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Budget, Infrastructure and Election Reforms Top Fall Agenda

By Rep. Dan Moul (R-Adams)

Taking Aim at Transportation Funding Shortfalls

As a state representative, I am acutely aware of the need to restore Pennsylvania's transportation infrastructure to ensure public safety, reduce traffic congestion and strengthen mass transit systems. I am also aware of the enormous costs associated with these improvements and the need to find revenue sources to pay for them.

The House Transportation Committee is currently considering a package of bills stemming from the House Transportation Task Force, formed last year to address our transportation funding needs. In its report, the task force outlined the reasons for shortfalls in our transportation funding streams and produced a series of recommendations to address these deficiencies.

Since 2012, about \$4.5 billion has been transferred from the Motor License Fund to the Pennsylvania State Police, leaving insufficient funding for transportation infrastructure projects that would be paid out of the fund. **Act 89 of 2013**, which increased the state's gas tax to fix our crumbling roads and bridges, has failed to raise the revenue anticipated due to low gas prices and greater auto fuel-efficiency.

Another significant change occurred with **Act 44 of 2007**, which required the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) to transfer \$450 million annually to PennDOT for transportation capital needs. This forced the PTC to finance the debt payments, sharply increase tolls and the PTC's debt load - now at \$13 billion. When the turnpike's obligation to PennDOT drops to \$50 million in 2022, it will create a large funding gap in the General Fund.

Legislation now before the committee stems from task force recommendations and focuses on generating reliable funding sources to provide for our current and future transportation infrastructure needs. To learn more, visit pahousegop.com/transportation.

2020 Election Update

The June 2 spring primary was the first election in which Pennsylvania voters were permitted to vote by mail-in ballot without an excuse to do so. To help expedite election results, the new law permitted counties to begin processing absentee and mail-in ballots at 7 a.m. on Election Day, with counting starting at the close of the polls.

Higher than expected numbers of mail-in ballots, coupled with a court ruling permitting mail-in ballots postmarked on Election Day but not received for as long as a week later to be counted, resulted in delayed election returns in several races.

Since the volume of mail-in ballots is expected to be far greater in the Nov. 3 General Election, legislation I sponsored, which is contained in another pending bill, would permit earlier processing of mail-in ballots with counting to begin when polls open on Election Day. When we return to session in early September, we will address this legislation and other measures to ensure the integrity of our elections.

For more information, including deadlines and to obtain a mail-in ballot application, contact my district office, the Adams County Board of Elections or go to www.votespa.com.

Plans to Revisit 2020-21 State Budget

In May, the General Assembly passed a \$25.8 billion short-term budget to fund state government while we better assess the fiscal realities of the COVID-19 pandemic and work on another short-term plan to fund the balance of the fiscal year. The inability to forecast state

revenues during the pandemic led us to a plan that fully funds preK-12 education and human services for the entire fiscal year but funds many other expenditures only through November. We expect to be called back this fall to complete the budget.

New Law Allows Seniors to Volunteer, Save on School Taxes

I supported legislation, recently signed into law, which allows senior citizens to volunteer at their local schools in exchange for a reduction in their property tax burden. This is a practice already employed by some school districts around the Commonwealth, but I voted for **Act 20 of 2020** because it codifies this practice, making it easier for older citizens to trade their time for much-needed school property tax relief.

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