 million



*Old Clairton Road*

**ATTENTION**

Please bring any unused or expired medications to dispose of at my senior fair.

**Got drugs?**

## Mark your calendars:

### 9th Annual Senior Fair

10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 13, Broughton VFD  
1030 Cochrans Mill Road, Pittsburgh (South Park), PA 15236

### 4th Annual Shred-It Event

10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 15, West Mifflin #3 VFC  
3722 Rodeo Drive, West Mifflin, PA 15122



## Rep. Kortz's Current Legislation

Below is a highlight of some of the important bills and resolutions I authored this session. For a complete list of bills I have authored and co-sponsored, please visit [www.legis.state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us).

**H.B. 1421** – Co-sponsored with Rep. Susan Helm from central Pennsylvania, would require licensing for all Pennsylvania home inspectors. Many home sales are tied to the results of a home inspection, yet there are no standards and no way for a potential homeowner to guarantee the qualifications of the person doing the inspection. A house is too expensive to have an unqualified person examine it before a sale. The bill is currently under consideration in the House Professional Licensure Committee.

**H.B. 145** – Would allow communities to offer volunteer first responders a tax credit worth up to 20 percent of the volunteer's local income and property tax. The volunteer must be actively participating in a volunteer fire company, EMS group or hazardous materials response team. If this bill passes, local communities could elect to offer the credit against the volunteer's tax liability. The bill is currently under consideration in the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee.

**On June 30, Rep. Kortz stands while Gov. Tom Wolf signed H.B. 1877 into law. This bill extended the Fire Companies and Volunteer Services Grant Program, which was set to expire June 30, 2016. This program provides total annual funding of \$30 million, which is divided among the local fire and EMS services in the district and around the state.**

**H.B. 685** – Would give grandparents specific legal rights when considering where to place a dependent child when a court decides it is in the best interest of the child to place him or her with someone other than a legal parent or guardian. This bill would give grandparents legal standing to ask for the child to be placed in their care. Current state law does not give grandparents legal standing to ask for the child to be placed with them. The bill is currently under consideration in the House Judiciary Committee.



## Stay in the Know

I want to alert you about Pennsylvania House rules that prohibit when I can contact you leading up to a state House election.

Though you might already be receiving my email alerts, there will be a 60-day period preceding the upcoming November 2016 election when I will be prohibited from sending legislative emails to you unless you have opted in to continue receiving them.

Please visit my website, [www.pahouse.com/Kortz](http://www.pahouse.com/Kortz), to sign up for email alerts on important information, including legislation being considered in Harrisburg. On my website, click on the contacts tab in the top bar and then click on the Sign up for Emails link and fill in your information.

## Kortz votes to cut legislature

Earlier this year, the state Senate passed legislation (H.B. 153) that I voted for in May 2015, which would reduce the size of the legislature.

The proposed amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution would cut the House of Representatives from 203 to 151 members following the reapportionment in 2020.

Because it is a constitutional amendment, the identical bill must pass the General Assembly again next session and then would go before the voters as a ballot question.

I believe that a smaller legislature would save taxpayer money and provide more efficient state government.





# Around the 38th District



**West Mifflin Community Day 2015 at Allegheny County Airport. From left, Councilman Dan Davis, Rep. Bill Kortz, West Mifflin Man of the Year Robert Kozar, Mayor Chris Kelly, Rick Torretti accepting on behalf of West Mifflin Business of the Year Dom's TV, Councilman Steve Marone, and Allegheny County Councilman Bob Macey.**



**Rep. Kortz attends the annual Soap Box Derby held on Father's Day in McKeesport to cheer on the racers. This year he drove the West Mifflin VFD #3 car.**



**Rep. Kortz participates in the annual Dravosburg Memorial Day celebration.**



**Rep. Kortz participates in the West Mifflin Baseball League Opening Day festivities April 16. From left, School Board Director Deb Kostelnik, Councilman Frank Stupar, Magistrate Dan Olasz and Mayor Chris Kelly.**



**Rep. Kortz participates in the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Glassport police station.**



**Congrats to Barbara Stevenson on her retirement from Dravosburg council! Thank you for the many years of excellent community service!**



**Rep. Kortz is joined by Rep. Paul Costa, state Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera, Sen. Jay Costa, Sen. Jim Brewster and Austin Davis from Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald's office, at the Mon Yough Area Chamber of Commerce legislative luncheon in April.**



**Port Vue Fun to be a Kid Day.**



**On Glassport Kids' Fishing Day, June 18, Rep. Kortz is joined by Mayor Rosemary Bradley, Council President Dave Kowalski, other council members, police, firemen and volunteers.**



**Rep. Kortz is joined by Sen. Jim Brewster and County Councilman Bob Macey in presenting citations to DJ Wunderley honoring his 50 years of service to Liberty Borough VFD.**



**Rep. Kortz speaks at the annual Glassport Memorial Day celebration.**



**Rep. Kortz speaks to the West Mifflin Tri-Valley Senior Citizens group in April.**



**Rep. Kortz joins Port Vue Boy Scout Pack 53 for their pancake breakfast.**



**Rep. Kortz participates in the annual Port Vue Baseball opening day ceremonies on April 30.**



State Representative  
**BILL KORTZ**

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**UPCOMING EVENTS  
IN THE 38TH DISTRICT**

■ **Oct. 13 Senior Fair**

■ **Oct. 15 Shred-It Event**

*More information inside!*

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lpo.kl.0816

## Veterans Corner

### Kortz bills for veterans currently under consideration

H.B. 684 would offer bonuses to veterans who served in the war on terror

I have introduced this legislation that would offer a one-time payment of \$500 to eligible veterans who served in the Global War on Terrorism. The bill would offer the bonuses to those who received the Global Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal or Afghanistan Campaign Medal and were discharged under honorable circumstances. The bonus would be awarded to current Pennsylvania residents or those who were legal residents at the time of their discharge.

The bill is currently under consideration in the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, of which I am a member.

H.B. 687 would increase pensions for some disabled veterans.

I have introduced H.B. 687, which would increase the state pension for blind, paralyzed and amputee veterans by \$50 per month. Currently, these disabled veterans receive a pension of \$150 per month, an amount which has not increased since 1999.

In the past 16 years, inflation has added 43 percent to the cost of living. This bill would help close that income gap for these veterans.

The bill is currently under consideration in the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, of which I am a member.



### Persian Gulf bonus deadline extended through August 2018

I'd like to remind you that the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has extended the state's Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Bonus Program through Aug. 31, 2018.

Under the program, eligible veterans of the first Persian Gulf War in 1990-91 can receive \$75 for each month of service in the Persian Gulf Theater of Operations. Prisoners of war and the families of troops who died as a result of the war can receive \$5,000.

Anyone who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserve component, or Pennsylvania National Guard in the Persian Gulf Conflict between Aug. 2, 1990 and Aug. 31, 1991, may be eligible.

The deadline to apply for this benefit is now Aug. 31, 2018. More details about the program are available at [www.persiangufbonus.pa.gov](http://www.persiangufbonus.pa.gov) or by calling the program's toll-free number, 1-866-458-9182.



**Rep. Kortz salutes as part of the Veterans Day celebration at West Mifflin High School. The AFJROTC cadets are all saluting. Next to Rep. Kortz is Gene Staudt, a veteran and chaplain of VFW Intrepid Post 914.**