



HARRISBURG *Report*

From State Senator
Stewart J. Greenleaf

SPRING 2013

Dear Friends,

2013 begins a new two-year legislative session for the General Assembly. This session, the Legislature will focus on funding the modernization of our state's aged transportation infrastructure, as well as reforming the state's public employee retirement systems.

The state's revenues over the past year have reflected an improvement in the economy, and we are on track to have a budget surplus by the end of the fiscal year. As a result, the budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 includes increases to public education and early childhood education programs. I will work to ensure the passage of these funding increases for education. As always, I invite all of the constituents of the 12th District to contact me with any comments, questions, or requests for assistance with any state-related matters. I look forward to seeing many of you throughout the district this year.

Sincerely,

Stewart J. Greenleaf
Stewart J. Greenleaf

The 2013/2014 State Budget

Each spring, the Legislative caucuses and the Governor negotiate a balanced state budget which is to be approved by June 30th. Pennsylvania's State Constitution requires our budget to be balanced, meaning that the money we spend each fiscal year cannot exceed our revenue collections. As a result, Pennsylvania does not take on massive debt, and each year's spending is a reflection of our state's economic productivity. However, this also causes much debate over how to spend a well defined amount of public funds. Throughout the year, the Senate Appropriations Committee closely monitors tax revenue collections to anticipate any shortage or surplus that will directly shape budget negotiations.

This year, we are seeing state tax revenues bounce back from the recent recession-caused shortfalls of 2009 through 2011. It is estimated that we will see a \$232 million revenue surplus by the end of the current fiscal year. The proposed budget for next fiscal year (2013/2014) is \$28.4 billion. This would be an increase of \$679 million, or 2.4 percent, from the current fiscal year.

This is a significant increase, being that only a few years ago the state faced a \$4 billion budget deficit. We overcame this

significant budget shortfall without raising taxes.

As spending priorities are set each spring, the majority of state spending goes toward the same top expenditures. The six largest appropriations each exceed \$1 billion and total \$13.9 billion, or 50.35% of the General Fund total. These appropriations for the 2012-2013 Budget include:

2012 – 2013 Top Budget Expenditures:

Basic Education	\$5,403,629,000
Medical Assistance/Managed Care	\$3,780,674,000
State Correctional Institutions	\$1,579,973,000
Debt Service	\$1,094,332,000
County Child Welfare	\$1,040,029,000
Special Education	\$1,026,815,000



September 7, 2012—Senator Greenleaf spoke at the re-opening of the newly restored Limekiln Pike Bridge over Little Neshaminy Creek in Montgomery County.

Mass Transportation

As a Senate appointee to the SEPTA board, I play a role in directing the future of mass transportation in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Incorporating new technology will help encourage more ridership and enable SEPTA to expand its positive impact on our region. Regional rail lines are a critical part of our region's transportation infrastructure, reducing wear and tear on roads and bridges and reducing harmful, polluting emissions.

SEPTA Smart Card

SEPTA will soon begin installing its long-awaited "New Payment" fare collection system, which will be available early next year on subways, buses, and trolleys. For Regional Rail, the system will be ready in mid-2014.

This will be an open system, accepting a variety of payment options including credit / debit cards, and any devices containing smart chip technology such as ID Cards, and NFC-enabled cell phones. Customers will still have the option to use cash. SEPTA purchased a license to leverage the system to smaller transit agencies across Pennsylvania as well as neighboring PATCO and Dart First State.

High Speed Rail

High speed rail lines can have an enormous positive economic impact on the communities they access. SEPTA is currently evaluating various alternatives for a rail connection from the high-speed line between 69th St. in Philadelphia and Norristown to destinations in King of Prussia and Upper Merion Township in Montgomery County.

I would like to see additional high speed connections to various communities and employment centers throughout our region to enhance commerce and encourage more ridership. Visit www.SEPTA.org to plan a trip.



November 2, 2012—Senator Greenleaf sponsored legislation to name the Rt. 202 Parkway Bridge in Montgomery Township after recently retired Montgomery Township Police Chief, Richard J. Brady. From Left: Chief Richard J. Brady; Senator Greenleaf; State Rep. Kate Harper.

Supporting Education

The proposed budget for next fiscal year would increase spending for both basic education and early childhood education programs. Basic education would see an increase of \$90 million, which would bring the total amount of education funding to \$5.49 billion. Nearly \$11.5 million in new money is allocated for early childhood education programs.

As budget negotiations continue, I will advocate to uphold these funding increases. Early childhood education funding is among my top priorities. Studies have shown that investments in

early childhood education programs have positive impacts throughout a child's life. They are far less likely to rely on public assistance, are more likely to complete secondary education and progress to higher education. These programs not only improve the economic well being of those who participate, but they result in less government resources spent on corrections and social services. Behavioral problems are addressed while they can be more easily corrected, and literacy is dramatically increased.

Basic education funding has been reduced in recent years, partly because fed-

eral stimulus dollars are no longer available. Today, we are finally seeing restorations made to our public schools. Public education expenses are on the rise due to the rising cost of healthcare and public pension obligations. Basic education funding is always the number one expense in the state budget, representing about 35 percent of the total budget. The Legislature must see to it that our schools are sufficiently funded to remain competitive.



January 24, 2013— Senator Greenleaf speaks about his legislation to fight human trafficking with the Network of Victims Assistance (NOVA) of Bucks County.



February 22, 2013— Senator Greenleaf presents a Senate Citation to Ann's Choice Retirement Community Executive Director, Chris Donati in honor of the organization's 10th Anniversary.



February 13, 2013— Senator Greenleaf meets with members of the Auto Theft Prevention Authority at the State Capitol. The Senator's legislation to assist law enforcement in cracking down on auto theft in Pennsylvania recently became law.



February 11, 2013— Senator Greenleaf greets the Stover Scholars from Waynesburg University on the Senate Floor.



November 5, 2012— Senator Greenleaf spoke during the grand opening celebration for the Route 202 Parkway.



February 20, 2013— Senator Greenleaf questions a witness during a budget hearing.

Keystone Works Program

The new Keystone Works Program, recently established by the Legislature, provides opportunities for unemployed workers to receive training with an employer while continuing to re-

ceive unemployment compensation benefits.

Training plans are developed by businesses and approved by the Department of Labor & Industry (L&I). Training programs can be up to 24 hours per week for up to eight weeks. Trainings are for open positions in high priority occupations (HPOs), which are in demand by employers, usually require high level skills, and are likely to provide family-sustaining wages.

If the business decides to hire the individual at the conclusion of the training, the business is eligible for a monetary incentive of \$375

for every four weeks the individual remains employed full-time (at least 35 hours/week) up to a total of \$1,500.

Claimants benefit by having the opportunity to turn job-specific training into full-time employment and by gaining marketable skills. Businesses benefit by being matched with prescreened, qualified claimants for their open positions, determining the training plan that best fits their needs, and being eligible for incentives for hiring those who complete the program.

More detailed program guidelines and information about participating in Keystone Works can be found by visiting www.dli.state.pa.us/keystoneworks.



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