

Editorial: Our Children Deserve Better — Pass the State Budget Now

Two of the Elk County schools — Ridgway, and Johnsonburg — stand together today to voice what every parent, teacher, and community member already know: our children deserve better.

As you are all aware the 2025/2026 State Budget stalemate continues as of today October 21, 2025. We are the ONLY state in the nation that is yet to pass a fiscal budget which is the most important function of our state legislature. While the bickering from side to side continues, as well as the reluctance to continue deliberation until the budget is delivered, taxpayers are carrying the burden. Since July 1, 2025 the House has been in session 23 days, the Senate has been in session 12 days, there have been approximately 78 calendar workdays since July 1 - while it is understood that legislators need to spend time in their respective communities recess prior to the completion of a required State Budget should not take place until said budget is passed and signed by the Governor, this is what you are elected to do.

As the state budget impasse continues in Harrisburg, the consequences are being felt far from the Capitol walls — right here in our classrooms, cafeterias, and playgrounds. The absence of a finalized state budget is not an abstract political problem; it is a growing crisis that affects real students, real families, and real futures in our communities.

Schools, Community Services, Local Governments, Social Services are being put in a situation where they are forced to deplete reserves and consider borrowing money to fund the bare minimum operation – this will come at a cost and unfortunately consideration will have to be given regarding how to fund that additional cost and most likely it will be in the form of a tax increase that your constituents will have to bear. All across Elk County agencies and organizations are being forced to make difficult decisions. Programs that inspire creativity and hands-on learning are being delayed or reduced. Support services that help students with emotional, social, or academic challenges are being stretched to their limits. Rising costs for fuel, food, and instructional materials are colliding with the uncertainty of when or if state funding will arrive.

For many students, especially in rural areas like ours, school is much more than a place to learn. It's where children find safety, meals, guidance, and opportunity. When the state fails to pass a budget, that security begins to slip away. Students feel the anxiety of canceled field trips, cut-back electives, and shrinking classroom resources. Teachers are forced to stretch every supply, cover for unfilled positions, and reassure students who sense that something isn't right.

This strain extends beyond the school walls. Families who count on consistent programs, meals, and childcare options are left wondering what will be cut next. Communities that take pride in their local schools are being asked, once again, to do more with less. And while our districts have shown incredible resilience, the truth is that resilience alone cannot make up for the absence of responsible state funding.

Our schools — Johnsonburg Area and Ridgway Area — educate the next generation of Elk County's workers, leaders, and citizens. Every day without a budget sends a harmful message: that our children's education is negotiable. It is not.

We call on our state and federal representatives — including Representative Michael Armanini, and Senator Cris Dush— to come together and act now. The students of Elk County should not bear the burden of political gridlock. Passing a fair, timely, and student-centered state budget is not just a fiscal responsibility — it is a moral one.

Elk County's children have dreams as big as any in Pennsylvania. They deserve classrooms with resources, teachers with support, and communities with hope. It's time for Harrisburg to listen — and to act.

Please stand up for your constituents and call for the end of this budget impasse and do the right thing for all of Pennsylvania, by passing a budget.

Please reach out to your representatives and urge them to Pass the State Budget Now!



Pennsylvania House of Representatives — District 75 Rep. Mike Armanini (Republican)

Contact Information: Phone: 814-781-6301

Harrisburg / Capitol Office	145B East Wing, P.O. Box 202075, Harrisburg, PA 17120
District / Local Offices	DuBois Area Plaza, Suite 10, 1221 East DuBois Avenue, DuBois, PA 15801
Additional Office	53 South St. Marys Street, Suite 2, St. Marys, PA 15857
Email	marmanini@pahousegop.com



Pennsylvania State Senate — District 25 Sen. Cris Dush (Republican)

Contact Information: Phone: 814-646-7272

Harrisburg / Capitol Office	Senate Box 203025, 9 East Wing, Harrisburg, PA 17120
Brookville Office	73 S. White St., Suite 5, Brookville, PA 15825
Bellefonte Office	301 N. Spring St., Suite 110, Bellefonte, PA 16823
Smethport Office	601 W. Main St., Suite 1, Smethport, PA 16749
Email	cdush@pasen.gov