



2019 Spring Accomplishments

House Republican Caucus

July 15, 2019

Protecting Victims:

- Strengthened victim rights by constitutionally setting forth those rights and describing how they are to be enforced (*HB 276, Pamphlet Laws Resolution No. 1*).
- Provided civil immunity to individuals rescuing another from a motor vehicle (*HB 279, Act 5 of 2019*).
- Criminalized the practice of female mutilation (*HB 315, Act 21 of 2019*).
- Helped victims confront their abusers by providing the right to attend any proceeding related to their case (*HB 502, Act 23 of 2019*).
- Aided victims and witnesses with intellectual disabilities or autism testifying in court by affording them the tender years exception (*HB 503/SB 469, Act 30 of 2019*).
- Ensured that prior sexual assaults or other acts of victimization against a rape victim cannot be used at trial for the purpose of attacking the victim's character (*HB 504, Act 24 of 2019*).
- Assisted child victims of sexual or other violent crimes with testifying against their perpetrators by expanding the tender years exception (*HB 505/SB 479, Act 31 of 2019*).
- Strengthened PA criminal justice system by promoting multi-jurisdictional task forces operating in the Commonwealth (*HB 1614, Act 58 of 2019*).

Advancing Good Government:

- Passed a balanced budget with no new or increased taxes (*HB 790, Act 1A of 2019*).
- Prioritized the Commonwealth's financial solvency both now and in the future by putting more than \$300 million into the Rainy Day Fund (*SB 712, Act 20 of 2019*).
- Ensured that our overall debt obligations are paid earlier and that interest rates are kept substantially lower by requiring equal principal payments on bonds (*HB 24, Act 43 of 2019*).
- Provided greater spending transparency and accountability by requiring written statements from the Governor for supplemental appropriation requests (*HB 923, Act 15 of 2019*).
- Afforded safeguards against the misappropriation of public funds through financial procedures for the collection of monies by municipal authorities (*HB 264, Act 4 of 2019*).
- Enacted welfare reform by eliminating cash assistance and expanding the role of the inspector general in targeting abuses (*HBs 33 and 1461, Acts 12 and 15 of 2019*).
- Strengthened the Pension Forfeiture Act by cutting off pension benefits after a finding of guilt or entry of a guilty plea (*HB 59/SB 113, Act 1 of 2019*).
- Authorized the CFA to award grants up to \$1.5 million or 50% of the project costs for use by the Natural Gas Infrastructure Development Fund (*HB 1103/SB712, Act 20 of 2019*).

Strengthening Communities & Families:

- Promoted the adoption of children with disabilities, or who are hard to place due to age, sibling relationship or ethnicity by reinstating adoption assistance subsidies (*HB 856, Act 14 of 2019*).
- Expanded the list of individuals permitted to serve as a signed witness to the execution of a consent to adoption by a birth parent who is incarcerated (*HB 235, Act 47 of 2019*).

- Established a PA state-based insurance exchange and reinsurance program projected to save consumers up to 10% in insurance premiums (*HB 3, Act 42 of 2019*).
- Addressed declining outcomes and inequitable funding formulas for PA trauma centers by updating trauma centers-accreditation standards (*HB 786, Act 54 of 2019*).
- House passed legislation amending the Abortion Control Act to prohibit abortion based on a diagnosis of Down Syndrome (*HB 321*).

Preserving PA's Agricultural Heritage:

- Passed a package of twelve bills that demonstrated a commitment to our agricultural and farming community. These bills included legislation that:
 - Limited restrictions and subdivision on preserved farmland (*HB 370, Act 33 of 2019*).
 - Revamped the Health Farms Healthy Schools program (*HB 1514, Act 34 of 2019*).
 - Established the Agriculture Rapid Response Disaster Readiness Account (*HB 1516, Act 35 of 2019*).
 - Created the Conservation Excellence Grant Program (*HB 1517/SB 634, Act 39 of 2019*).
 - Re-established the Agriculture-Linked Investment Program (*HB 1526, Act 37 of 2019*).
 - Established the Dairy Investment Program (*HB 1590, Act 38 of 2019*).

Providing Tax Relief:

- Eliminated the assessment of Inheritance Tax on children under the age of 21 after losing a parent or guardian (*HB 262, Act 13 of 2019*).
- Provided a Sales and Use Tax exemption for volunteer firemen's organization and non-profit youth centers (*HB 779, Act 13 of 2019*).
- Expanded the agriculture Sales and Use Tax exclusion to include building materials and supplies used for the construction of agricultural buildings (*HB 1225, Act 13 of 2019*).
- Created a Realty Transfer Tax exclusion for the transfer of real estate to a qualified beginning farmer (*HB 241, Act 13 of 2019*).
- Clarified the assessment of Sales and Use Tax on the purchase of malt or brewed beverages sold at PA Breweries (*HB 1549, Act 13 of 2019*).
- Extended the REAP Tax Credit to the spouse of an eligible applicant (*HB 241, Act 13 of 2019*).

Investing in Education:

- Increased EITC by \$25 million and OSTC by \$5 million. Additionally, raised the income limit for eligible participants by \$5,000 (*HB 1615, Act 16 of 2019*).
- Provided protections for children by enacting comprehensive school safety measures and providing targeted school safety grants (*HBs 1429 and 1631/SB 144, Act 18 of 2019*).
- Made substantial investments in education funding from Pre-K to Higher Education (*Act 16 of 2019*).
- Created the PA National Guard Military Family Education Program to allow national guard service members the ability to earn educational benefits for their spouse and/or children. (*HB 1324, Act 32 of 2019*).