



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE **BRIAN SMITH**



## DEAR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS,

I hope you all enjoyed a safe and happy holiday season, and a great start to 2024! My team and I have been gearing up for another year full of events to make life a little easier in the 66th Legislative District.

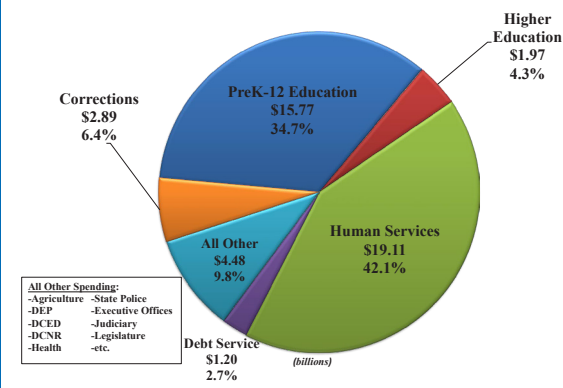
In 2023, the House passed my bill to restart a Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement program that allows minors to take part in compliance checks. This legislation is vital to ensure our liquor establishments are not serving underage buyers. The House Transportation Committee approved my bill to allow the use of safety cables when towing vehicles, in addition to the safety chains currently allowed by law. I've also proposed legislation to legalize UTVs (commonly known as side-by-sides) for street use in Pennsylvania. Most importantly, I've fought to defend our constitutional right to own firearms. I've voted against several bills trying to criminalize perfectly legal gun ownership, and I will continue to oppose any attempts to infringe upon our right to bear arms.

Just like last year, my team and I are ready to serve you. If you have any state-related issues, please feel free to reach out to my office. We're always ready to help!

Warm regards,

Brian Smith

### 2023-24 Enacted Budget \$45.42 Billion



## STATE BUDGET COMPLETED SIX MONTHS LATE

In mid-December, the state budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 was finalized nearly six months late due to the failed leadership of House Democrats who delayed adoption of the final elements of the \$45.42 billion spending plan.

The budget process took far too long and negatively impacted the implementation of several key initiatives and prevented distribution of funding for community colleges, public libraries, career and technical schools, and more.

### POSITIVES

This budget spends a historic amount of money on education, and I am pleased it also makes a significant investment in career and technical centers.

A few of the other items now in place with completion of the budget include:

- **REAUTHORIZATION OF FUNDING** for county 911 systems, as well as a fee increase from \$1.65 to \$1.95 to meet the expanding cost of services to counties.
- **FUNDING** for an additional 100 Pennsylvania State Police troopers to help make our communities safer.
- **CREATION** of a new Public School Facility Improvement Grant Program to support critical school infrastructure and facility improvements.
- **AN ADDITIONAL \$20 MILLION** for county mental health programs, and \$100 million for K-12 mental health programs for schools.
- **AN ADDITIONAL \$150 MILLION** for education tax credits to provide student scholarships to students through two existing programs.

## PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE EXPANSION

More Pennsylvania seniors and people with disabilities are eligible for increased property tax or rent relief this year under a new law I supported in 2023.

Under the expanded program, the maximum rebate increased to \$1,000. Income eligibility also increased to \$45,000 annually for both homeowners and renters. Remember to exclude 50% of Social Security when calculating income.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits eligible residents 65 years and older; widows and widowers 50 years and older; and people with disabilities 18 years and older. First-time filers must submit proof of age, and proof of permanent disability or a copy of your spouse's death certificate if applicable.

Acceptable proof of age includes birth certificates, state-issued ID and passports. Acceptable proof of permanent disability includes award letters, letters from the Veterans Administration and a Physician's Statement of Permanent Disability (PA-1000 PS). A complete list of acceptable documents can be found at **RepSmith.com** under the "resources" tab.

Applicants should also bring their 2023 proof of income. Homeowners need to bring paid property tax receipts, while renters should bring a completed rent certification.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**BRIAN SMITH**

66<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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## CONCEALED CARRY SEMINAR

I'm hosting a Concealed Carry Seminar on Thursday, April 11, from 6–8 p.m., at the Sigel Fire Hall on PA-949. Law enforcement officials, legal experts and representatives from state agencies will be on hand to give you the facts about Pennsylvania's concealed carry laws and Castle Doctrine. Please RSVP at [RepSmith.com/events](http://RepSmith.com/events).



## DEDICATING A BRIDGE TO A **LOCAL HERO**

I was honored to take part in the service to dedicate the State Route 2019 bridge over Mahoning Creek in Bell Township to a local hero. SP4 Michael Ishman was killed in action while serving our country during the Vietnam War.

I hope this dedication will ensure that we remember Ishman's sacrifice for another half-century, and many more centuries to come.