



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE **BILL KORTZ** 38TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



**Pleasant Hills, Baldwin,  
Whitehall and South Park**

**SUMMER 2017**

**Dravosburg Office:**

751 Pittsburgh-McKeesport Blvd.  
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**Website:**

[www.pahouse.com/Kortz](http://www.pahouse.com/Kortz)

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[www.facebook.com/RepKortz](https://www.facebook.com/RepKortz)

## Libre's Law signed into law!

In a rare outdoor ceremony, Gov. Tom Wolf on June 28th, signed and enacted Libre's Law – the comprehensive overhaul of Pennsylvania's animal protection laws.

I was proud to co-sponsor and support the effort, which culminated with Act 10 of 2017 – better known as Libre's Law after the cute Boston terrier pup left for dead last summer but nursed back to health.

The law, which just took effect at the end of August, makes it a felony to torture a pet, and anyone who severely abuses a horse or tethers a dog outside in extreme weather will face serious criminal charges.

Those convicted of abusing or neglecting pets or animals face their forfeiture. Another provision will offer limited civil immunity for veterinarians and humane society police officers who report suspected animal cruelty.



## Mark your calendars.

### 10th Annual Senior Fair

**Thursday, Oct. 12**

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Broughton VFD**

1030 Cochran's Mill Rd.

Pittsburgh (South Park), PA 15236



### 5th Annual Shred-It Event

**Saturday, Oct. 14**

10 a.m. to noon

**West Mifflin #3 VFC**

3722 Rodeo Drive

West Mifflin, PA 15122



2-box limit per vehicle • Home items only  
No businesses, please



# Road and Bridge Updates

## Roads & Bridges

- Homeville bridge
- Work completed November 2016
- Final cost approximately \$10.2 million



## Retaining wall by railroad tracks Rt. 837

- Add 200-yard wall along R.R. tracks to keep ballast from roadway
- Completed November 2016



## R.R. crossing upgrade Rt. 837 at Boswell Oil

- Rebuilt track crossing
- Repainted line for traffic flow
- Added lighting for better visibility



## Streets Run Road Bridges

- Replacement of bridge near Lutz Hollow Road postponed until spring 2018.
- Replacement of bridge near Doyle Road postponed until summer 2018.

## Glass Run Road bridge replacement

- Bridges on Glass Run Road between Cathell and Gensler roads being replaced
- Began in August 2017
- Expected completion in October 2017
- Public-Private Partnership



## Lebanon Church Road Project

- Construction and inspection cost \$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 possible
- Projected start date 2019

## Mon Fayette Expressway

- Final section approved by Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission in June
- From PA Route 51 in Jefferson Hills to I-376 in Monroeville
- Estimated cost \$2.2 billion
- Public meeting to review plans tentatively scheduled for January 2018

## Streets Run Road landslide

- Repaired roadside between Missionary Road and Springdale Road with geosynthetic reinforced soil
- Completed Aug. 14, 2017





# Around the 38th District



*Rep. Korts hosting the Whitehall Seniors Luncheon.*



*Left: Rep. Korts reads to children at Whitehall Tendercare.*

*Below: Rep. Korts at Whitehall Community Day with Police Chief Keith Henderson and retired Police Chief Donald Dolfi.*



*Rep. Korts with Whitehall Councilwoman Linda Book at Memorial Day Service.*



*Above: Rep. Korts at Paramount Senior Center on Veterans Day, 2016.*

*Left: Reps. Korts and Rick Saccone present a citation to Marine Sgt. Colton Carmen of South Park, in recognition of his military service and Purple Heart.*



*Rep. Korts and Baldwin Councilman Mike Ducker present citations to the Baldwin EMS on behalf of himself and state Rep. Harry Readshaw.*



*Above: Rep. Korts speaking with residents at Baldwin Towers.*



*Right: Jefferson Memorial Cemetery Memorial Day Service.*

## Opiate discussion at Thomas Jefferson Middle School



*Rep. Korts joined the office of the Attorney General to discuss opioid abuse with students at Thomas Jefferson Middle School.*

## Does the state have your money?

The state Treasury holds more than \$2 billion in unclaimed property that it wants to return to rightful owners.

Examples of unclaimed property include:

- Closed bank accounts;
- Uncashed checks, including paychecks;
- Lost stocks and bonds;
- Contents of safe deposit boxes; and
- Expired gift cards/certificates.

The state maintains a website that lets you search by name, but I want to make it even easier for you. Contact one of my constituent service offices and schedule a time so we can help you search.

If you are owed anything of value, we can also help you file the paperwork to have it returned.

## General Election is November 7

Tuesday, Nov. 7 is General Election Day. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

The last day to register to vote in the general is Oct. 10, and you can do that online at [www.register.votespa.com](http://www.register.votespa.com).

A number of statewide judgeships are on the ballot – state Supreme Court, Superior Court and Commonwealth Court – as well as Allegheny County Council positions.

A number of municipal seats and school board positions will also be on the ballot, so I encourage you to get out and vote.

Your polling place may have changed since the last election. Voters can verify their polling location at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).

Unless you are a first-time voter or voting at a new precinct, photo ID is not required.

For more information and a complete list of candidates, visit the Allegheny County Election Division website at [www.county.allegheny.pa.us/elections/index.aspx](http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/elections/index.aspx) or call 412-350-4500.

### Important 2017 Election Dates

**Oct. 10** – Last day to register to vote

**Oct. 31** – Last day to apply for an absentee ballot

**Nov. 3** – Last day for county election offices to receive absentee ballots

**Nov. 7** – Election Day Polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

## Internet Essentials program helps low-income students

Home internet access helps many of us conveniently search for all kinds of information helpful to our daily lives. It also gives our children a leg up with school assignments and projects. But for thousands of families in our area, internet access for children is something they cannot afford.

Please help me spread the word about Internet Essentials, which offers families who receive housing support through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development the ability to receive high-speed home internet service and even a computer at greatly discounted rates.

This is an expansion of the program that previously was available to families with students who qualified for free or discounted lunches.

HUD estimates as many as 20,000 households in the Pittsburgh area may qualify for this program.

No tax dollars are spent on this program.

More information about the program, including eligibility guidelines, is available by calling 1-855-846-8376.



## Budget Work Continues

A budget spending plan was passed on time as required by the Constitution at the end of June. It has been challenging to reach an agreement on a revenue package that the House, Senate, and the Governor could agree upon.

This process has not been easy. On Saturday, July 22, Speaker of the House Mike Turzai called the House into session with the goal of working through the weekend to solve the funding issue. However, Speaker Turzai sent members home without voting on a revenue package.

Later that week, the Senate passed a funding plan that includes a long overdue Marcellus Shale extraction tax.

The other main part of the Senate bill would authorize a \$1.5 billion bond to be paid back using future payments from the state's tobacco settlement plan.

Unfortunately, Speaker Turzai did not see a need to call us back in to vote on the Senate plan.

The plan I favor would allow for Video gaming terminals (VGTs) to be legalized in American Legions, VFWs, Volunteer Fire Departments and taverns. In many cases, these machines are there now. This will help both our volunteer organizations and the state budget.

I would also address the tax loopholes, such as the Delaware loophole, used by large companies.

A Marcellus Shale extraction tax needs to be enacted. Pennsylvania remains the ONLY state where fracking occurs that does not charge drillers a tax on the gas as it is removed.

As of this writing, the revenue plan remains unfinished.





# Legislative update

## Legislation for veterans

**H.B. 980** – I co-sponsored this bill that would exempt 100 percent of veterans' federal disability payments or pensions from income calculations for any state benefit programs. The bill would also extend that exemption to an unmarried surviving spouse. This bill unanimously passed the House and has moved to the Senate for consideration.

**Act 9 (H.B. 168)** – Stolen valor bill signed into law by Gov. Wolf on June 27. It is now a crime to fraudulently present yourself as a veteran or a member of the military in order to gain a benefit such as a government contract or military benefits such as healthcare. This bill unanimously passed both the House and the Senate. The law took effect at the end of August.

**H.B. 1363** – It would protect the residency of a person while on active military duty in reference to residency requirements for elected or appointed officials in municipal offices. A person's residency would remain as it was before the deployment unless that person has made a specific effort to move to a new location. The bill unanimously passed the House in June and is currently in the Senate Local Government Committee.

**H.B. 1153** – This bill would allow Pennsylvania to enter into reciprocal agreements with other states to recognize valid fishing and hunting licenses for active-duty military members or disabled veterans. The Attorney General would evaluate and negotiate the agreements. The bill passed the House unanimously in June and it now awaits further consideration in the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.

## Rep. Kortz sponsored legislation

### **H.B. 359 – mistaken kill for bear and elk – passes House**

Legislation I co-authored with Republican state Rep. Hal English aimed at not penalizing honest, ethical hunters for a mistaken harvest unanimously passed the House.

Specifically, the bill would remove the threat of a license suspension for those hunters who make an honest mistake and then self-report the mistaken harvest by contacting the Pennsylvania Game Commission, turning in the animal and pleading guilty to the offense.

With different hunting dates for different Wildlife Management Units, the difference of a few yards in the woods can mean the difference between a legal or illegal harvest.

The bill is now awaiting further consideration in the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.

### **H.B. 564 would require students to pass a civics exam to graduate**

Last December, I introduced a bill with Republican state Rep. Karen Boback that would require high school students to pass a test on basic civics before graduating.

This bill would require that, by the 2020-2021 school year, all students attending public, private, charter or cyber schools; or taking a G.E.D. exam; score at least a 60 percent on a 100-question civics exam currently used by the U.S. Citizens and Immigration Services for its citizenship test.

## Legislation for First Responders

**Act 172 of 2016 (H.B. 1683)** – Signed into law last November, this new law authorizes municipalities to offer a tax credit of up to 20 percent for municipal taxes for first responder volunteers. Communities that wish to do so may now offer the tax credit against earned income and/or property tax liabilities. The bill passed both chambers unanimously.

**H.B. 1600** – This bill would support our volunteer first responders by offering a tax credit to private employers who allow an employee who is a volunteer to leave work for training or to respond to a call, while encouraging private employers to grant time off for a call or training. This bill is currently under consideration in the House Finance Committee.

## Legislation for Seasonal Workers

**Act 144 of 2016 (H.B. 319)** – Restored unemployment benefits for up to 44,000 seasonal workers who earn the majority of their income in a limited window, such as outdoor construction workers or agriculture workers. In addition to protecting these workers, the new law has sections that will strengthen the unemployment compensation fund by reducing waste and charging more to companies that over-use the system.

## Do-Not-Call Legislation

**H.B. 105** – Would extend the registration period on the do-not-call list for as long as the individual keeps that specific phone number. Current law only blocks a number for five years. The bill would also prohibit telemarketing on legal holidays as well as calls initiated by automatic dialers. This bill unanimously passed the House in May and was reported out of the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee in June, and is now eligible for a vote in the Senate.

Students would only have to hit the 60 percent threshold one time and schools could begin offering the test to students as early as grade 7. Students would also be able to take the test as many times as necessary to pass.

I believe our own students should be expected to understand our government at least as well as we expect an immigrant who is applying to become a citizen.

Recent events point out the lack of understanding of our own democracy, such as the basic structure that all three branches of our government – the Legislative (Congress), Executive (President and his staff) and Judicial (Court system) – must operate independently of each other yet each has equal authority.

The bill is currently in the House Education Committee for further review.

### **H.B. 1001 would require licensing for home inspectors**

I have co-authored a bill with Republican state Rep. Sue Helm that would require all home inspectors to earn a certification for the field. This is a commonsense bill that would guarantee that a home inspector meets a minimum standard of competency. Rep. Helm is also a licensed realtor, so I am happy to partner with her and make use of her knowledge and experience in the home industry.

The bill is currently under review in the House Appropriations Committee.

State Representative  
**BILL KORTZ**

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**UPCOMING EVENTS  
IN THE 38TH DISTRICT**

- Oct. 12 Senior Fair
  - Oct. 14 Shred-It Event
- More information inside!***

www.pahouse.com/Kortz  
www.facebook.com/RepKortz  
@RepBillKortz

lpo.kl.0917

**Kortz sworn into office on  
Tuesday, January 3rd, 2017**

*I was sworn in as State Representative for the 38th Legislative District on January 3, 2017. I have been appointed to five important committees: Vice-Chair of Professional Licensure, Transportation, Liquor Control, Gaming Oversight and Commerce.*



***With my sisters, Dot, Karen, and Char, on Swearing In Day.***

**Citation recognizes Father  
Grosko's 85th birthday**



*I was honored to present a citation to Father Joseph Grosko of St. Agnes Parish in West Mifflin. He celebrated his 85th birthday and was recently recognized for the 58th anniversary of his ordination. Bishop David Zubik was on hand to celebrate as well. Fr. Grosko is retiring as administrator and I wish him well.*

**Bus trip to the Capitol  
and the Governor's  
Residence**



***Last December, I was proud to show a number of local residents around Harrisburg on my annual bus trip. We toured the Capitol and also the Governor's Residence, both of which were decorated for the holidays. Look for information on my trip coming this winter!***

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5101 Old Clairton Road • Pittsburgh, PA 15236 • (412) 886-2870

South Park Municipal Building • 2675 Brownsville Road • South Park, PA

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month

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