



STATE REPRESENTATIVE Joe Ciresi

146th Legislative District

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Working for Property Tax Reform

For years, our citizens – and especially our senior citizens on fixed incomes – have struggled to stay in their homes due to steadily rising property taxes. One of my top priorities as a state legislator is finding realistic ways to enact property tax reform and bring real savings to taxpayers.

Property Tax Relief Legislation

I am proud to be a co-sponsor of bipartisan legislation that would freeze property taxes for seniors: H.B. 1672 and H.B. 1675. I am committed to supporting our older population and finding ways to keep seniors from being taxed out of their homes.

The very first bill that I introduced this term was H.B. 797, which would expand the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for seniors by allowing the deduction of paid property taxes from eligibility income, expanding the program to cover more people and offer larger rebates. I also have co-sponsored H.B. 498 to expand the state's commitment to property tax relief by dedicating a portion of revenue from daily gross sports betting to the Property Tax Relief Fund.

Fair Funding for Education

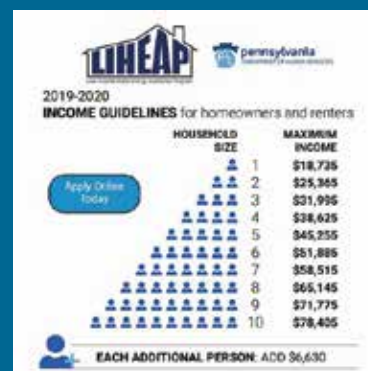
One of my most important priorities as a state legislator is to achieve fair funding for schools. Despite the legislature's passage of a fair funding formula, only 11% of state education funding actually goes through it, leaving the 146th District heavily underfunded by the state as school districts in the central and western parts of the state receive more than their fair share. Every year, our local school districts – Pottstown, Pottsgrove, Perkiomen Valley and Spring-Ford – miss out on more than \$17 million because of the state's broken education funding system.

In addition to advocating for fair funding, I am also a co-sponsor of multiple bills that would get us to true fair funding, including H.B. 961, H.B. 1313 and H.B. 1790.

Reducing State Mandates and Costs

Beyond increasing the state's share of education funding and fixing the funding formula, the final piece to comprehensive property tax reform is driving down costs through the elimination of unnecessary, outdated and expensive state mandates. I am working with stakeholders and my fellow legislators to identify opportunities to cut down on these mandates, and I've spoken out against efforts to impose additional unfunded mandates on our school districts and local taxpayers.

An area that has seen strong bipartisan support has been cyber charter school reform, which costs Pennsylvania taxpayers almost half a billion dollars annually despite not showing strong performance results. I am proud to join both the Republican and Democratic chairs of the House Education Committee in pushing H.B. 526, which would make paying for cyber charter schools optional if the school district already has a full-time cyber education program and save school districts and taxpayers millions of dollars.



The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program is now accepting applications.

You also can contact my office for help applying for LIHEAP or if you have questions or need assistance with any state-related matter.

I am proud to have helped deliver \$6.8 million in grant funding to our communities so far this year:

Education & School Safety

Pottstown School District:

- \$1.5 million in additional state funding to reduce the fair funding gap in money that Pottstown SD should be receiving through the formula.
- \$20,000 Career and Technical Education Supplemental Equipment Purchase grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Education for Pottstown High School's automotive department and program.
- \$5,000 School Breakfast Initiative grant for Rupert Elementary School.
- \$3,000 environmental education grant to support the Pottstown Powered by Nature program, which teaches fourth through sixth grade students scientific inquiry in environmental issues.
- \$35,000 in PAsmart funds for computer science offerings.

Pottsgrove School District:

- \$51,000 in school safety and security grant funding. The district sought funds for work in the categories of safety and security assessments, security planning and technology, and student discipline management.
- \$13,911 in School Breakfast

Initiative grants for West Pottsgrove Elementary, Pottsgrove Senior High School, Ringing Rocks Elementary and Lower Pottsgrove Elementary.

Spring-Ford School District:

- \$386,192 in school safety and security grant funding. The district sought funds in the categories of safety and security assessments; risk assessment, safety and violence prevention curriculum; student codes of conduct; violence prevention programs; districtwide safety, violence prevention, emergency preparedness and all hazards plans; and costs related to school resource officers or school police officers.
- \$35,000 in PAsmart funds for computer science offerings.

Perkiomen Valley School District:

- \$4,882 School Breakfast Initiative grant for Schwenksville Elementary School.

Western Montgomery Career and Technology Center:

- \$40,000 Career and Technical Education Supplemental Equipment Purchase grant to boost job readiness and training.

Montgomery County Community College:

- \$2.9 million for renovations to the South Hall Building on the West Campus in Pottstown.



Infrastructure & Recreation:

Royersford:

- \$474,935 grant for safety and other improvements to Royersford Borough's wastewater treatment system.
- \$500,000 to the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority on behalf of The Lewis Group for infrastructure improvements on 20 acres in Royersford Borough, for the Riverfront at Royersford, a proposed mixed-use development on a former industrial site.
- \$120,000 grant to construct ADA improvements at Royersford's Victory Park.

Pottstown:

- \$281,884 grant to assist with storm sewers and flood mitigation for a rehabilitation project in Pottstown Borough.
- \$56,704 grant through an Industrial Sites Reuse Program to perform an environmental assessment and remediation plan for Pollock Park on the former Mayer Pollock Steel Company site in Pottstown Borough.

Public Safety:

- \$350,552 for the Pottstown Police Department in a Community Violence Prevention/Reduction grant.



Investing in Infrastructure – Restore PA

The underground stormwater arches in Pottstown, which are over a century old, are in dire need of repair and replacement to the tune of over \$1 million.

On Sept. 19, I received the news that our district had been awarded over \$280,000 to assist in storm/sewer and flood mitigation rehabilitation.

I strongly recommended and fought for this funding from the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Safe roadways and functioning water systems are basic functions that government must get right. Pottstown is a historic, once-industrial town containing stormwater systems under our feet that date to Civil War Reconstruction. Before we can move on to our next chapter, we have to make sure that our foundation is safe and stable.

The \$281,884 grant will allow the Borough of Pottstown to undertake a comprehensive inspection and evaluation of all storm/sewer arches within the borough. The inspection will provide information regarding the storm/sewer arch locations, size, shape and material, along with documenting visible defects.

The borough also will make emergency repairs to a collapsed segment of the storm sewer arch.

Pottstown Council passed a resolution this year supporting Restore Pennsylvania – a initiative I am proud to co-sponsor that would invest \$4.5 billion in necessary infrastructure throughout the commonwealth. Funded through a proposed severance tax on natural gas drilling, Restore

PA would prioritize blight remediation, downtown revitalization, broadband internet access, stormwater improvements, emergency preparedness and business development – as well as investment in capital transportation projects such as restoring passenger train service.



Free Notary Services

Most official documents can be notarized for free at my district office. Please call ahead to make sure a notary is available and that your document can be accommodated. The person whose signature is to be

notarized must sign the document in person, in the presence of the notary and provide proof of identity, such as a valid driver's license, photo ID card or passport.

Upcoming Events

Informational Seminar on Phone Scams

*Co-Hosted with the TriCounty
Active Adult Center*

Wednesday, Dec. 11
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
288 Moser Road
Pottstown, PA 19464

Mobile Office Hours at Sanatoga Ridge Community:

Tuesday, Dec. 17
10 a.m. to Noon
2461 E. High Street
Sanatoga, PA 19464

REP CIRESI'S OFFICE BY THE NUMBERS



3,683

Constituent Services Provided

2,668

Caseworks
Completed



566

Bills
Co-Sponsored

8 Bills
Introduced



17

Events
Hosted

REAL ID Update

Starting Oct. 1, 2020, a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or identification card or a valid passport will be required by the federal government in order to board a plane (for domestic or foreign flights) and to enter a federal building that requires ID. If you opt not to get a REAL ID, you will need to have a valid passport with you when you fly domestically or enter federal buildings after Oct. 1, 2020, while your non-REAL ID driver's license will suffice for driving.

GETTING A REAL ID

If you decide you want or need a REAL ID, your first step is to gather the following documents:

- **Proof of identity** (a valid U.S. passport OR an original or certified copy of a birth certificate with a raised seal)
- **Two proofs of current Pennsylvania address** (a current, unexpired Pennsylvania license or non-driver's ID AND a current car registration or utility bill that is no more than 90 days old)
- **Proof of Social Security number** (an original Social Security card; a photocopy won't do)
- **Proof of legal name changes, if applicable** (a certified copy of a marriage certificate or the court order issued by your county's family court)

Our office can review these documents with you prior to visiting a PennDOT Driver License Center, or you may proceed directly to a license center (King of Prussia, Norristown, Malvern/Frazier or Reading are closest). **Pottstown's center cannot provide this service.**

If you got your first PA driver's license or ID after Sept. 1, 2003, you may not have to produce these documents, because PennDOT has scanned the required documents as part of the regular license application process since that time. To find out if you are exempt from this part of the REAL ID process and for additional information, go to penndot.gov/REALID and click on the pre-verification icon.

If you have questions about this process or your documents, don't hesitate to reach out to my office for help. Call (484) 200-8265 or email RepCiresi@pahouse.net.

A WORD ABOUT THE DOCUMENTS:

Your name on each of the required documents should match exactly or close to it. If some documents have your middle initial and others have your full middle name, the initial should match the first letter of your middle name. If it does, you should be fine. If it does not, PennDOT is unlikely to certify your identity.



422 Rehabilitation Projects & Transit

I met with Gov. Tom. Wolf to discuss transportation options for western Montgomery County, including the potential of trackless trams. The photo above shows Professor Peter Newman and Mark Cave – two experts in that field. On a related initiative, I am serving on a Route 422 Taskforce, organized by Greater Valley Forge TMA, to study bus rapid transit and other alternatives to help alleviate traffic congestion.

PA Forward Student Loan

Applications are now available for PHEAA's new PA Forward Student Loan Program, which offers competitively low-interest student loans for undergraduate students, graduate students and parent borrowers. There are no application or origination fees, flexible repayment options and terms, and interest rate reductions for successful graduation.

A PA Forward Refinance Loan will also be offered this year to combine all of a borrower's federal and private loans into one convenient monthly payment, which could help those with existing loans lower their monthly payment and/or reduce the amount they pay over the life of the loan.

With high and rising cost of college attendance and low borrowing limits on federal loans, many students have trouble affording the full cost of attendance – now averaging over \$43,000 a year in Pennsylvania – even after taking advantage of available grants, scholarships, financial aid and federal loans. This new option from PHEAA allows for a borrower-friendly alternative, especially compared to private loans — which often come with stricter credit requirements and higher interest rates.

People who have questions or would like additional information on PA Forward Student Loans are encouraged to reach out to PHEAA's Office of Public Information at (717) 720-2509. More information and the application is available at www.pheaa.org.

Photos from around the district



The Pottstown JROTC joined us at our Veterans Breakfast in November to honor our heroes. Thank you for your service!



I was joined by my fellow Southeast Delegation representatives and volunteers at a litter cleanup. PennDOT spends millions every year picking up litter, money that should be going toward fixing our roads and bridges.



I participated in the Schuylkill River Sojourn along with Rep. Joe Webster. #LovePAWaters



Above: Helping vacuum the district office after serving our constituents.



Below: I helped observe Memorial Day in the Trappe/Collegeville annual parade.

Joined by my colleagues from the House and Senate, we held a rally in support of S.B. 44, to be known as Victoria's Law – a bill that would encourage more humane practices for pet sales.



Right: I participated in an in-depth interview with local journalist Dave Devlin on his informative podcast, This is Your Town. Check it out at thisisyourpodcast.com.





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Stay up to date with Rep. Ciresi

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic updates from me, including legislation updates, event announcements, traffic updates, state and local program information, and more. You can sign up on my website at

www.pahouse.com/Ciresi

You also can follow me on social media, which is regularly updated with information from Harrisburg and events right here in Montgomery County.

   @RepCiresi ·  RepCiresi@pahouse.net

Ways my district office can serve you:

- Provide you with Pennsylvania state tax forms
- Print out federal tax forms whenever possible
- Provide you with and help you fill out Property Tax/ Rent Rebate forms
- Help you find and claim unclaimed money in your name through the Pennsylvania Treasury
- Explain the REAL ID application process
- Notarize and process applications for Disability Parking Plates and Placards
- Assist you with unemployment compensation questions or problems
- SEPTA Senior ID Cards
- Field questions or complaints about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Provide you with recognition from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding
- local accomplishments and family milestones
- Provide you with any state form or brochure
- Send state forms for you to their appropriate departments in Harrisburg to expedite their processing
- Schedule tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
- Help with state programs for children and adults with disabilities