



KORTZ

38th Legislative District

Report

Summer 2019



to Whitehall, Baldwin, Pleasant Hills, South Park

2019-20 budget shortchanged education and transportation

This year's budget was – to put it mildly – a disappointment. While it was an on-time budget, one that did not include any tax increases, it simply did not go far enough to support school districts in my area and others, notably from the challenges they face from charter and cyber charter schools.

The financial strain put on our school districts by these entities is causing property taxes to increase. There is little to no accountability for these schools. Efforts to reform these financial outliers were thwarted by the majority party in the House and the Senate. Charter and cyber charter schools don't have the same accountability as traditional public schools. While the state auditor general can – and has – audited traditional schools, the same cannot be said for charter and cyber charter schools. To me, that's wrong and unacceptable.

The costs to operate and sustain charter and cyber charter schools are out of alignment and as a result, they're bleeding necessary funds away from other public schools, leading to steep hikes in property taxes. This is unfair to property owners and it's hurting our local school districts.

Another reason I voted no on this year's budget deals with funding for the competitive safety school grant program. Last year, I was extremely disappointed to discover that five of our six school districts were shut out of this program. Since there was no guarantee in this year's budget that these districts would be made whole, I could not – in good conscience – vote yes. The Mon-Valley school districts were put on the backburner. To me, that is unconscionable.

While the budget provided an additional \$160 million in basic education, keep in mind that's divvied up among 500 school districts. At the same time, \$300 million was placed into the Rainy Day Fund. I think it would have been best served if that amount had been used to fund basic education.

However, there is some good news to share: this year's budget deal included investments in the PAsmart workforce development program, including \$10 million to support career and technical education and job training and \$20 million for STEM and computer

State funding for local school districts

South Park School District

1.2% ↑ basic education funding

3.8% ↑ special education funding

Baldwin-Whitehall School District

3.5% ↑ basic education funding

3.9% ↑ special education funding

West Jefferson Hills School District

2.2% ↑ basic education funding

2.6% ↑ special education funding

While the 2019-20 funding shows an increase, bear in mind that a portion of those funds will not stay with brick and mortar public schools, but will go to charter schools instead as the chart below indicates.

Money siphoned from school districts to fund charter and cyber charter schools

| South Park SD Total Payment: | 2015-16 \$598,975 | 2016-17 \$541,822 | 2017-18 \$723,241 |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Baldwin-Whitehall SD Total Payment: | 2015-16 \$1,846,624 | 2016-17 \$1,424,681 | 2017-18 \$1,185,429 |
| West Jefferson Hills SD Total Payment: | 2015-16 \$551,582 | 2016-17 \$565,839 | 2017-18 \$703,919 |

Education funding breakdown

- \$160 million ↑ Basic Education
- \$50 million ↑ Special Education
- \$30 million ↑ Early Childhood Education
- \$30 million Career and Technical Education (*includes PAsmart initiative*)
- \$33.8 million ↑ Institutions of Higher Education

science training. When we return to session, I anticipate additional action on measures related to career and technical education to help close the skills gap and train more Pennsylvanians for the jobs that employers need.

Another reason for my no vote on the budget deals with transportation funding. Why are we shortchanging transportation funding by \$366 million, while we have nearly 3,000 structurally deficient bridges across our state? The 2019-20 budget also shortchanged transit funding by \$111 million. These actions fly in the face of Act 89, which was signed into law nearly six years ago to secure vital transportation and infrastructure investments.

While this is a no-tax budget, we could – and should – have done better.

Rest assured, I will continue to work with my colleagues on these and other issues impacting our district.

Road and Bridge Updates

Completed Projects:

Elizabeth Street (Dravosburg)

- Completed May 2019
- Final Cost - \$500,000



Brownsville Road Bridge

- Completed June 2019
- Final Cost - \$1.5 million



Streets Run Road Bridge (public-private partnership)

- Completed August 2018
- Rapid Bridge Replacement Project (P3) is a \$899 million project to replace 558 bridges statewide



Stewart Avenue Bridge and street paving (Whitehall)

- Completed July 2019
- Final Cost - \$925,000



Current Projects:

Homestead - Duquesne Road

- Project estimated to be completed by September 2019
- Estimated Cost - \$2.1 million



Lebanon Road (SR885)

- Pavement from the intersection of Lebanon Church Road north and down over the hill to the intersection of Mifflin Road
- Estimated Cost: approximately \$2.2 million
- Project timeline: beginning early August and anticipated to end late November/early December



Mifflin Road

- Pavement from the intersection of Lebanon Road up to the intersection with Buttermilk Hollow Road, then continuing on Buttermilk Hollow Road up to the

intersection of Lebanon Church Road

- Estimated Cost: approximately \$1.7 million (this includes continuing the Buttermilk Hollow Road section from Mifflin Road to the intersection of Pittsburgh-McKeesport Boulevard)
- Project timeline: beginning early August and anticipated to end late November/early December

State Route 837 (River Road)

- The work is part of the Allegheny Group 4 Drainage Project. Work on the significant road dip was completed, but short-term work remains. The remaining work includes drainage and guiderail updates from Lebanon School Road to Camp Road in Duquesne.
- Estimated Cost - \$3.8 million



Future Projects:

Lebanon Church Road

- Construction and inspection cost of \$17.2 million
- Right-of-way required at nine of the 11 signals for pole placement and at Target
- Various temporary easement for drainage and gutter work
- Utility involvement limited to manhole/valve adjustments
- Sidewalk replacements in Cloverleaf and other areas possible
- Projected start date 2020



Mon Fayette Expressway

- Focused on first phase of project – Route 51 in Jefferson Hills to Route 837 in Duquesne
- Right-of-way acquisition underway
- Expected construction date 2021, with estimated completion date 2026

Around the 38th District



Celebrating the 4th of July with state Sen. Iovino, state Rep. Readshaw and Mayor Nowalk at the Brentwood parade, one of the largest parades in PA.



Participating in the Baldwin-Whitehall Athletic Association baseball opening day ceremony.



Whitehall AARP seniors take part in Rep. Kortz's "Ice Cream Social" summer series.



Whitehall Annual Recognition Dinner to celebrate community volunteers.



Meeting in Harrisburg with Pleasant Hills Mayor Bill Trimboth, Councilman Dan Soltesz, and borough Manager Kelly Theiss to discuss upcoming community projects.



Rep. Kortz hosts the Book family, paying tribute to their father and husband, Raymond Book, through a special condolence resolution.



Recognizing Edward and Ruth Fedorchak of Pleasant Hills on their birthday. Ruth is a leap year baby, so she celebrates with her husband!



Rep. Kortz visits West Jefferson Hills School District to speak with students about the role of government and the importance of civics.



Attending 25th Annual National Night Out in Pleasant Hills.



Attending Baldwin Borough's 23rd annual Volunteer Recognition dinner.



Rep. Kortz joins South Park officials for the groundbreaking of Summit Station. The project will convert a 92-acre parcel (the old Consol Energy property) into residential, retail, and commercial space with access to green space and transit.



Rep. Kortz attends the swearing-in of officers for Pleasant Hills Volunteer Fire Company.



Reps. Kortz and Readshaw meet with Baldwin-Whitehall School District Superintendent Dr. Lutz and the administration team to hear about ways the district is utilizing state funding and the challenges they face.



Kortz named committee chairman

Earlier this year, I was honored to be sworn in as your state representative and also to be named as the Democratic chairman of the state House Game and Fisheries Committee. As someone who enjoys spending time outdoors, I consider it an honor to advance legislation to benefit hunters and anglers in the 38th District and across our great commonwealth.

In addition, I also accepted a leadership position as vice chairman of the House Professional Licensure Committee. This important committee provides oversight for many businesses, occupations and professions that require or involve licensing issues.

Legislation I'm Sponsoring

Below are a few of the bills that I have sponsored this session:

H.B. 353 – Animal Fighting: this legislation would add animal fighting to the state's racketeering provisions and allow prosecutors to address the pattern of illegal activity associated with animal fighting and provide for longer penalties and higher fines for offenders.

H.B. 21 – Licensing of Home Inspectors: this bill would amend Act 367 to require licensure of home inspectors, the only profession not regulated in the home-buying process.

H.B. 1651 – Allowing for Recall Elections: my measure would amend the state Constitution to allow and establish a process for recall elections on the local or state level.

To see more of the bills I am sponsoring, please visit www.legis.state.pa.us, click on "session info," then click on "co-sponsorship memoranda," and then click on my name.

Legislative Updates

I wanted to provide you updates on the following bills I supported and introduced this session:

I was proud to support H.B. 1324 (now Act 32), known as the PA GI bill, which creates a program to allow spouses and family members of Pennsylvania National Guard members to attend college at no or reduced cost. Under this new law, members who commit to an additional six years of service can receive five years of higher education benefits at a Pennsylvania-based education institution for their spouses and children. It's anticipated that this could benefit up to 8,000 military family members.

My legislation, H.B. 584, would allow the state Fish and Boat Commission to issue therapeutic exemptions to fishing license requirements. The measure would provide the needed language to allow the PFBC to award these exemptions to a variety of therapy groups. My measure is under consideration in the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.

I supported S.B. 621 (now Act 67), which was also signed into law, creating new training requirements for armed security personnel and providing needed clarification to state laws related to school security for school districts.



Rep. Kortz and Rep. Karen Boback with Gov. Tom Wolf as he signed H.B. 564 into law last year, which requires all schools to test students on civics, government and U.S. history competency.

Veterans Corner

My office offers monthly veterans' outreach

Once a month, on the third Thursday between 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., my office hosts a representative from the American Legion's Pennsylvania Department. The representative can assist with veteran benefits and services such as:

- Service-connected claims
 - Non-service connected claims
 - Aid and attendance for veterans needing nursing care
- This service is by appointment only and is located in my Dravosburg office. For more information about this service, please feel free to reach out to my office.

'Honoring Our Veterans' license plate

The "Honoring Our Veterans" license plate is a great way to show your support for veterans while also helping those in need. The plate costs \$35 and is available for passenger cars, motorcycles and light-duty trucks up to 14,000 pounds. Fifteen dollars from each sale goes to the Veterans' Trust Fund, which assists and supports Pennsylvania veterans in need of shelter and other basic services.

There are other ways you can support the VTF as well. The next time you apply for or renew your driver's license or photo ID or motor vehicle registration, consider checking the VTF box to make a \$3 tax-deductible donation on your renewal form.

To purchase an "Honoring Our Veterans" plate or learn more about how you can support the VTF, visit www.vtf.pa.gov.

Mark your calendars 12th Annual Senior Fair

Thursday, Oct. 10

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Broughton VFD

1030 Cochran's Mill Road • Pittsburgh (South Park), PA 15236

Drug drop-off box – please bring any unused or expired medications for disposal.

Port Authority will be on hand to issue NEW ConnectCards for senior citizens



7th Annual Shredding Event



with Senator Pam Iovino

Saturday, Oct. 5

9:30 a.m. to noon

West Mifflin #3 VFC

3722 Rodeo Drive, West Mifflin, PA 15122

We will also be collecting non-perishable food, hygiene and cleaning supplies at this event for Operation Troop Appreciation, an organization to help build and sustain the morale of the military community.

A donation is not required to participate in the shredding event.

Military family relief assistance program

I wanted to make you aware of the Military Family Relief Assistance Program, which provides financial assistance – in the form of grants – to eligible Pennsylvania service members and their family members. Examples of financial need include:

- A sudden or unexpected loss of income, real or personal property, directly related to military service
- Emergency need for childcare for which the service member or family member lacks financial resources
- Natural or man-made disasters resulting in a need for food, shelter or other necessities
- The death or critical illness of a parent, spouse, sibling or child which results in immediate need for travel, lodging or subsistence

For more information on MFRAP, please contact the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs toll free at 866-292-7201.

Veterans: Make sure you're registered to receive benefits

The state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs wants to make sure that all Pennsylvania veterans receive the benefits they're entitled to as part of their service to our country.

It's important to sign up for benefits and also safeguard your military paperwork, such as your DD-214 and DD-215 forms. Veterans can easily sign up for the DMVA Veterans Registry by visiting www.register.dmv.pa.gov. Family members and people who work with veterans can also sign up for the registry to receive helpful information about benefits, programs and services. Veterans can safeguard their military documents by immediately filing them at their county courthouse of record. These documents can also be uploaded to the DMVA Veterans Registry for safekeeping.

If you need assistance from the DMVA in locating your DD-214 or DD-215 forms, or other military documentation, please contact my office.

Memorial Day Around the District





State Representative
BILL KORTZ

P.O. Box 202038
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2038

**UPCOMING EVENTS
IN THE 38TH DISTRICT**

■ **Oct. 5 Shredding Event**

■ **Oct. 10 Senior Fair**

More information inside!

www.pahouse.com/Kortz

www.facebook.com/RepKortz

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lpo.ad.0919

UPMC Update



I was pleased that an agreement was reached earlier this summer between UPMC and Highmark, extending UPMC facility access to Highmark-insured patients for 10 years. This certainly eased the concerns and anxieties of thousands of Pennsylvanians, who were left wondering about their health care access, as well as the coordination and management of that care.

Moving forward, I will continue to advocate for legislation to require charity hospital-insurance company hybrids to behave in the public interest and stop taking advantage of sick and vulnerable Pennsylvanians.

I was among 60 state representatives and six senators who signed a legal brief in early May supporting Attorney General Josh Shapiro's February lawsuit against UPMC, which sought to modify and indefinitely extend the UPMC/Highmark consent decrees that had expired on June 30.

REAL ID: Available now in PA

REAL ID is now available for Pennsylvanians who want one.

Starting Oct. 1, 2020, Pennsylvanians will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, photo ID card, or another form of federally acceptable identification (such as a valid passport or military ID) to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a federal building or military installation that requires ID.

You have three options for getting your REAL ID:

- Ordering online, if you have already been pre-verified.
- Visiting any PennDOT Driver's License Center to have the required documents verified and imaged.
- Visiting one of the 12 REAL ID Centers in Pennsylvania.
- Visit www.PennDOT.gov/REALID for information on the documents you need and more.

REAL IDs are now available



**October 1, 2020 is
the deadline to get
a REAL ID.**

**Pennsylvanians will
need a REAL ID to:**



**Board a
domestic
flight**



**Enter a
federal
building**



**Enter a
military
base**

PennDOT.gov/REALID