

State Representative
Pamela A. DeLissio
194th Legislative District



Capitol Office: 109B East Wing • P.O. Box 202194 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2194 • 717-783-4945
District Office: 6511 Ridge Ave. • Philadelphia, PA 19128 • 215-482-8726

RepDeLissio@pahouse.net | www.RepDeLissio.com

@RepDeLissio @RepDeLissio /RepDeLissio

Dear Neighbor,

There continues to be uncertainty about the impact of the novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19; its historic impact is not yet written.

The definition of novel is “new and not resembling something formerly known or used.” There is no blueprint for this pandemic. Policymakers are acting and reacting as this unfolds. We are cognizant of the fact that we need a strong and thoughtful plan to recover.

We do not yet have a vaccine, there is no definitive treatment, the ability to test for antibodies is being refined, and the extent of the financial and emotional impact will not be known for quite some time.

It is difficult to live with uncertainty. Most folks appreciate order and predictability in their lives. Structure helps us plan our day and meet our families’ needs.

During this time, I am reading and assimilating hundreds of memos, thousands of emails and applicable social media posts, and reviewing as much information as I can to determine what we need to do to help citizens get through this and, at some point, beyond it.

Our session days at first were focused on what was needed for unemployment compensation, the primary election, and our school children. Our session days were filled with debate on how to reopen – a particularly tough assignment given that the two counties I represent have thousands of positive COVID-19 cases and many other counties combined had far fewer (e.g. as of this writing Phila/Montco has over 38,000 cases compared to the 68th Legislative District in northern Pennsylvania, which includes three counties that have a total 140 cases).

During those many session weeks, we passed a partial budget, which we still need to complete before November 30.

Our federal and state governments have put in place a package of bills to help with the economic impact. People are hurting, and many are struggling to find balance in the process.

Neighbors are concerned about meeting financial obligations and ensuring that their children continue to be educated. The ability to collect unemployment has never been this extensive and constituents should call my office with questions or if you need assistance. Social distancing has been a trying situation, particularly for people living alone.

Through it all, I am encouraged and impressed with the various ways we have found to support each other and meet needs in our community. The other definition I have focused on is resilience – “the capacity to recover from difficulties, toughness.” The resiliency I see is heartening.

We can, and we will, get through this ... together.

Pamela A. DeLissio



Ensuring your voices are heard.

A Fair Funding Formula that is Not Fair

One lesson reinforced – or, for some, learned – because of COVID-19, is that our basic public education system is not equitable.

Our state constitution states, “The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.” In reality, our system does not meet its constitutional obligation.

When the Governor ordered schools to close, some school districts – there are 500 total – moved somewhat seamlessly into remote learning. The tools needed, e.g. internet access, laptops or tablets, and curriculums conducive to remote learning, were readily available. These districts were able, for the most part, to quickly prep teachers for remote instruction, and teachers and students adapted.

Other districts did not have sufficient equipment or infrastructure to make this shift effortlessly. For example, Philadelphia needed to raise funds privately to help get the necessary tools into the hands of students and teachers.

What created this inequity? What can be done?

Over the past 40 years, basic public education funding formulas have varied and included financial

participation by federal, state and local governments.

In the 1970s, the state’s participation was close to 50% of funding required for school districts’ needs. Today, that percentage is closer to 35%.

Further contributing to the inequity is a “hold harmless” feature. This feature guarantees that a school district receives no less than the same amount of state basic education dollars that it received in the prior fiscal year, regardless of the fact that their student enrollment may have diminished over time and that they actually have less costs and expenses.

In response to the ongoing concern about funding, the PA General Assembly established the Basic Education Funding Commission pursuant to Act 51 of 2014 (House Bill 1738) to examine, yet again, the basic education funding formula.

The Commission recommended that the General Assembly adopt a new formula.

The main objective of the new funding formula was to equitably distribute state resources according to various student and school district factors. The new formula included factors reflecting student and community differences such as poverty, local effort (local tax base)

and capacity, and rural and small district conditions.

So, why did the response to COVID-19 vary greatly among school districts? One reason is the formula is only applied to new dollars appropriated since the formula was implemented. The formula is not applied to all basic education funding appropriated, therefore the inequity is perpetuated.

Also, there was no political will to eliminate the hold harmless feature which then continues to ensure overfunding for some districts.

If all of the money appropriated for basic education were distributed per the formula, we would see more dollars flow into the underfunded school districts. There are currently two bills that have been introduced to accomplish this goal.

The good news is that the Commission is to be reconstituted every five years to review the operation of the basic education funding provisions and to make a further report to the General Assembly. Perhaps sufficient political effort will be made to ensure all dollars are allocated via the funding formula. The pandemic has highlighted its inequity, and this would be a silver lining to this pandemic hell.

Highlighting bipartisanship; Seconding the nomination of the Speaker of the House

It was my privilege to stand before the House of Representatives to second the nomination of the Speaker of the House. I was surprised when Representative Bryan Cutler (R) from Lancaster County called and presented his request asking me to second this nomination.

For me, this was a recognition of the other caucus that makes up the PA House, a body that has been in existence for literally centuries. The minority caucus represents approximately 46 percent of our citizens, and including my caucus in this nomination was recognition of those citizens.

I believe my invitation to second this nomination acknowledges the desire and need for both sides of the aisle to join and work together. I believe our ultimate responsibility is to find a joint path forward and to find the best policy for the greater good of all citizens.

Mail-in Ballots - Safe and Convenient

On Oct. 31, 2019, I stood with Gov. Tom Wolf as he signed Act 77 (SB 421) into law. The bipartisan, history-making voter reform bill allowed citizens to use a no-excuse, mail-in ballot.

This and other changes were the first substantial changes to the Election Code in 82 years, and the timing proved to be incredibly important. The pandemic meant voting by mail became a critical option. I strongly urge all eligible citizens to consider this option for voting on November 3.

Mail-in ballots are available to any qualified voter without a reason, while absentee ballots are for voters who plan to be out of their municipality of residence on Election Day or have a disability or illness. Mail-in ballots are used exclusively by five states and have been used for many years: Oregon as of 2000, Washington since 2011, Colorado from 2013 and Hawaii and Utah as of 2019. All these states hold all elections entirely by mail.

Twenty-nine other states and the District of Columbia offer mail-in voting as an option along with in-person voting.

A little history of SB 421: I was one of two members of the minority party to vote affirmatively to pass this bill out of the State Government Committee and one of 33 members of the minority party to vote this bill affirmatively on final passage.

Voters can apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot by going to www.votespa.com, or contacting my office.



Apply for your mail-in ballot today.

COVID-19 Highlights the Need for Gerrymandering Reform

While in Harrisburg these last five months, a point of frustration has been the myriad of proposed bills that have been introduced and voted on, especially legislation to undermine the Governor's executive powers during this emergency. Emergency powers granted by the General Assembly, albeit not this General Assembly.

I imagine that the General Assembly that granted these emergency executive powers was made up of senators and representatives who talked to each other and not at each other; a General Assembly who would work diligently with a Governor to identify the priorities for the commonwealth and a magnitude of order that was for the greater good of citizens.

On too many session days, and in too many committee meetings, it has been about winning. What is the cause of this dysfunction? What is the remedy? Gerrymandering has greatly contributed to this polarization and gridlock. Redistricting reform is the remedy.

Gerrymandering has been around since the 1800s. No system of redrawing lines to determine the district boundaries for state senate, state representative and

congress is foolproof. However, there are better processes and I have been a staunch member of the effort for reform.

The establishment of an Independent Redistricting Commission to draw boundaries is one such reform. It would take this critical task away from the elected officials who are directly impacted by this redraw of district lines.

This reform would produce more competitive races. If races were more competitive, candidates would have to appeal to a broader number of citizens. If candidates were elected with a broader base of support, their decisions would be more moderate.

I have invested countless hours in trying to make reform a reality. It has been less than encouraging that leadership on both sides of the aisle has little appetite for true reform. My commitment is to keep this topic front and center until the session ends on November 30. Next year, 2021 is a redistricting year and a worst-case scenario would be that no reform is instituted and the tens of thousands of citizens advocating for reform become 'watch dogs' to hold elected officials accountable as the lines are redrawn.

Henry Avenue Safety Improvement Plan

PennDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Project (SIP) for Henry Avenue was initiated in 2012 and is a safety study paid for with federal funds.

The study included community involvement, and the outcome of the study recommends traffic-calming measures to influence and encourage a decrease in speed. The study was in two segments; SIP, runs from Port Royal Avenue to the Wissahickon Creek Bridge, and SI2 is from that bridge to Abbottsford Avenue.

PennDOT met with civic associations in 2012 and 2013 to get input from the community and held a public meeting in September 2014. The input from citizens was incorporated into the safety improvement design.

I hosted three additional meetings to give the community further opportunity for review and input. At both the Oct. 8, 2015 and Feb. 11, 2016 meetings, PennDOT staff, the city Streets Department, local and state law enforcement and the councilman's office were in attendance. Additional input was received from citizens, and PennDOT included much of that input into the planned improvements.

On April 20, 2017 PennDOT hosted another public meeting in the East Falls neighborhood to get the community's consensus on the improvements proposed for SI2.

At my 64th Town Hall meeting on May 17, 2017, PennDOT again presented an overview of the improvements planned, and the additional input offered by constituents was much appreciated.

Calming measures and changes such as selective tree trimming, guiderail replacement, roadway resurfacing, traffic signals (additions and/or timing), curb and sidewalk bump outs, signage and pavement marking enhancements as well as additional, high-friction surfacing, roadway deflections, and more, are all part of the planned improvements.

PennDOT officials said that they anticipate a reduction of crashes due to these planned changes.

The preliminary engineering for implementation of these measures was to be completed by 2017 for SIP, with construction completed by the end of fall 2020. Preliminary engineering for SI2, was to be completed by 2018 with construction finished by fall 2021.

The current bid schedule is: SIP is the fall of 2020 with construction commencing in the spring of 2021. SI2 is the winter of 2020-21 with construction commencing in late spring/early summer of 2021. One reason for the delay was the need for additional funding for enhancements to the project as a result of community input. The pandemic also created challenges.

PennDOT has been very responsive to the concerns and requests of the community, acknowledging that it is the travelers who know these surfaces, bends, and blind spots best. Balancing pedestrian, vehicular and bicycle safety is of interest to all parties, and it is awesome to see the power of citizens' work to improve the conditions around us; a total of 11 community meetings have been held on this topic, and I am grateful to the constituents who have taken the time to participate.

In the interim, I ask drivers to slow down, respect traffic lights and speed limits and to drive responsibly and adhere to our traffic laws. The neighbors who live along Henry Avenue are beyond frustrated with the crashes and irresponsible driving behavior and local and state law enforcement are limited in the role that they can play in enforcing speed.

REAL ID Update

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security extended the REAL ID enforcement deadline from October 1, 2020 to October 1, 2021.

SEPTA Senior Key ID cards

You are invited to have your photo taken for a free SEPTA Senior Key ID card.

By appointment only residents in the 194th district who are 65 or older and have yet to have their SEPTA Senior Key ID photo taken. Call for an appointment.

SEPTA is providing a one-year extension of all SEPTA Senior Key ID cards expiring in calendar year 2020.

General Election Dates

September 14, 2020:

First day for mail-in ballots to be mailed to those who have applied.

October 19, 2020

Last day to register to vote before the general election.

October 27, 2020:

Last day to submit an application for a mail-in (no excuse necessary) or civilian absentee ballot.

November 3, 2020:

General Election Day

Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Check for your polling location if voting in person.



My friendly staff is here to assist you.

Serving You

My role as your state representative is to ensure that constituents are represented in the law-making process. The laws that are passed (or not passed) affect our everyday lives. You can view my participation in the legislative process on my website and social media, as I endeavor to make your voices heard by using mine.

While my focus is on being the best legislator I can be, my staff strive to be the best at delivering constituent services.

The district office is at the epicenter of the district, no more than about 3 miles from any district border, with plenty of free parking. The office is served by the 9 and 35 SEPTA bus routes. Office hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday by appointment, and by appointment in the evening or on weekends.

Team Pam was working 100% remotely from March 18th until June 5th. Staff are back in the office, rotating for telework throughout the week and seeing constituents by appointment or with curbside service if you need to deliver or pick up paperwork. We are observing guidelines for infection control and you must wear a mask to enter unless you have a medical reason to not wear a mask. We have disposable masks if you have forgotten your mask at home.

Leza, Merle, Caroline, and Morgan handle both the mundane as well as the more stressful challenges of ensuring that state government is meeting constituents' needs. Please contact my office to determine how we can best assist you.

The 194th Book Club

In January of 2019, I started a book club in the 194th Legislative District. My reason was to broaden the various ways I dialogue with constituents. The goal is to select books that would provoke thoughtful conversation about state policy.

We are four books into this additional way of communicating and those who have attended have shared valuable insight.

Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance, is a memoir about a young man's family's journey from the hills of Kentucky to Ohio.

Educated by Tara Westover made me think about the role of state government, pertaining to child welfare, the rules by which we educate our children, and to what degree nature versus nurture plays out in our lives.

Kids for Cash by William Ecenbarger was a stomach-churning tale of the abuses that persisted in the Common Pleas Court in Luzerne County in PA.

No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us by Rachel Louise Snyder. We gained awareness that domestic abuse crosses income, education and age boundaries.

They Called Us Enemy by George Takei is our next book. Originally scheduled for March 2020 this gathering has been indefinitely postponed due to COVID-19.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

As of March 30, 2020 my town halls have been conducted virtually.

Videos of these town halls are on Facebook in addition to my website.

Topics covered included:

March 2020 – Secretary of Pardons Brandon Flood - probation, parole and clemency.

April 22, 2020 – Mike Weilbacher, Executive Director of the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education - the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

May 21, 2020 – former Secretary of Aging Teresa Osborne for Older Americans Month and the needs of older citizens living in the community, especially during COVID-19.

June 18, 2020 – update on the state budget and current state legislative initiatives related to COVID-19, redistricting reform, mail-in ballots, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

July 21, 2020 – reopening of K through 12 schools and unemployment compensation in particular.

August 24, 2020 – voting – open primaries and mail-in ballots.

Upcoming Town Hall Dates via Facebook Live:

Tuesday, September 22 @ 7 p.m. **Wednesday, November 18 @ 10:30 a.m.**
Monday, October 26 @ 7 p.m.

To participate, join me at [f](https://www.facebook.com/RepDeLissio) /RepDeLissio.

State Representative

Pamela A. DeLissio

109B East Wing
PO Box 202194
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2194

lpo.km.0820

SHRED EVENTS

Sunday, September 13, 10 a.m. – noon.

Beth David Reform Congregation
1130 Vaughan Ln., Gladwyne, 19035



Saturday, October 10, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Magisterial District Courthouse parking lot
925 Montgomery Ave., Narberth, 19072

Saturday, October 24, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Main Street Theatre parking lot
3720 Main St., Manayunk



Shred events are a popular way to discard sensitive materials.

Senior Expo

My annual Senior Expo, held in September, will not occur this year due to COVID-19.

Stay Informed

Sign up and 'opt in' to continuously receive my emails, which I send regularly for news and upcoming events in the district, legislative topics important to you, and other state government-related information. Visit www.RepDeLissio.com and scroll to the bottom of the page to sign up.

www.RepDeLissio.com • /RepDeLissio • @RepDeLissio • @RepDeLissio