



Frank Burns

State Representative

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Burns: Stop making Johnstown a destination for people seeking public housing

Presses JHA to come clean on 'equity plan' for building new projects

- Johnstown has five times the amount of public housing units as other cities its size.
- 80 families per month (mainly from Philadelphia) are moving to Johnstown just to live in public housing.
- 50% of the JHA's 1,504 public housing units are occupied by people who came from outside Cambria County.
- \$12,500 is the average household income of those relocating here for public housing.
- Many of these residents stay long enough to obtain a Section 8 voucher, then return to where they came from, sticking the JHA with a rent bill that has reached \$1.8 million per year.



Representing Johnstown for the first time, Rep. Burns didn't wait long to tackle long-simmering problems with the Johnstown Housing Authority.

Rep. Burns has called for a HUD audit of the Section 8 Program to help slam shut this revolving door. He's also called on the JHA to "right size" by tearing down excess public housing, instead of maintaining five times as many units as other cities Johnstown's size.

To get to the bottom of things, Rep. Burns has sought documents and emails from the JHA and HUD using the state Right-to-Know Law and federal Freedom of Information Act.

Rep. Burns has been on the front lines seeking answers as the JHA suddenly emptied out its 110-unit Prospect public housing community, citing "structural deficiencies" that included ceilings in danger

of collapse. Rep. Burns even showed up at a JHA meeting with Prospect tenants to discuss the forced evacuation – but he was told by a JHA official that he wasn't allowed to attend.

As the situation has morphed into a potential \$50 million total redevelopment of the Prospect, Oakhurst and Coopersdale public housing complexes, which total 631 units, Rep. Burns has been the only voice on another key issue.

Rep. Burns is currently pressing the JHA to answer how it intends to comply with an "equity plan" pushed by the Biden administration as a condition of receiving HUD funding.

Rep. Burns says there are strings attached to the money – and on behalf of those who live in other municipalities he wants to know if any of those 631 public housing units would be rebuilt outside of Johnstown, in places such as Richland, Westmont, Upper Yoder or Ebensburg.

"Cambria County would be much better off if we focused more on importing 80 jobs each month instead of 80 additional public housing residents."

- Rep. Frank Burns



Burns' clout increases as new Majority Chairman of House Professional Licensure Committee

Economic development, consumer protections top focus

Continuing his steady upward trek as a bipartisan force in the House of Representatives, Rep. Burns in March was elevated to the top position on the Professional Licensure Committee.

As its new Majority Chairman, Rep. Burns leads the committee that oversees 29 professional and occupational licensing boards, encompassing 120 state-licensed jobs

in varied occupations from doctors and nurses, to barbers and car dealers, to pharmacists, accountants and crane operators.

Rep. Burns knows from experience that it takes working with everyone to get things done in Harrisburg – so he's throwing the paralyzing partisan divide out the proverbial window.

He's pledging to work with Republican

state Rep. Carl Metzger, the committee's minority chairman, and colleagues from both parties to ensure common sense prevails in Pennsylvania's professional licensing laws.

Burns also serves as Democratic chairman and founder of the Blue Lives Matter Caucus as well as Democratic chairman of the Second Amendment, Steel, Coal and Rural Health caucuses.

“As chairman, I’ll be determining which bills come before the committee for a vote, which will require balancing economic development with consumer and patient protection. I’m up to the task.”

– Rep. Frank Burns

Burns stands strong for Second Amendment rights

Don't believe anyone who spins it otherwise

It takes guts to be the only House Democrat to vote against three bills that dilute your Second Amendment rights – but that's what Rep. Burns did in May.

On one of them, his vote stopped a bill that would have imposed criminal charges on a gun owner for not reporting a lost or stolen firearm within 72 hours. Without Rep. Burns' vote, that bill would have passed the House.

Despite how his foes try to spin it, Rep. Burns stands up for law-abiding gun owners over criminals and the “progressive agenda.” He ALWAYS chooses policy over party – and as these comments show, his constituents appreciate that independent streak.



I took an oath to defend the Constitution.

Charles R Mangus
Thank you for standing up for the Constitution and being true to your oath.
3w Like Reply 5

Brandy Scaife Houghton
Thank you for standing your ground. Your actions give me hope for your party. More laws will not help...the criminals don't care about them. Killing and assaulting someone is already against the law and they still do that.
2w Like Reply 5

Adina Horner
I am glad you vote for what you think is right as opposed to voting along party lines.
2w Like Reply 1

Rick Dakota Kempf
I was kind of nervous when the lines got redrawn and we lost Jim... but but I'm actually impressed with the common sense Frank has had as well. Vote the policy.. not the party
3w Like Reply 2

Burns makes Vision 2025 see the light

Elected officials step down from nonprofit's board

From the start of Vision Together 2025's Afghan refugee plan controversy, Rep. Burns said it was a conflict of interest for elected officials, government employees and the Tribune-Democrat newspaper publisher to serve on the nonprofit corporation's board of directors.

Rep. Burns took a bold stance, calling for them to step down because they couldn't fully represent the public while wearing two hats – saying what needed to be said while others remained silent.

Rep. Burns proved that one man's voice and resolve can make a difference, as first the newspaper publisher left to become Vision 2025's executive director, then in short order elected and agency officials quit their roles as voting board members.

His battle on your behalf isn't over, as Rep. Burns continues to call on Vision 2025 to open its board meetings to the public, in the name of full transparency.

"If Vision 2025 is truly community-driven – and is more than just a political propaganda organization – they should prove it by opening up their board meetings to the public. Why are they so afraid of doing that, unless they are hiding something?"

– Rep. Frank Burns



Rep. Burns participated in the "Shop with a Cop" program and believes the excitement and gratitude shown by the kids embodied the Christmas spirit.

Burns comes through with \$112,000 for Ebensburg

Effort makes 2-year-old dog park project a reality

As part of \$1.2 million secured by Rep. Burns to build and improve parks, streets and sidewalks, Ebensburg received \$112,000 to help complete a project that was under development for more than two years.

The 1.5-acre Ebensburg Borough & Community dog park includes pavilions, parking and fencing – and is another example of a locally initiated project where Rep. Burns steps in to help whenever and wherever he can.

Rep. Burns was eager to do his part, working with the borough and the Ebensburg Rotary club to finally make the project happen.



"Our goal here is to provide a safe place for dogs and people to socialize and exercise within a 20-mile radius of Ebensburg. This grant will enable us to begin the process of constructing the park and making it a reality for the citizens of our area."

– Jim White, Ebensburg Rotary



Burns brings back \$300 million in grants

Capitalizing on his experience and seniority, Rep. Burns has delivered \$300 million in grant funding to the district – including \$4 million so far in 2023 alone.



- ✓ **\$200,000 to the Johnstown Police Department** to purchase a mobile crime unit.
- ✓ **\$1.1 million in criminal justice grants** to help Cambria County, including **\$759,718 for Johnstown Police Department equipment.**

“Thankfully, with the help of Representative Burns and his determination to lowering crime in the area and assisting us, he was able to help us secure funding for this project.”

- Capt. Chad Miller, Johnstown Police Department



\$148,400 in state funding to Upper Yoder Township for a project to update the Elim Street Playground.



\$500,000 for the Bottle Works to fund building renovations at a significant community asset.

\$214,000 in Safe Schools Targeted Grants



Forest Hills School District



\$55,650 for First Summit Arena to upgrade seating at the 4,000-seat entertainment venue.



Westmont Hilltop School District



\$100,000 to Conemaugh Valley School District to help fund their football stadium lighting project.

Burns presents Jackson Township grants

\$3 million for IBEW Local Union 126's training school

\$2,310,634 for Jackson Township Volunteer Fire Co.'s new fire station



"Ever since taking office, I've made it a priority to ensure that our area gets its fair share of funding. Working with municipal leaders, we have been highly successful in securing funding for local projects."

- Rep. Frank Burns

Burns negotiates extra \$1 million for area public schools

Obtains more funding while taxes remain unchanged

As evidence of his effectiveness in Harrisburg, Rep. Burns managed to get an extra \$1 million for four local school districts in last year's state budget – even as there were no new taxes AND state spending on public education was already at a record high!

These Ready-to-Learn grant recipients were:

- Greater Johnstown School District, \$500,000
- Westmont Hilltop School District, \$200,000
- Central Cambria School District, \$200,000
- Conemaugh Valley School District, \$100,000

The grants can be used for full-day kindergarten or pre-K programs, reducing class sizes in kindergarten through grade 3, providing tutoring assistance, and increasing career awareness programs – all of which benefit students' learning experience.



"I was able to negotiate this additional funding into the state's surplus budget, and this money will be spent in the classroom benefiting local children."

- Rep. Frank Burns



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Burns wants all state jobs posted online

Believing that everyone deserves an equal shot at state employment, Rep. Burns introduced a “Fair Chance” bill that would require online posting of all taxpayer-funded state job openings.

Rep. Burns said that all too often, such job availabilities never see the light of day as they are filled internally – giving a huge advantage to those already on the payroll, and bureaucrats and others who are in-the-know.

Openness and transparency in hiring, Rep. Burns believes, will expand the applicant pool and position the state to hire the best-qualified employees.

“My bill would make great strides in curbing the nepotism or favoritism that so often plagues state government. It also would help ensure that the state is able to hire the best-qualified person for the job.”

– Rep. Frank Burns



As a lifelong Pittsburgh Steelers fan, Rep. Burns will always remember catching “The Bus” at a Johnstown Tomahawks game at 1st Summit Arena, when he ran into Jerome Bettis, and being lucky enough to share a Terrible Towel with Franco Harris in the Capitol shortly before the legend’s death.

