



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE Donna Bullock

195th Legislative District

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Dear Neighbor,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve my first full term, and I look forward to working for you during the next two years. The 2015-16 legislative session was busy and exciting for me as a new representative, and I'm proud of everything we accomplished as a community. I'm eagerly awaiting the new session so that I can build on the partnerships we've created, forge new relationships and affect positive legislative change in Harrisburg.

It's also been a pleasure for me and my staff to serve you from my constituent service office at 2835 W. Girard Ave. My office can help with the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications, prescription-drug assistance programs, unemployment compensation, PennDOT-related matters and much more.

As we head into the winter months, my office can help with the state's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP.

LIHEAP offers cash grants of \$200 to \$1,000 that are sent directly to the utility company, and crisis benefits of \$25 to \$500 for households in immediate danger of being without heat. This season's income guidelines for LIHEAP cash and crisis grants are \$17,820 for an individual and increase by at least \$6,200 for each additional person in the household.

Please call or visit my office if you or someone you know needs help filling out the application, which can also be found online at [www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov).

The coming winter months also mean the holiday season is on its way, and I hope yours is filled with joy and the promise of a prosperous new year. Be on the look out for opportunities to serve one another this holiday season and be sure to take the time to reflect on the importance of love, family and community fellowship. My office and I will be supporting many local causes this year, so please stop by to get involved, find out more about state-related programs or just to say hello!

Sincerely,

Rep. Donna Bullock

## Bringing funding to Philadelphia

As a state representative, I'm humbled and privileged to help direct state budget, grant and loan funds to deserving projects in the 195<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. There are many state programs that deliver targeted and critical funding for projects that promote investments in community economic development, recreation and quality of life, green initiatives, schooling, child care and infrastructure.

**Here are a few of the projects that state programs have helped during this legislative session.**

- \$47.1 million in 2016 increased basic education funding for the School District of Philadelphia
- \$3.2 million in 2016 increased special education funding for the School District of Philadelphia
- \$1 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant for the African Plains Trail at the Philadelphia Zoo
- \$1 million RACP for Community Partnership School expansion in North Philadelphia
- \$1.01 million in 2015 Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) awards for 46 affordable units in Mt. Vernon Manor II
- \$1.18 million in 2016 LIHTC awards for 55 affordable units in Strawberry Mansion
- \$400,000 in Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnership Program grants for preliminary planning of a greenway from the Delaware River Trail to the Schuylkill River Trail in Spring Garden
- \$25 million in 2016 increased Pre-K school funding (statewide)
- \$15 million for Centers for Excellence in opioid treatment (statewide); nearby Penn Presbyterian Medical Center and Temple University will each be designated as Centers of Excellence.

# Legislation offered in 2015-16

As a legislator, my most important job is to introduce and advocate for legislation that improves the quality of life for our community. I've had the privilege to introduce several important House resolutions this session, including ones recognizing the importance of men's health, taking your children to work, financial health, biking to work, lead awareness, the services available to the blind and more.

Meanwhile, I also have introduced House bills that would change law in Pennsylvania, providing for a more fair, healthy and prosperous commonwealth. Of particular importance is my bill to raise the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families exemption from 50 percent to 75 percent to encourage people to work, acknowledging that low-income working families' expenses use up a large percentage of their take-home pay. While the bill saw many co-sponsors sign on to it, Republican leadership in Harrisburg failed to bring the bill up this session.

The road for some of these proposals might be long, but their journey begins with a single step. I hope to report back next session with more progress on these bills.



## Legislative initiatives I look forward to advancing next session include:

- Preventing PACE and PACENET participants from being removed from the prescription-drug discount program if their income increases solely due to a Social Security cost-of-living adjustment (COLA);
- Prohibiting employers from asking certain questions about an applicant's salary history;
- Prohibiting landlords from asking certain questions about a tenant's criminal background, unless it is in regard to a felony or misdemeanor conviction;
- Giving eligible parents eight hours of unpaid leave to attend school-related activities. Also, parents of children with a disability would receive an additional four hours of unpaid leave;
- Requiring the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to accept certain inmate photo IDs as proof of identity and date of birth of an otherwise qualified applicant for the issuance or renewal of a state identification card or driver's license;
- Providing members of a community the opportunity to have a say in the transfer of liquor licenses that have not been renewed; and
- Amending the Crime Victims Act to exclude all records and information pertaining to a victim of a crime that is possessed or maintained by the Office of Victim Advocate from the Right-To-Know Law.



## BREW FAIR

Thanks to all who braved the rain, wind, and cold to attend Brew Fair on Oct. 22. The sun eventually came out and our neighbors were able to connect with resources and hear some great music. I'm looking forward to a bigger and better event next year.



## DIAPER NEED AWARENESS WEEK

Thanks to everyone who supported our Fall Diaper Need Awareness Week Diaper Drive. We collected over 3,000 diapers and 1,000 wipes for needy families residing at Project H.O.M.E.



## GOLDEN LIFE SENIOR FAIR

The 2nd Annual Golden Life Senior Fair at the the Liacouras Center on Oct. 20 was a great success thanks to your participation. I was proud to work with City Council President Darrell L. Clarke to connect seniors with community agencies.



## SMALL BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM

My office co-hosted a Small Business Symposium with the Office of Rep. W. Curtis Thomas on Sept. 8.



## HOMEOWNERSHIP SEMINARS

Thanks for attending my Homeownership Seminars with City Council President Darrell L. Clarke at the William D. Kelley and Richard Wright Elementary Schools this past year. Look for upcoming seminar dates in your neighborhood.



## FINANCIAL PLANNING WORKSHOP

I sponsored a Financial IQ Workshop with Councilmen Bill Greenlee and Allan Domb at the Philadelphia Art Museum's Perelman Building on Oct. 8.



# Defending our environment

I never saw myself as an environmentalist, but over the last year I've become more and more aware of the environmental injustices happening in our neighborhoods. Bad environmental policies tend to impact poor communities, and communities of color, first and more significantly. I will continue to fight for clean air, clean water and to protect these natural resources for our children and grandchildren.

Pennsylvania's Constitution is clear: "Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people."

And so I have become a voice for environmental justice in the Capitol, speaking on these issues at news conferences, policy hearings and in the House chamber during session – any chance I get. I've advocated for funding lead-abatement programs for cleaner water and homes, a state budget that includes money to help bring about cleaner urban air, increased transit access and to advance clean-energy plans in the face of more fossil fuel development.

Environmental protection and urban policy are not necessarily two issues that most people quickly connect, but almost any bad environmental policy will rear its ugly head in the city, where we live: on oil freight cars, in dumps, in construction material used on low-bid housing projects, in the air we breathe or water we drink. Our shipyards are where gas pipelines lead, where oil is refined and where the scraps of industry are left behind to rot.

If you don't think that poor environmental policy affects you in the city, look again. There is a reason that children in cities are afflicted with asthma at rates

higher than the rest of the nation. I talked about the issue of clean air with Moms Clean Air Force this spring and frequently speak about the issue of lead paint because it is so pressing.

Lead paint also disproportionately affects us; here in Strawberry Mansion, a staggering 21 percent of children have tested positive for lead poisoning, the highest of any area in the city. I am working with local, state and federal officials to address this troubling public health concern.

This fall, I also recognized the 25th anniversary of the adoption of 17 Principles of Environmental Justice, which were presented to delegates at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. The principles have served as the defining document and basis for the grassroots movement for environmental justice. The delegates strived to create a level of respect for differing cultures, languages, and beliefs about the natural world and their role in healing themselves, ensuring environmental justice, and to promote economic alternatives that would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods. You can read more about the principles at [www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html](http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html).

These principles are just as relevant 25 years later, and serve as a great guide when addressing the environmental justice issues of today. I look forward to remaining vocal and standing up for these issues and many more.

**I joined children, U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and members of Moms Clean Air Force in Philadelphia on Sept. 6, 2016 at a "play-in" for clean air and to advocate for better environmental policy in the commonwealth and beyond.**





# General Assembly accomplishments for 2015-16 legislative session

## FIGHTING OPIOID ABUSE IN PENNSYLVANIA

In late October, the General Assembly passed several bills that begin to fulfill the commitment it made with Gov. Tom Wolf earlier this year to attack the opioid and heroin epidemic in Pennsylvania. The governor signed the bills into law earlier this month.

The laws include restrictions on prescriptions to minors, education for medical professionals, and limiting the amount of opioids prescribed in emergency rooms and urgent care centers to a 7-day supply.

In addition to these bills, legislators also added funding in this year's state budget to implement opioid treatment centers across the state that will help 11,000 more people get treatment.

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## FIXING PENNSYLVANIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM

This month, Gov. Tom Wolf signed legislation that contained an unemployment compensation fix that restores unemployment compensation eligibility to 44,000 cyclical and seasonal workers such as those who work in agriculture or the building trades and construction.

Among other things, the law also addresses fraud and abuse within the system, and puts the unemployment compensation fund on track for full solvency two years earlier than under previous law.

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## STRENGTHENING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW

The General Assembly passed and Gov. Wolf signed a bill last month to include strangulation as a form of assault. Before this law, there was no criminal statute specifically addressing the act of intentionally impeding or interfering with a person's breathing or circulation.

A 2001 study from the Journal of Emergency Medicine found that 10 percent of violent deaths in the United States could be attributed to strangulation and most of those victims were women. Nearly half of domestic violence homicide victims reported being choked or strangled in at least one episode before their eventual homicide. This suggests that strangulation behavior is correlated with future homicide in domestic violence cases.

While it's unfortunate to have to do this work, it is helpful for many victims looking to see justice carried out against their attackers.

## LEGALIZING RIDE-SHARING SERVICES

The legislature worked for several months to develop and pass legislation to ensure residents across Pennsylvania can use ride-sharing services such as Uber and Lyft legally and safely. As a bonus, the ride-sharing law also directs additional funding to Philadelphia schools.



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## MEDICAL MARIJUANA LAW PASSES

The General Assembly passed a bill to legalize medical marijuana in Pennsylvania this session. The legislation was signed into law as Act 16 of 2016.

When the law is fully implemented, patients suffering from serious medical conditions, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, post-traumatic stress disorder, epilepsy and glaucoma, will be permitted to use the drug. The law also sets up requirements and timelines for prospective growers of medical cannabis and dispensaries.

The signing of this bill into law is a significant win for patients' rights. Patients should be able to choose the treatment that's right for them and make a treatment plan that they feel will work for them. This law will allow patients to do that.

You can find ongoing updates on the phasing in of this law at [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov). Click on "Pa. Medical Marijuana" under "Hot Topics."



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## My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Unemployment compensation problems
- Birth and death certificate applications
- Problems with Pennsylvania income taxes
- Problems with Department of Human Services (SNAP and TANF benefits)
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information, student aid information, etc.
- Citations from Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishment and family milestones

## Any problem with state government!!

- Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC
- Consumer complaints
- Problems or questions about PennDOT
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Disability license plates and placards
- Assistance in getting and filling out state forms of all kinds, like PACE (pharmaceutical assistance for qualified senior citizens), voter registration, Property Tax/Rent Rebate (for qualified seniors), PHEAA (PA Higher Education Assistance), etc.
- Problems or questions about the state Lottery
- Local government officials' problems with state agencies