

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

ARVIND VENKAT, MD

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Passing a Budget to Move Pennsylvania Forward

Thanks to the work of members on both sides of the aisle and with my affirmative vote, the House passed the budget with bipartisan support in early July. Although signing was delayed in the state Senate, the budget finally made it to the governor's desk and is now law.

No budget is perfect, but I joined my colleagues in supporting the budget for 2023-24 because it includes critical funding for our schools and for programs that will provide real help for residents.

Education funding is a main highlight, and the new plan will benefit students in our district by bringing funding increases of:

- \$4.34 million for the Avonworth School District.
- \$7.69 million for the Hampton School District.
- \$17.26 million for the North Allegheny School District.

With these investments in public schools in the 30th Legislative District, we may begin to fairly fund school districts without increasing property taxes, which reduces the burden on taxpayers in our district.

The budget also invests more than \$238.8 million in the Department of Health, which will allow us to fund programs to aid local health departments, address maternal health, and so much more to improve the health and well-being of Pennsylvanians.



“The increase in state funding is a down payment so that the state may begin to meet its obligation on public education without increasing property taxes, which in return reduces the burden on taxpayers in McCandless, Franklin Park, Ohio Township, Kilbuck, Emsworth, Ben Avon, Ben Avon Heights and western Hampton Township.”

- Rep. Arvind Venkat, MD

Hello neighbor,

I'm writing today to update you on some of the ways I'm working both in Harrisburg and right here at home to improve life in our community. I'm proud to represent you and the 64,000 residents of our district, which includes Hampton, Kilbuck, McCandless, and Ohio Townships and Ben Avon, Ben Avon Heights, Emsworth, and Franklin Park Boroughs. I've heard from many of you, and I always consider your concerns when voting on legislation in the House.

Since taking office in January, I have been working to increase funding for our public schools without increasing property taxes, reform cyber charter schools to save our public schools money, invest in the Department of Health to support health care initiatives, pass common-sense gun safety legislation, expand civil liberty protections for the LGBTQ+ community, and alleviate medical debt for Pennsylvanians. In this time of political division, I have successfully worked with colleagues across the ideological spectrum to find bipartisan solutions to the many issues facing our community and the commonwealth.

As always, you can contact me about your concerns. My staff is available to assist you with PennDOT services, unemployment compensation, Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications, unclaimed property through the Pennsylvania Treasury, the Prescription Assistance Programs PACE and PACENET, and many other state services.

Arvind Venkat

Rep. Arvind Venkat, MD
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License Plate Peeling Event



Earlier this summer, I worked with AAA to host an event to help motorists determine if their license plates are illegible and help them apply for a free replacement, if necessary. Allegheny County and Port Authority Police also attended to inspect license plates and sign forms. The event was a great success, and we plan on holding another event like this on Saturday, October 28 in Ohio Township. Please see page 4 for details about the event, which will also offer child car seat safety checks.

Working to Alleviate Medical Debt

As an emergency physician, I've witnessed patients delay medical care due to rising costs, to the point that they are dying as a result of untreated medical conditions. To address the problem, I introduced the Medical Debt Relief Act, which would help alleviate the impact of crushing medical debt that hurts families and discourages doctor visits.

My bill, H.B. 78, would establish the Medical Debt Relief Program within the Department of Health

to discharge the medical debt of eligible residents by contracting with a medical debt coordinator. Pennsylvanians would be eligible for relief if they have a household income at or below 400% of federal poverty guidelines or medical debt equal to 5% or more of their household income. The legislation would also require hospitals to make patients aware of their charity care programs, assist eligible patients with applying for charity care, and hold these patients' bills in

abeyance until eligibility is verified.

Thanks to members on both sides of the aisle, the House passed the Medical Debt Relief Act with bipartisan support. Now, it is being considered in the Senate. This bill is an opportunity to alleviate medical debt for working Pennsylvanians, improve health care institutions and providers' finances, and reduce the costs for all Pennsylvanians. It is my hope that the Senate will pass the Medical Debt Relief Act and send it to Governor Josh Shapiro's desk.

Reforming Cyber Charter Schools and Helping Public Schools

Private cyber charter schools operate with little accountability, and the lack of any checks on their spending ends up draining critical funding from our public schools – and hurting taxpayers. House Bill 1422, sponsored by Rep. Joe Ciresi, D-Montgomery, would reform cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania. The bill would annually set a cyber charter tuition rate; implement a tiered Special Education Fair

Funding Formula currently used by public schools for cyber charter schools; require transparency and reasonable restrictions for advertising, sponsorships, and other expenses not related to student learning; cap unassigned fund balances; provide wellness checks for students to ensure their wellbeing and verify participation; require cyber charter school meetings to follow the Sunshine Act;

eliminate conflicts of interest; and require ethical reporting standards.

The bill passed with my affirmative vote and bipartisan support. If enacted into law, it would allow us to generate an estimated savings of up to \$134,979 in 2024-25 for the Avonworth School District, \$439,214 in 2024-25 for the Hampton Township School District, and \$775,092 in 2024-25 for the North Allegheny School District.



Little Medical School

I recently had the privilege of teaching children in our community about responding to medical emergencies by instructing them on how to use EpiPens, perform the Heimlich maneuver, and help someone having a seizure. As an emergency physician, I know that medical emergencies can feel scary to those involved, so it's important to be prepared to respond!

Rep. Dan Miller's 10th Annual Disability and Mental Health Summit

In May, I attended Rep. Dan Miller's 10th Disability and Mental Health Summit. Making our community more inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities and mental health needs are important priorities for all of us. I will continue to work with Rep. Miller and House Democratic Caucus leaders to address these issues.



Bringing Dollars Back to Our District

Since taking office, I have helped bring more than \$4.8 million in state grants back to our district to fund projects and services. The funding includes:

- More than \$1.2 million to Northland Public Library to renovate the library's entrance, replace stairs, improve operations, install equipment, and upgrade security systems.
- \$500,000 to Franklin Park Borough to build a new public works garage.
- \$500,000 to McCandless to improve the Town Hall.
- \$100,000 to the Hampton Township Police Department, the McCandless-Franklin Park Ambulance Authority, Ohio Township Police Department, and the Emsworth Volunteer Fire Department for vital equipment.



My legislative door-knocking is an important way for me to connect with residents and learn what's on their minds, whether it involves securing funding for our state-related universities such as the University of Pittsburgh, growing our area's economy with more businesses, addressing road concerns, or other issues. These conversations help me consider how I address your concerns locally and also when I'm in Harrisburg. I look forward to continuing my door-knocking and getting to know more folks in our community in the months ahead.

“ I became aware of the PRT Senior ConnectCard through a friend, and I asked Rep. Venkat's staffer during his satellite office hours at the Emsworth Borough Building. The process was easy-peasy - a few questions were answered, photo taken, and at the next office visit, Catherine brought my ConnectCard with her. Having a staff member from Rep. Venkat's office is such a bonus to us in this part of the district. His staff is knowledgeable, friendly, and eager to help. ”
- Cathy, resident of Emsworth



How Can My Office Help You?

When I'm in the district, my staff and I continue to work for YOU! So far this year, we have helped solve more than 5,000 issues for residents!

We are available to help with:

- ➔ PennDOT services
- ➔ Unemployment compensation
- ➔ Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications
- ➔ Unclaimed property through the Pennsylvania Treasury
- ➔ Prescription Assistance
- ➔ And so much more

Call my district office or visit us so that we can assist you! You also can sign up for my weekly e-newsletter at my website - www.RepVenkat.com - to get regular updates about my work and important events in our community.

**9800B McKnight Road, Suite 130
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
(412) 348-8028**

My office also hosts satellite office hours:

**Second and fourth
Monday of the month
9 a.m. to Noon**

**Emsworth Borough Building
171 Center Avenue
Emsworth, PA 15202**

In August, we'll host satellite office hours on Monday, August 28. I hope to see you there!



Joining the Bipartisan Caucus

As your state representative, I intend to work for all residents, regardless of political affiliation, and I expect my fellow lawmakers to do the same. It is important that legislators on both sides of the aisle meet in the middle to work together to pass legislation that helps all Pennsylvanians. I am proud to be a member of the Bipartisan Caucus with a goal of finding common ground, regardless of political affiliation.



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30TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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PLEASE JOIN **REPRESENTATIVE VENKAT** FOR A
FREE COMMUNITY SHRED DAY



SATURDAY, AUGUST 26
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
FRANKLIN PARK BOROUGH BUILDING
2344 WEST INGOMAR ROAD, PITTSBURGH,
PA 15237

PAPER ONLY!
LET US HELP GIVE YOU A GREENER SENSE OF SECURITY (AND ORGANIZATION!)

Rep. Arvind Venkat and Senator Lindsey Williams



FREE
COMMUNITY SHRED DAY

 **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

 **NORTH PARK-OREGON SHELTER**
NORTH RIDGE DRIVE, ALLISON
PARK, PA 15101



PAPER ONLY!
LET US HELP GIVE YOU A GREENER SENSE OF SECURITY (AND ORGANIZATION!)




PLEASE JOIN **REPRESENTATIVE VENKAT** FOR A
VEHICLE SAFETY EVENT // **SATURDAY, OCT 28**
12 PM - 2:30 PM

 **OHIO TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY**
1520 ROOSEVELT ROAD, PITTSBURGH, PA 15237

CAR SEAT SAFETY CHECKS | LICENSE PLATE PEELING REPLACEMENT

Open House
In Celebration of
Diwali
Hindu Festival of Lights

Sunday, November 12
1 PM - 3 PM

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