



Spring 2019

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# Austin Davis

## REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE 35TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Dear Neighbor,

It has been a little while since our last newsletter update and a lot has been going on around the district and in Harrisburg. On Jan. 1, I officially began my second term as your state legislator and I am so grateful for the opportunity to continue to represent you in Harrisburg.

Since taking my oath of office, I am happy to announce that I have been appointed to several influential committees that will allow me to have a greater voice in representing your needs, and the needs of all constituents in the 35th District.

I have big plans for our district and intend to keep you as up-to-date as possible with events and services that my offices provide. From email blasts, to phone calls, I would like to think I have done a good job at this so far, but I am always open to suggestions from my constituents. Please continue to read through this newsletter for more updates on my recent appointments, events, legislation, and more.

Again, thank you for allowing me to represent you both in Harrisburg and throughout the district. I look forward to continuing to work to move the Mon Valley forward.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature of Austin Davis in blue ink.

### Inside:

Legislative Update • Grants for the 35th Legislative District • Real ID  
Fighting for a Higher Minimum Wage • Harrisburg & Around the District



*State Sen. Jay Costa and I joined DCED Secretary Dennis Davin for a tour of the Carnegie Library of Homestead.*



*In February, Gov. Tom Wolf invited Blayre and me to the Governor's Residence to celebrate African American History Month.*



*I spoke at the Capitol to roll out a bipartisan legislative package that would require mandatory lead testing in schools.*



*In December, I was interviewed by Comcast Newsmakers on what's happening in the state Capitol and the 35th District.*



*Blayre and I were happy to join so many great people at the annual Mon Valley HIV/AIDS Awareness Walk.*



*The Jefferson Regional Foundation hosted a legislative roundtable and asked me to speak about issues that impact the health and vitality of our communities.*



*I joined House Democratic Caucus Chairwoman Joanna McClinton in the Capitol Rotunda to speak at the Coalition for Fathering Families.*

## FIGHTING FOR A HIGHER MINIMUM WAGE

Everything in Pennsylvania – at least from a consumer, renter or commuter's standpoint – is on the rise.

The cost of housing is skyrocketing, as is the cost of daily household products. Inflation, cost-push or demand-pull induced, has dealt a tremendous blow to the economy, sending shockwaves through residents' pockets statewide.

Working-class Pennsylvanians have been hit hard, especially those who are dependent on the minimum wage for their livelihood.

It's a struggle I see in my district and across Allegheny County every day. We as legislators need to do more, which is why I have and will continue to advocate for a substantial increase to the state's minimum wage.

To be transparent, Pennsylvania has had minimum wage increases in the past, such as in 2006, where the minimum wage went from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.15 an hour. In 2009, the minimum wage was raised to \$7.25. But it's simply not enough.

Legislators recently have made attempts to raise the state minimum wage with the introduction of H.B. 1215. The legislation aims to raise the state minimum wage to \$12 by July 1, 2019, with an overall increase to \$15 an hour by 2025.

Opponents of an increase to the state minimum wage claim it will wreak havoc on small businesses, however the research points to quite the opposite.

According to the Keystone Research Center, raising the minimum wage benefits small businesses by "extending a competitive advantage to those that have a profitable business that already pays a livable wage." It would also enhance consumer spending, which provides the building blocks for a sustainable, prosperous local economy.

Despite this information, legislators at the state Capitol remain deadlocked on this issue while neighboring states reap the benefits.

Pennsylvania is one of 21 states that didn't require employers to pay a wage higher than the federal minimum wage. The U.S. Department of Labor's statistics show that all of Pennsylvania's neighbors – Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio, New York, New Jersey and Delaware – pay a wage higher than the federal minimum wage, with Delaware and West Virginia ringing in at \$8.75 an hour, and New York capping out at \$11.10 an hour.

It's encouraging that our neighbors understand the importance of providing a livable wage for individuals who are dependent on the minimum wage. We must do more!



# Legislative Update

Below is an overview of the current bills I've introduced in the House during the 2019-20 legislative session.

In addition to the bills that I have prime sponsored, I have co-sponsored over 100 bills/resolutions introduced by my colleagues. If you're interested in reviewing these please go to my website at [www.pahouse.com/ADavis](http://www.pahouse.com/ADavis).

H.B. 292: This bill would assist working, low-income households at risk of having their water supply cut off for non-payments. It would operate similar to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), assisting households with income levels below 100 percent of the federal poverty line. Under this proposed program, eligible families would receive a grant once a year to allow them to get back on their feet when it comes to paying water and wastewater bills.

H.B. 294: This measure would reduce the fee for identification cards for at-risk residents like senior citizens, low-income individuals, the homeless, and disabled veterans.

H.Bs. 291, 293: This legislative package is designed to protect consumers, notably those who live in multi-unit housing complexes, from unexpected water shutoffs. H.B. 291 would require homeowners' associations that collect money from individual units and then pay water bills on their behalf to be regulated by the state Public Utility Commission. H.B. 293 would require that if an individual unit of a multi-unit dwelling were to be sold, each occupied unit must have a separate water meter.

H.B. 1006: This bill would create the Municipal Police Enhancement and Consolidation Program to encourage reasonable consolidation, provide funding for training, and ensure police officers have access to the services they need to do the job well.

H.B. 899: This bill would make it easier for guardians to play a more active role in the care of an individual who has been involuntarily committed to a mental health care facility by prohibiting the interest of a facility from superseding those of guardians and their wards.

H.B. 898: This would give people with criminal records a fair chance at employment by prohibiting any employer from inquiring about an applicant's criminal history until a conditional offer of employment has been made.

H.B. 1004: A bill that would include nursing homes in the Pennsylvania Safety Authority (PSA) organization, so that we can track incidents, analyze data, and ultimately correct the problems that lead to serious incidents and events that occur in these facilities.

## APPOINTMENT TO PORT AUTHORITY BOARD WILL GIVE MON VALLEY A GREATER VOICE!

At the end of March, House Democratic Leader Frank Dermody appointed me to serve on the Port Authority of Allegheny County's board of directors.

This is great news!

This appointment will allow me to have more oversight on public transportation services and issues in and around Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, something that has been a high priority of mine since taking office.

This issue is important to me because I know that providing efficient, easy-to-use public transportation is a must in Allegheny County. Without it, some residents wouldn't be able to get to doctor's appointments, pick up their children, or visit family.

So, while I'm grateful for the appointment, I'm even more grateful that I now have a more hands-on role in providing residents with the public transit they deserve.

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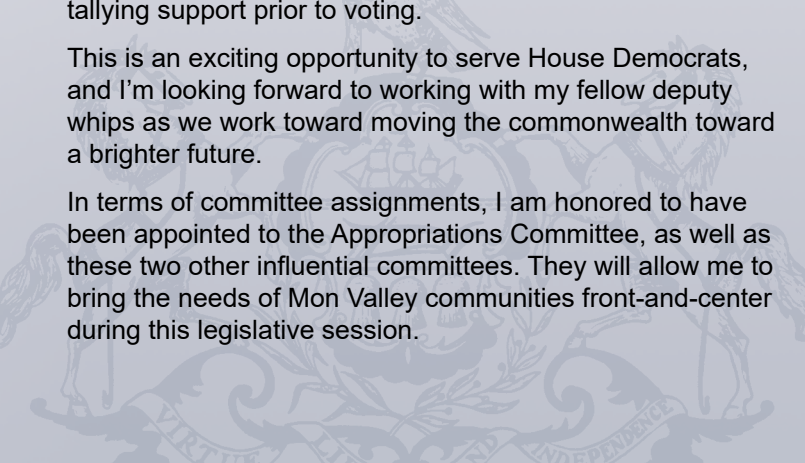
## REP. DAVIS APPOINTED TO CAUCUS LEADERSHIP POSTS

I'm happy to announce that in January I was appointed by State Rep. Jordan Harris, D-Phila., to serve as one of the deputy whips for House Democrats during the 2019-20 legislative session. In addition, I have also been appointed to serve on the following three House standing committees: Appropriations, Consumer Affairs, and Insurance.

As deputy whip, I will be responsible for supporting and advancing legislation with your best interests in mind. I will also be tasked with assisting leadership in the House chamber in ensuring members are present for votes and tallying support prior to voting.

This is an exciting opportunity to serve House Democrats, and I'm looking forward to working with my fellow deputy whips as we work toward moving the commonwealth toward a brighter future.

In terms of committee assignments, I am honored to have been appointed to the Appropriations Committee, as well as these two other influential committees. They will allow me to bring the needs of Mon Valley communities front-and-center during this legislative session.



# Harrisburg and Around the District



Feb. 11 was an exciting day as I joined County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and state Rep. Bill Kortz to celebrate the grand opening of the Tube City Center, in the former McKeesport's Daily News Building.



It was great to join fellow elected officials and a fantastic crowd at the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.



I attended Gov. Tom Wolf's annual budget address to see how we can work together to move Pennsylvania forward.



I attended the annual McKeesport NAACP Pancake Breakfast with constituents Ms. Barbara Williams and Ms. Mary Jane Kirby.



I had a great time speaking to political science students at Duquesne University.



I hosted an ice cream social for residents at The Oaks in White Oak. It was great to get to share resources on state-related programs and hear from my constituents.



Improving the lives of Pennsylvanians with disabilities was the central topic at state Rep. Dan Miller's Annual Disability and Mental Health Summit. It is always a privilege to be a panelist at such an impactful event.



I met with Penn State Greater Allegheny President Jackie Edmundson and students to discuss issues that are important to them.



I joined state Rep. Sara Innamorato and Lynne Hayes Freeland to serve soup at the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank's annual Empty Bowls Fundraiser.



It was great to hear feedback from constituents at the conclusion of the Joint House/Senate Policy Hearing on Air Quality in Clairton.



On behalf of House Democrats, I chaired a Joint House/Senate Policy Committee Hearing in Clairton on Air Quality.



It was an exciting day to join Secretary Dennis Davin from the Department of Community and Economic Development and other elected officials to cut the ribbon at the grand opening of Clairton's Produce Market.



Since being appointed to the Appropriations Committee, I have spent a great deal of time attending House Appropriations Committee budget hearings. These hearings allow committee members to hear testimony from agencies and help us to make important budget decisions.



I joined my colleagues to introduce our Community Policing and Police Professionalism Legislative Package.



It was an honor to speak at the Veterans Day Ceremony in McKeesport.



# REP. DAVIS DELIVERS MORE THAN \$4.7 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR THE 35TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

It is always my goal to work hard to make sure that tax dollars are being brought back into the 35th District. I am happy to announce that since September 2018 I have been able to help secure over \$4.7 million in grants for our district. Below you'll find a rundown of some significant grants that have been awarded in 2018-19.

- The Carnegie Library of Homestead was awarded \$500,000 on Sept. 6, 2018, for improvements to its music hall.
- On Sept. 18, 2018, the 35th Legislative District was awarded more than \$680,000 in state funding from the Commonwealth Financing Authority.
- The Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County was awarded \$175,000 to construct a Regional Public Training Facility, which will be located on Martha Street in Munhall.
- The City of Duquesne received \$100,000 to replace waterlines and a reservoir mixer to prevent the formation of trihalomethanes, which form by a reaction of chlorine with certain compounds in water.
- Clairton Municipal Authority received \$337,000 to replace a combined sewer line located in Clairton City.
- Versailles Borough was awarded \$71,946 to help fund its sanitary sewer rehabilitation project.
- McKeesport was awarded \$2.9 million in state grant money on Oct. 2, 2018, for improvements to its municipal parking garage and the Steel Valley Trail.
- Two local school districts were awarded a combined total of \$60,000 in state funding from the state Department of Education's competitive Safe Schools Targeted Grant program on Oct. 4, 2018.
- McKeesport Area School District received \$20,000 for programs to prevent and reduce violence.

- West Mifflin Area School District was granted \$40,000 for the training and compensation of school police officers during Year 1 of the 2018-19 fiscal year.
- The Clairton City School District was awarded a \$5,000 grant on Oct. 18, 2018, to help students learn about workforce development.
- Six local school districts on Nov. 1, 2018, were collectively awarded \$150,000 in state grants to improve safety at their schools:
- Clairton City School District, \$25,000.
- Duquesne City School District, \$25,000.
- McKeesport Area School District, \$25,000.
- South Allegheny School District, \$25,000.
- Steel Valley School District, \$25,000.
- West Mifflin Area School District, \$25,000.
- On Nov. 14, 2018, Regional Trail Corp. was awarded \$170,000 in state funding to restore nearly 10 miles of the Great Allegheny Passage trail in Elizabeth Township and Lincoln Borough.
- Duquesne City, Steel Valley and South Allegheny school districts received \$35,000 each on Jan. 18 to enhance their computer science classes and teacher training.
- Operation Troop Appreciation, a national nonprofit organization located in West Mifflin, was awarded a \$45,000 state grant on March 1 to help fund the group's initiative of providing welcome home kits to at-risk veterans.
- A \$200,000 state grant was awarded to White Oak on March 26 for safety improvements for pedestrians and drivers. Improvements include new light poles, ADA-compliant and slip-free crosswalks, and streets signs.

## MY TAKE ON GOV. TOM WOLF'S BUDGET ADDRESS

On Feb. 5, Gov. Tom Wolf stood before the House and gave his annual budget address.

I thought you'd be happy to know that the building blocks laid forth in Gov. Wolf's budget address stand in conjunction with that of the working-class families in the Mon Valley.

Since then, I've had time to assess the budget proposal in the House Appropriations Committee, and I'm hopeful my colleagues and I will be able to bring it to resolution in June.

After examining the budget, I can say that this proposal is a positive reflection of the core values of Mon Valley residents. The budget aims to increase workforce development funding by \$10 million, and basic, special, and early education funding by \$282 million. It also aims to increase funding for

Human Services by \$403 million to help protect some of our most vulnerable citizens, and proposes a plan to make Pennsylvania a better place for workers and business by raising the minimum wage to \$12 per hour effective July 1, 2019 and up to \$15 per hour, effective July 1, 2025.

The 2019-20 budget proposal would make key investments to the future of Pennsylvania and remains responsible to the taxpayers by not imposing any new taxes.

We still have a long way to go, but the progressive and calculated budget proposal offered before the House reflects the base of the House Democrats' Plan for PA, which includes putting people first, quality schools and a fair economy.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

## Austin Davis

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## REAL ID CARDS ARE NOW AVAILABLE



Real ID cards are now available from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Real ID is a new, optional form of driver's license or identification card that

PennDOT will issue after verifying certain identification and residency documents provided by you.

Getting a Real ID is not mandatory but it may be useful depending on your needs. After card-based enforcement of the Real ID Act starts Oct. 1, 2020, you will no longer be able to use your regular, state-issued driver's license or identification card to board commercial airline flights or enter high-security federal facilities such as military bases. Instead, you will either have to use the new Real ID or rely on your passport, military ID or other form of federally accepted identification.

You don't need a Real ID to visit regular federal buildings, vote, apply for or receive federal benefits, or gain access to hospitals and health clinics.

For more information, you can read about Real ID on PennDOT's website: [www.PennDOT.gov/REALID](http://www.PennDOT.gov/REALID).

## DON'T MISS THE UPCOMING

# SHRED EVENT!!

Are you concerned about the safety of your personal information when discarding important documents? If so, plan to bring them to my FREE shredding event on **Saturday, June 1 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in front of the McKeesport High School Stadium, located at 1960 Eden Park Blvd., McKeesport.**

Unwanted items that should be shredded include credit card statements, credit card applications, bank statements, canceled checks, income tax information, insurance records and retirement or pension fund information. Documents will be shredded on site, and all material collected will be recycled.

**Personal documents only, no businesses please.**

Please call my office at (412) 664-0035 if you have any questions about this upcoming event.



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