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PA Budget Invests in Education

By State Rep. Joe Emrick

SLATE BELT - The 2022-23 state budget continues our efforts to support educational opportunities for children throughout Pennsylvania, whether they attend a traditional public school, a public charter school or a private/parochial school.

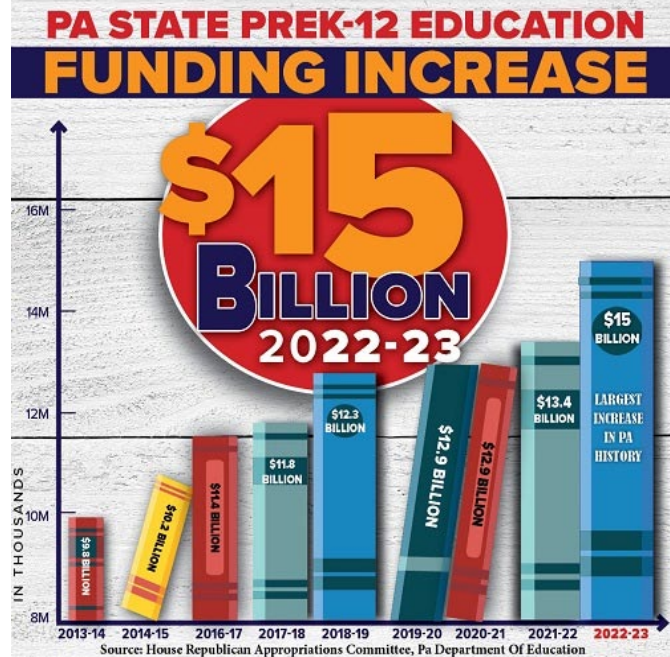
This year's budget sets a record high investment in Pre-K-12 education of \$15 billion. We increased basic education funding by \$525 million to \$7.08 billion, including a \$225 million "Level Up" initiative that provides additional funding to the poorest 100 school districts. Special education funding is up by \$100 million to \$1.3 billion.

We increased funding for early childhood education by \$60 million for Pre-K Counts and \$19 million for Head Start. Career and technical education is up by \$6 million. We dedicated \$100 million for school safety and security funding and a first-time investment of \$100 million for a new school mental health initiative.

To help give students more options, we increased funding for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program to \$405 million, an additional \$125 million or 45% increase. The program provides tax credits to eligible businesses that contribute to a scholarship organization, educational improvement organization, and/or a pre-kindergarten scholarship organization.

Finally, the budget supports students seeking a higher education by increasing the maximum PHEAA grant award from \$5,000 to \$5,700, as well as boosting funding for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and community colleges.

Learn more at PAHouseGOP.com/statebudget.



Conservation Tip

Aquatic invasive species are plants and animals that have been introduced into new ecosystems and have environmental, recreational, economic, or health impacts.

These invaders may damage equipment and compete with native species. Anglers and boaters may unknowingly introduce aquatic invasive species into new waters.

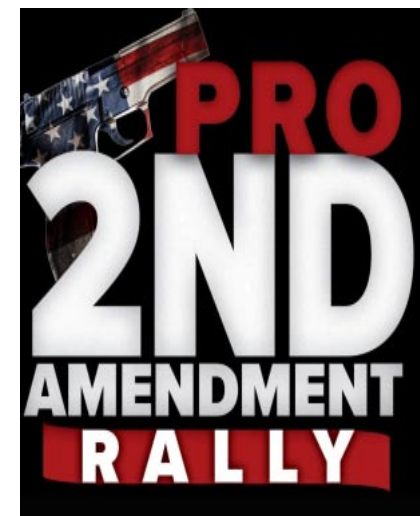
You can help stop aquatic invasive hitchhikers by following these simple steps:

Check and inspect every inch of your boat, trailer, and fishing gear.

Drain water from all equipment before leaving the area you are visiting. Some species may live for months in water that has not been removed.

Clean, remove, and leave behind plants, mud, and aquatic life. Many aquatic invasive species can't be seen and are microscopic. It's important to clean your gear even if it doesn't appear to have anything on it.

Dry equipment to the touch, and then allow it to dry another 48 hours. Thick and dense material like life jackets and felt-soled wading gear will hold moisture longer, take longer to dry, and can be more difficult to clean.



Second Amendment Rally Set for Sept. 12

By State Rep. Ann Flood

SLATE BELT - The Rally to Protect Your Right to Keep and Bear Arms is coming up on Monday, Sept. 12, starting at 10 a.m. on the front steps of the state Capitol building in Harrisburg. The event is held rain or shine. The rally attracts supporters from around the state who are united in their mission to protect this important constitutional right.

Fidelity Bank

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over six years. Slate Belt Rising Community Plan 2022-2028 consists of three interconnected project focus areas:

- Vibrant Economic Climate
- Quality, Affordable Housing
- Regional Cooperation and Community Engagement

Thanks to Fidelity Bank's investment in the community, SBR will have the capacity to continue offering its various programs and creating tangible impact in the four boroughs and throughout the Slate Belt region.

SBR's new director, Vincent Behe, started his new position this past June. Prior to moving into the director role, Vincent was the Planner for Slate Belt Rising, assisting with program planning, fund development and contract compliance. He is a lifelong Lehigh Valley resident and attended Lehigh University, obtaining both a BA in History and an MA in Environmental Policy. Vincent looks forward to inspiring others and sparking an enthusiasm for community service as he works with community partners and the great people of the Slate Belt to execute the new plan.

Our mission is to galvanize the boroughs to capitalize on their shared heritage and traditions, the natural beauty of the Slate Belt, and the commercial potential provided by the proximity to major roadways in order to increase economic opportunity in the region, reduce poverty, eliminate blight, and improve the overall quality of life.