



SUPPORTING
HEALTHCARE HEROES

INVESTING IN STUDENTS
AND EDUCATION

CONSERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT
AND COMBATING FOOD INSECURITY



STATE SENATOR LINDSEY WILLIAMS

Summer 2022

HOLDING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE AND MY DEMYSTIFYING HARRISBURG SERIES

Government works best when it is transparent, encourages public participation, and holds legislators accountable.

KEEPING LEGISLATIVE EXPENSES TRANSPARENT

In May, the House unanimously passed legislation that would require its Chief Clerk to post copies of their expenses online in a searchable format.

This legislation was originally nearly identical to legislation I introduced in the Senate, but it was amended before passage to make it apply only to the House. Additionally, the amendment included a loophole that allows the Chief Clerk of the House or a House Committee to unilaterally redact or remove expenses from inclusion in publication, defeating the purpose of true transparency.

I appreciate that the Senate began posting Members' expenses online after I introduced my legislation, but the format used - individual PDFs broken down by office by month - makes it incredibly difficult to review and requires a manual search. Also, because it isn't a legal requirement, the next Senate President Pro Temp can decide to stop posting expenses entirely. Posting these expenses should be a matter of law that isn't subject to legislative leaders' whims.

I remain the only Senator who posts all expenses that I have direct authorization over online monthly in an easily searchable format. I also don't take a state vehicle or a per diem. Instead, I submit receipts clearly showing how funds from my office are spent. You can view all of my expenses on my website at SenatorLindseyWilliams.com/expenses or call my office to get more information. ■

DEMYSTIFYING HARRISBURG SERIES

Harrisburg is needlessly—and sometimes purposely—complicated. My “Demystifying Harrisburg” event series explains what you need to know to effectively interact with your legislators and the government.

So far, this year I've hosted two events:

- Demystifying Harrisburg: The Budget Process in February
- Demystifying Harrisburg: How To Lobby Your Legislators in April

I have two Demystifying Harrisburg events coming up:

- **The Budget: What's In It**
- July 6 at 6 p.m.
- **Office of the Consumer Advocate**
Meet the state agency that represents the interests of Pennsylvania utility consumers.
- July 21 at 6 p.m.

You can register to attend these events or watch previous events at SenatorLindseyWilliams.com/DemystifyingHbg.

REFORMING THE RULES

Senate Rules stop good legislation from getting passed. I'm the prime sponsor of a package of rules that significantly overhaul the way the Senate operates, giving citizens a real voice in their government.

- Check out the recording of our Demystifying Harrisburg: Knowing the Rules and Tracking Legislation at SenatorLindseyWilliams.com/DemystifyingHBG.
- Read more about my Rules Reform legislation at SenatorLindseyWilliams.com



SUPPORTING OUR HEALTHCARE HEROES

In January I joined healthcare workers from across the Pittsburgh region for a Candlelight Vigil to call attention to the staffing crisis affecting hospitals. After nearly two years of an ongoing pandemic, our hospitals are at a breaking point. The brave individuals who we have called healthcare heroes deserve more than lip service- they deserve better working conditions, safe staffing levels, fair wages, and the right to form a staff union. These are the people who we trust to take care of us when we need it most. We need to take care of them now.

Soon after I was able to take action for those workers by voting for HB253, which provided \$225 million in American Rescue Plan funds to directly fund programs that will support our healthcare workers. \$210 million will go to retention and recruiting programs for patient care employees. That includes nurses, environmental service employees, and clinical care workers at hospitals and behavioral health providers. An additional \$15 million will go to the existing Student Loan Relief for Nurses Program, which was created by Senator Maria Collett and Senate Democrats last Session. I'm proud to support these workers at home and in Harrisburg. ■



Healthcare workers have been true front-line heroes not just during the pandemic, but every day. They show up when we need them the most. I'm proud to have supported legislation and grant funding that provides them money to continue operating at their high level of performance.

In February, I voted for SB739, which established the EMS Covid-19 Grant Program. A \$25 million allocation of Federal American Rescue Plan money made this program possible. It will provide about \$31,000 in grant funding to each EMS agency in Pennsylvania.

Our local EMS agencies continue to need support in training, recruiting, and retaining EMT's. That's why I partnered with the Alle-Kiski Health Foundation to provide a \$99,000 Department of Community and Economic Development grant for EMT training and recruitment specifically for EMS agencies within the district. The local EMS providers included in this grant funding are Citizens Hose EMS, Eureka Fire Rescue EMS, Foxwall EMS, Lower Valley EMS, McCandless Franklin Park EMS, Parkview EMS, Pittsburgh EMS, Richland EMS, Ross/West View EMS, Seneca EMS, Shaler Hampton EMS, and West Deer EMS.

This funding is already being put to excellent use. Citizens Hose EMS, Eureka Fire Rescue EMS, the Allegheny-Kiski Health Foundation and CCAC partnered to offer a free 16-week EMT training course for 20 individuals. West Deer EMS has purchased advanced life support training equipment that can be used to train both new and existing EMTs.

It's so important for individuals to subscribe to their local EMS services. ■



If you need help finding which ambulance agency provides services to your home, please contact my office or visit my website, [**SenatorLindseyWilliams.com/district**](https://SenatorLindseyWilliams.com/district) for a full list of EMS agencies with their websites within Senate District 38.



INVESTING IN OUR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS

IN FEBRUARY I HOSTED A POLICY HEARING ON ADDRESSING PENNSYLVANIA'S SCHOOL STAFFING SHORTAGES

Pennsylvania schools are facing a huge staffing shortage, impacting our kids and our parents. This includes all adults in the building, from teachers and paraprofessionals to cafeteria workers and bus drivers. Harrisburg needs to make smart investments in our current educators to ensure that they remain in the profession.

That's why I've introduced legislation that will establish a student loan forgiveness program for certified school nurses, counselors, social workers, and psychologists. We know that these professionals are leaving the profession due to overwhelming student debt. By relieving some of this debt, we will encourage them to remain in their careers helping our students succeed. I'm also

introducing legislation that would allow school districts to pay prospective school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses during their internships. This will lower the barrier to becoming a school-based mental health professional and increase the number of caring adults in schools to support students now.

Additionally, we need to address building the next generation of educators, especially at our PASSHE schools, which have traditionally been thought of as "teacher schools". To do this, we need to ensure that these schools remain affordable for Pennsylvania students through appropriate funding from the General Assembly. We also need to ensure that we have strong partnerships



between community colleges and these four-year universities to help students graduate with less debt and more opportunities. ■

If you'd like to watch any of the Budget Hearings, they're available for replay on my website at **SenatorLindseyWilliams.com/budget**.



In February I had the honor of welcoming the PIAA Class 3A Champion Hampton Township School District Boys Soccer team to Harrisburg. Congratulations to all of the players and coaches on a successful season and good luck to you all in your next seasons, especially to the 10 graduating seniors!

SHALER SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE PA SEAL OF BILITERACY

In April, former Secretary of Education Dr. Noe Ortega and I joined teachers, administrators, and students at Shaler Area High School to honor a group of students who helped launch the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy, a statewide program to recognize students proficient in English and at least one other world language upon graduation. These students wrote letters to me last year, urging Pennsylvania to adopt the Seal of Biliteracy.

After receiving the students' letters, I spoke with Secretary Ortega about introducing the Seal in Pennsylvania, and a few months later, he announced that Pennsylvania would offer the Seal. In April, he became the first PDE Secretary to visit Shaler Area High School.

I am so proud of each and every one of these students for using their voices to help students across the Commonwealth. Their passion for learning about the world is inspiring. Thank you to Superintendent Dr. Sean Aiken, Shaler Area School Board President April Kwiatkowski, Principal Dr. Timothy Royall, and all the students' teachers who were able to attend and who support and care for our students. ■



Senator Williams holds up the letters that the students wrote.



CONSERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND COMBATTING FOOD INSECURITY



In the fall I hosted a “walk and talk” at our Nature Walk event at the Latodami Nature Center in North Park. The North Park Naturalists and Allegheny County Park Rangers guided us as we learned about our invaluable park assets, the health benefits of regularly getting outdoors, and the plants and animals that live in our parks.

We discussed legislation I am introducing to increase access to parks and outdoor recreation opportunities. My legislation would eliminate the local match requirement that makes it harder for low-wealth communities to access Pennsylvania’s largest grant programs for parks, trails and greenspace. Every community should be able to benefit from the social, economic, environmental, and health benefits of green spaces.

We also talked about a bill to invest in Pennsylvania’s natural resources, SB 525, Growing Greener III, and its passage out of committee. This bill would protect Pennsylvania’s water, land, forests and other natural resources; stimulate economic growth in our communities, and improve the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians. I’m proud to co-sponsor this legislation and look forward to voting for it when it comes to the Senate floor, hopefully during this year’s budget. ■

At the end of 2021 I joined Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and North Hills Community Outreach to announce an \$11.4 million investment in grants to install cold storage and transportation facilities at food banks across Pennsylvania. These grants are funded by American Rescue Plan dollars and will significantly help food banks and their partner organizations in distributing fresh produce, meats, eggs, and milk to our neighbors who need it most.

Getting these ARP dollars into the communities that have been hardest hit by not just the pandemic, but also by factors such as the loss of reliable public transportation, the lack of healthy options available in neighborhoods, and economic downturns that began long before 2020 has been an enormous priority for me and the entire Senate Democratic Caucus. We need to spend this money in ways that give us the best return on our investment, and the Cold Storage Infrastructure Program is a perfect example of how to do this. ■



My District 38 Parks Tour kicked off Earth Week 2022 at Harrison Hills Park and I was lucky enough to stock trout with Cub Scout Pack 186 at Deer Lakes Park.

In March I joined the Highlands Partnership Network, Citizens Hose Fire Rescue EMS Company, and community members to celebrate the groundbreaking of a community garden in Natrona Heights. The community garden and future bike-share program was made possible by a DCED grant I was proud to support.



WELCOMING NEW NEIGHBORS

In May, I had the amazing opportunity to sit down with several of our region's Refugee Service Providers to hear more about the work that they've been doing to help current refugee families in our region and how they're preparing to welcome potential Ukrainian refugees. I was encouraged to hear that there are a few ways that we in the General Assembly can be helpful to the Refugee Service Providers on the state level as well. That includes providing resources to allow students to fully integrate into their new school community, updating licensing procedures to streamline their ability to continue to work in their own professions, and providing state funding to fill in the gaps where federal funding falls short. I've started to address one of these issues with SB1176, which creates the New Neighbors Fund, a \$2 million state grant program that would give service providers more flexibility to provide services as needed.

I'm so grateful for the work that these providers are doing and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with them on ways that the legislature can support their work.

I know that Pittsburghers are supportive of welcoming our new neighbors and rebuild from the trauma they've experienced. My staff and I were proud to have both of our offices serve as drop off points for the hygiene kit collection for Ukraine organized by Mayor Ed Gainey and Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. We filled a car with donations that were dropped off at Brother's Brother Foundation thanks to the generosity of our neighbors. ■



HELPING SENIORS

In April I visited the home of a resident who called my office in need of a roof repair. We connected the resident with Allegheny Valley Habitat for Humanity and Build Acres General Contractors, who provided a no-cost repair to their home. I am a co-sponsor of The Whole-Home Repairs Act (SB1135), which is a bipartisan bill that creates a one-stop shop for home repairs and weatherization while building out our workforce and creating new family-sustaining jobs in a growing field. The Whole-Home Repairs Act is the first bill of its kind in the nation, making it so that Pennsylvanians can stay warm, safe, and dry in homes they can afford. ■

INVESTING IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

In March I hosted a townhall on infrastructure. Many constituents dialed in to hear PennDOT Exec Cheryl Moon-Siriani and I talk about federal infrastructure investments and local road projects. We also heard from residents about local flooding and stormwater related issues and their water and sewer bills during the town hall. There is so much to be done when it comes to infrastructure, which is why I have introduced legislation (SB916) to invest \$300 million in

American Rescue Plan Dollars into waste, water, and stormwater projects to help reduce flooding and landslide without increasing your water bills. And I'm also working on legislation to assist residents in paying their heating and cooling bills. ■



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Senator Williams and staff will be at neighborhood and municipal Community Days across Senate District 38 throughout the summer! Look for our table and stop by to say hi, ask a question, or get resources!

JULY 6

Demystifying Harrisburg: What's in the Budget
6 p.m. Virtual

JULY 16

Free Shredding Event

with Representative Sara Innamorato
9 a.m. – 11 a.m. • Kiwanis Park, Shaler Township

JULY 21

Demystifying Harrisburg: Making Utilities Work for You with the PA Office of Consumer Advocate
6 p.m. Virtual

AUGUST 10

Small Business Resource Fair

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. • The Union Project

AUGUST 13

Free Shredding Event

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. • Lauri Ann West Community Center

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NEWSLETTER**

FOR FREE RAPID COVID-19 TESTS FROM USPS,
VISIT: **USPIS.GOV/COVIDTESTS**