



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Leanne Krueger-Braneky

161ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

WEBSITE: www.pahouse.com/Krueger-Braneky • EMAIL: RepKrueger-Braneky@pahouse.net

WINTER 2017

CAPITOL OFFICE: 115B East Wing • P.O. Box 202161 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2161 • (717) 705-2567 • Fax: (717) 705-7000

DISTRICT OFFICE: 701 E. MacDade Blvd. • Folsom, PA 19033 • (610) 534-6880 • Fax: (610) 534-6881

SATELLITE OFFICE: Brookhaven Borough Bldg. • 2 Cambridge Road • Brookhaven, PA 19015 • (610) 447-3297 • Fax: (610) 447-3378
Satellite Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Proud to serve the 161st District again

It was an honor and a pleasure to serve the 161st District after winning a special election in 2015. I'm even more proud that I again have the opportunity to represent your best interests in Harrisburg for another legislative session.

My first partial term was a whirlwind experience that contained both good, such as the legalization of medical marijuana and securing multiple grants for improvement projects in the 161st District, and challenges, including the prolonged budget stalemate that was already occurring when I was sworn in. After speaking with so many of you in the community and being fortunate enough to be sworn into a second term, I'm even more resolute in my promises to fight for our district.

This session, I'm one of 40 women serving in the House, the highest total in state history. While it's an honor to be one of the 40 women, with less than 19 percent of the total legislature, we still have work to do to get more equal representation in state government.

I've also been appointed to four House committees for this session: Appropriations, Commerce, Environmental Resources and Energy, and Labor and Industry. There are multiple urgent issues facing Pennsylvania right now and our work on those issues starts at the committee level. Before being considered by the full House or Senate, a bill is referred to a committee to begin the vetting process.

As you know, protecting clean air and clean water is a chief concern of mine, and I look forward to resuming important work on the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. We must work to enact better regulations to keep Pennsylvanians safe.

The Appropriations Committee is one of the more powerful committees in state government as it plays a key role in the budgetary process. I did not serve on this committee in my first term, and I look forward to having an increased role in how our budget process plays out. We're in the midst of budget hearings, where each state agency presents its budgetary needs for the next year, and it's proven to be very informative. I will make sure you're fully updated as the budget process plays out and we gain a more clear view of what next year's budget could look like.



Delaware County fire/ambulance companies receive over \$200,000 in grants

Since I was first elected to represent the 161st Legislative District, I've had the opportunity to meet many first responders in our district to learn more about what can be done to ensure they have everything necessary to do their life-saving work on a daily basis. They put their own safety on the line to ensure that you and I have help when we need it most.

I've learned quite a bit about the dire financial situation many of our fire and EMS companies are in. That's why I realize how important Pennsylvania's Fire Company and Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program is. This program is vital to ensure that our first responders can do their jobs.

Thankfully, 17 local fire and ambulance companies in our district are set to receive \$214,974 in grant funding from the state. Grants can be used toward repairing, building or renovating facilities. The money also can be applied toward purchasing new equipment, training and certification of staff, or it may go to repay debt related to equipment purchases or facility building and maintenance.



It was an honor to present a citation to retiring Chief Bob Jones of the Swarthmore Fire & Protective Association to thank him for his years of service to our community.

The organizations in the 161st Legislative District receiving grants are:

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|---|----------|
| Aston Beechwood Volunteer Fire Company 1 (EMS) | \$7,448 |
| Aston Beechwood Volunteer Fire Company 1 (Fire Company) | \$28,490 |
| Brookhaven Fire & Rescue Company (EMS) | \$7,448 |
| Brookhaven Fire & Rescue Company (Fire Company) | \$15,000 |
| Folsom Fire Company No. 1 | \$13,645 |
| Garden City Fire Company 1 | \$15,000 |
| Holmes Fire Company (EMS) | \$7,448 |
| Holmes Fire Company (Fire Company) | \$14,674 |
| Milmont Fire Company & Ambulance Service | \$12,358 |
| Morton-Rutledge Fire Company | \$13,130 |
| S M Vauclain Fire Company (Fire Company) | \$13,645 |
| S M Vauclain Fire Company (EMS) | \$6,792 |
| South Media Fire Company No. 1 | \$15,000 |
| Swarthmore Fire and Protective Association (EMS) | \$7,448 |
| Swarthmore Fire and Protective Association (Fire Company) | \$15,000 |
| Woodlyn Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 (EMS) | \$7,448 |
| Woodlyn Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 (Fire Company) | \$15,000 |



Thanks to Gov. Wolf and all the brave women who joined us in Swarthmore to discuss the danger to women's health posed by Senate Bill 3.

Senate Bill 3 wrongly puts legislators above doctors

Unfortunately, this session we saw a quick reintroduction of the anti-woman, anti-choice bill from last session. Previously known as House Bill 1948, it has been reintroduced as Senate Bill 3 with a companion bill in the House, House Bill 77. S.B.3 has already passed the Senate and could come up in the House at any time.

S.B. 3 removes the right of a woman to make the agonizing decision to end a pregnancy after 20 weeks. Under current law, it is legal for a woman to receive an abortion up until 24 weeks of pregnancy. S.B. 3 would lower that limit to 20 weeks. This is a major issue because many families do not learn about terrible fetal abnormalities until right around the 20th week of pregnancy. This bill also makes it a crime for doctors to use the safest method for most abortions in the second trimester, as early as 13 weeks.

That's why in February I joined Gov. Tom Wolf to host a roundtable with patients, medical professionals and midwives to hear their personal heartbreak stories about their own experiences and why S.B. 3 is awful for women's health. Gov. Wolf has promised to veto this legislation, but I will work to make sure it doesn't pass the House.



Honoring the 'Silent Sentinels'

In January, I was proud to introduce House Resolution 31 honoring the Silent Sentinels and the sacrifices they made in earning women the right to vote. H.R. 31 was unanimously adopted by the House.

The Silent Sentinels began their protest for women's suffrage outside the White House on January 10, 1917. They went on to continue this protest for two and a half years to demand the basic right to vote. They earned the name Silent Sentinels because they were simply that – silent. They did not chant or shout, but instead stood silently outside the White House holding banners that made their points known.

It was a privilege to speak on my H.R. 31 honoring the Silent Sentinels for their sacrifices.

This protest was not always easy. The Silent Sentinels were subjected to scorn, violence, derision and arrests. Over 100 women were subject to what became known as the "Night of Terror" – a night in November 1917 when Silent Sentinels who were arrested and housed in the Lorton Reformatory were tortured, beaten and abused.

But they did not waiver. They protested until the 19th Amendment was passed by Congress and finally ratified by Tennessee in 1920, making the 19th Amendment officially law. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to these women and it was an honor to help get a resolution praising their sacrifices through the House with bipartisan support.

Wolf's budget proposal a step in right direction

In early February, Gov. Tom Wolf gave his annual budget address to a joint session of the General Assembly. While I continue to research his proposal, I do believe that this budget represents a new way of looking at state government and a path forward for Pennsylvania.

Gov. Wolf's proposal would balance the budget with no broad-based tax increases through creative cost-cutting measures in state government. These measures include combining state agencies to facilitate a more user-friendly state government. If we're able to consolidate state services without changing how those services are delivered, then it simply makes sense to make that change.

This budget proposal would also provide a needed boost to education funding. The previous administration slashed funding for K-12 education and higher education, leaving schools and universities scrambling and ultimately harming Pennsylvania's students the most.

Thankfully, Gov. Wolf took steps in his first two budgets to properly fund education, and the trend continues this year. He's proposing an additional \$75 million in pre-K and Head Start funding, an additional \$100 million for basic education, an additional \$25 million for special education and a proposed 2 percent increase for the State System of Higher Education.

Studies have shown that every \$1 invested in pre-K and Head Start education returns approximately \$7 in savings later in the student's life. I'm a strong supporter of early education funding and will work with the governor and my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to ensure this funding stays in the finalized budget.

The governor also continues to understand the threat posed by Pennsylvania's opioid crisis. This problem knows no party lines and can impact both rural and urban communities. Right

here in Delaware County, we have a tremendous problem with overdose deaths and must come together to help those who fall victim to this deadly addiction.

That's why I'm glad to see the governor propose several heroin/opioid initiatives, including:

- A \$10 million initiative to equip first responders across the state with the life-saving drug naloxone;
- A \$3.4 million initiative to expand drug courts, with the goal of increasing the number of courts that have received state accreditation;
- Tapping into federal funding provided through the CURES Act passed late last year to expand access to treatment for uninsured and underinsured residents.

Overall, this budget provides exactly what people want and need – increased education funding, a reduction in the level of bureaucracy while still maintaining vital services and continued protection for seniors. Pennsylvania has been plagued by politics as usual in Harrisburg and this has led to our current structural deficit. I truly believe the governor's plan will move Pennsylvania forward toward the kind of state people want it to be.



I discussed the governor's budget proposal with fellow legislators following his address in early February.

Climate Caucus will hopefully generate dialogue

There is no denying that climate change is real and it is impacting our day-to-day lives. It is a very real threat to our way of life on Earth, and it's time that we as legislators do more to collaborate and focus on possible solutions to slow the increasing danger we face. That's why in January, I joined fellow legislators to found Pennsylvania's first bicameral, bipartisan Climate Caucus.

The Climate Caucus aims to provide a forum for sharing information and discussing our options at the state level to decrease Pennsylvania's carbon footprint. With a new administration at the federal level, it's unclear as to how seriously it will take the threat posed by climate change. That's why now more than ever it's imperative that we take initiative ourselves to do what's best for the environment and the people of Pennsylvania who enjoy it.

We were joined by advocates from the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators, PennEnvironment, PennFuture and the Sierra Club. All of these groups understand the necessity of the Climate Caucus, and I look forward to working with



I joined the inaugural news conference for the Climate Caucus in January to bring legislators together to discuss how we can stem the threat of climate change.

them and fellow legislators from both sides of the aisle to come up with real solutions for Pennsylvania.

Our first organizational meeting was in February and I'll be sure to share updates in the future with our progress.

State grants helping to bolster our district

I will always strive to help improve the 161st District in any way possible, and that's why I'm always glad to report on state grants that come into our community.

Last November, the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program provided a \$1.5 million grant for the Bruder Life Center at Neumann University. The Bruder Life Center is an integral part of life for students at Neumann, and this grant will help provide more educational opportunities, as well as increase the ability to host programs for the community. Specifically, the funding will go toward construction to strengthen the multi-use student and community cultural and social center's ability to support campus life and the surrounding community.

Then in early December, the Commonwealth Financing Authority approved a grant for \$750,000 for Nether Providence Township to help create safe pathways for pedestrians and bikers alike. It's imperative that we focus on providing safe, healthy recreational opportunities, which can also serve as alternatives to driving, to ensure a vibrant community.

The project consists of three parts. First, a sidewalk will be extended on East Rose Valley Road from Osborne Lane to Providence Road. Second, a sidewalk will be installed to connect Leiper Smedley Walking and Biking Trail to the Copples Lane sidewalk. Third, 20,000 feet of bike lanes will be created in both directions on West Brookhaven Road from the township line to Providence Road.

The CFA was established in 2004 as an independent agency of the Department of Community and Economic Development to administer Pennsylvania's economic stimulus packages. The CFA holds fiduciary responsibility over the funding of programs and investments in Pennsylvania's economic growth. The CFA consists of seven board members: four legislative appointees and the secretaries of the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Office of the Budget, and the Department of Banking.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate forms are in

If you've previously filed for a Property Tax/Rent Rebate or feel as though you may be eligible this year, my office has received the applications and my staff is ready and willing to help you fill yours out.

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. Half of Social Security income is excluded; and cost-of-living adjustments cannot be the basis to solely disqualify an applicant.

The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates for certain qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975. The Revenue Department automatically calculates the supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners.

To learn more about filing an application, please contact my office at (610) 534-6880. Applications can also be filed online at www.revenue.pa.gov.

Since the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program's 1971 inception, older and disabled adults have received more than \$5.9 billion in property tax and rent relief. The program is funded by the Pennsylvania Lottery which provides many programs benefitting older Pennsylvanians.

PHOTOS FROM AROUND OUR COMMUNITY AND HARRISBURG



Thanks to everyone who attended my senior lunch in Rutledge, and a special thank you to Mayor Kevin Cunningham for hosting us!



Left: As a former Girl Scout, I loved spending time with Girl Scout Troop 5557 in Swarthmore to help them earn their Inside Government Badge!



Right: I joined Gov. Wolf and Rep. Maria Donatucci for a tour of Jyoti Natural Foods in nearby Sharon Hill. Jyoti employs 40 people and is looking to add 10 more jobs this year – a great example of what businesses are doing in Delaware County to be successful.



For this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, I joined 8th-graders at Strath Haven Middle School to help make capes for kids with cancer. I then joined 6th-graders who were making lunches for a homeless shelter and spoke at an assembly honoring first responders and our military.

Before the Super Bowl, Wendell and I had the pleasure of joining the Chambers Memorial Presbyterian Church in Rutledge for its Souper Bowl of Caring, where we helped sort donated canned goods.



State Representative

Leanne T. Krueger-Braneky

701 E. MacDade Blvd.
Folsom, PA 19033

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Don't miss these upcoming events around the 161st District!

PennDOT Town Hall

Thursday, March 30
6 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Location TBD

Join PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards for a town hall to discuss PennDOT improvements in our area and what more can be done for our roads and bridges.

Small Business Breakfast

Friday, March 10
8:30 a.m.

Schmidt Multi-purpose Room – Neuman University
1 Neumann Drive, Aston, PA 19014

Learn about resources available for small-business owners, with a focus on access to capital to grow your business.

PA's Mobile Veteran's Van

In an effort to make sure our veterans are receiving all the benefits they've earned, my office hosts Pennsylvania's Mobile Veteran's Van multiple times throughout the year. This spring, we'll be hosting the van on Thursday, March 16 at our Folsom office and also on Thursday, May 18 at our Brookhaven office. For more information on these events, please call us at (610) 534-6880.

Shred Event

Saturday, April 22
9 a.m. – noon

Strath Haven High School – Rear Parking Lot
Larkin Lane, Wallingford, PA 19086

Do you have documents containing sensitive information (bank account numbers, Social Security card numbers, etc.)? If so, get rid of it at our FREE shred event!

APPRISE Counseling available

You're invited to make an appointment at my office to speak with an APPRISE counselor. APPRISE is a free health insurance counseling program designed to help older Pennsylvanians with Medicare/Medicaid questions. Counselors are available on the third Tuesday of each month between noon and 3 p.m. Appointments are required, so please call (610) 534-6880 to schedule your appointment or get more information.