



February 2021

Welcome to MEDC News!
Published monthly by the Murrysville Export Democratic Club.

MEDC News

The Murrysville Export Democratic Club is open to all voters registered as Democrats and residing in Murrysville and Export. We meet on the third Tuesday every month – virtually on Zoom during these pandemic times. Membership is a great way to be involved with important elections and issues in our home community. For more information about who we are, see our website at murrysvilledemocrats.org. Navigate to the “Contact Us” to sign up for our emails.

MEDC dues are \$20.00 a year. Get more information and application to become a member at murrysvilledemocrats.org.

Support and Protect Essential Workers

As we wrote last month, many of our neighbors and others who serve our communities have placed their own lives in special danger as they have provided us vital services. Our MEDC members continue to salute and be grateful to those who have continued work on our behalf as health care workers; our police, fire and emergency responders; our teachers and school staff; and those who have maintained other public services.

The greatest threat to re-opening schools and businesses and to the health of our own families and neighbors is to ignore CDC guidelines. Let’s all do our best to respect essential workers and help to re-open our schools and businesses by observing CDC guidelines:

- Wear a mask.
- Observe social distancing.
- Wash hands.
- Quarantine when that is advised.

MEDC Community Survey – Coming Soon

The MEDC wants to hear from our neighbors in Murrysville and Export about opinions and priorities concerning issues affecting our local communities, the state and the nation. Please look for our 2021 MEDC Community Survey in a few weeks.

President Biden is Providing Desperately Needed National Leadership

It has been barely a month since taking office, but President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris are taking action and providing real leadership on issues critical to the well-being of the nation.

The former president spent the final two and a half months of his term whining and scheming about his election loss while doing nothing to plan an orderly roll-out of the much-anticipated virus vaccines, not even acknowledging that more than 3,000 Americans were dying every day.

Finally, there is truth-telling and a meaningful effort for national leadership to assure a plan to vaccinate Americans against Covid-19 and to re-open schools and businesses. Public health officials like Dr. Anthony Fauci say they are finally free to speak candidly about vital public health matters. There is finally reason to be optimistic that we can have a return to some normalcy later this year.

While we are on track for well over 100 million to be vaccinated soon, President Biden has also proposed, and the Congress is prepared to act on, a bold new COVID-19-Relief Act that will deliver stimulus checks to low-income and middle-income families, maintain extra unemployment benefits beyond the current March expiration date, help small businesses succeed in the pandemic aftermath, and help local and state governments maintain paychecks for essential workers.

We'll soon see a proposal for a major Infrastructure Investment Plan – a jobs-boosting and economy-boosting initiative that was promised years ago but never delivered by the former Administration.

There will be a lot more to celebrate in coming months, but for the moment it also is a great relief to not wonder (or worry) every morning about what arbitrary, ill-founded and potentially disastrous domestic or foreign-policy announcement will come via Twitter from the president.

The Impeachment of Donald Trump

Take a moment to recall what is now well-established.

- President Trump is the first and only President to be impeached twice.
- Donald Trump was impeached by a bi-partisan vote in the U.S. House.
- Donald Trump was acquitted in the Senate, but with 57 votes for conviction.
- The vote for conviction in the Senate was bi-partisan, including Senator Toomey, our Republican U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania.
- Many Republican senators who voted against and blocked conviction used as an excuse the question of whether the Senate could convict a president already out of office, ignoring the point that it was the Republican Senate Leader (Mitch McConnell) who created the delay in getting the Senate to begin a trial, and ignoring the overwhelming opinion of constitutional scholars.

The majority (58%) of Americans polled (ABC News/IPSOS 2/15/21) have said they think Donald Trump should have been convicted. In addition to the view of the

majority of Americans, here is what some Republican leaders also said about Donald Trump's responsibility for the tragic events of January 6 that included an attack on the Capitol by a Trump mob.

Republican Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania said: *"President Trump summoned thousands to Washington, D.C. and inflamed their passions by repeating disproven allegations about widespread fraud. He urged the mob to march on the Capitol for the explicit purpose of preventing Congress and the Vice President from formally certifying the results of the presidential election. His betrayal of the Constitution and his oath of office required conviction."*

Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine said: *"Instead of preventing a dangerous situation, President Trump created one. And rather than defend the constitutional transfer of power, he incited an insurrection with the purpose of preventing that transfer of power from occurring. Whether by design or by virtue of a reckless disregard for the consequences of his actions, President Trump, subordinating the interests of the country to his own selfish interests, bears significant responsibility for the invasion of the Capitol."*

Republican Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana said: *"But if you describe insurrection as I did, as an attempt to prevent the peaceful transfer of power, we can see the president, for two months after the election, promoting that the election was stolen."*

Even Republican Senator (and Republican Floor Leader) Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said: *"There is no question - none - that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day. No question about it. The people who stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president. And having that belief was a foreseeable consequence of the growing crescendo of false statements, conspiracy theories and reckless hyperbole which the defeated president kept shouting into the largest megaphone on planet earth. The issue is not only the president's intemperate language on Jan. 6. It is not just his endorsement of remarks in which an associate urged "trial by combat. It was also the entire manufactured atmosphere of looming catastrophe. The increasingly wild myths - myths - about a reverse landslide election that was somehow being stolen by some secret coup by our now president."*

2021-2022 State Budget Debate

Governor Thomas Wolf delivered his proposed 2021-2022 state budget to a joint session of the General Assembly on Wednesday, February 3. It kicked off a budget debate that is expected to be concluded by June 30. Following the Governor's budget message, the Appropriations Committees of the State House and State Senate are having public hearings to hear from agency heads about various pieces of the Governor's proposal.

The total General Fund budget as proposed is \$37.837 billion. You can view the Governor's entire 2021-2022 budget proposal, and also past state budgets, at this link - [Commonwealth Budget \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov/governor/budget)

The Governor's budget package includes significant changes to the state's personal income tax with much of the new revenue dedicated to increasing state support for school districts and other education programs.

Pennsylvania has one of the country's worst systems of funding public education due largely to state government providing one of the lowest percentage shares of K-12 costs. While the national average is around 48%, Pennsylvania state government pays 37-38% of K-12 costs. This leaves a larger than typical share to be paid by local taxpayers, and that usually results in higher property taxes. Nationally, less than 30% of K-12 revenue comes from property taxes while in Pennsylvania the share paid by property taxes is close to 45%. In addition to frequently higher property taxes, this dependency on local taxes (and therefore local wealth) results in the "worst in the nation" gap in resources and educational opportunities for children in the wealthier versus less wealthy school districts.

One of the objectives of the Governor's proposed budget is to significantly increase state support for school districts, students, and property tax payers.

Investing in Pennsylvania's children is a major theme of this proposal and includes the following:

- Proposes a historic \$1.35B increase in Basic Education funding, including \$1.15 billion to direct all existing state-level basic education funding through the Fair Funding Formula and include an adjustment so that no school district is negatively impacted and an additional \$200 million increase.
- Continues Governor Wolf's commitment to investing in education at all levels, including a \$25M increase for Pre-K Counts; a \$5M increase for the Head Start Supplemental Program.
- Proposes \$200M increase in Special Education.
- Includes a \$87.17M increase in federal funds for rates in Child Care Works to create a more stable business environment for child care facilities and to ensure equal access to these services.
- Invests in our state's Early Intervention program by providing an \$11M increase to fund an additional 2,000 slots for children ages 3 to 5.
- Proposes comprehensive Charter School Law reform that is estimated to save school districts an approximate \$229M per year.
- Creates transparency in education tax credit programs by lowering the maximum administrative set-aside from 20 percent to 5 percent for scholarship organizations participating in education tax credit programs, which will allow for up to an additional \$36M in student scholarships without an increase in taxpayer aid.
- Repurposes \$199M from the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development Trust Fund to support the Nellie Bly Tuition Program which will provide financial assistance to full-time PASSHE students who agree to stay in Pennsylvania for the same number of years for which they receive the benefit.

You can watch budget hearings of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees at these links:

The House and Senate web pages at [PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](http://www.state.pa.us).
Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN) at [PCNTV – Pennsylvania's Network](http://www.pcntv.com).

School Board and Municipal Elections in 2021

The Pennsylvania Primary Election is on Tuesday, May 18. The ballot will include local offices including municipal officials and members of the Franklin Regional School Board. Once again, all registered voters will be able to vote by mail-in ballot or in-person at the poll on election day.

*Candidates who wish to be considered for endorsement by MEDC members should send their **written request** to MEDC at murrysvilledemocrats@gmail.com with Subject Line: **ENDORSEMENT no later than March 15.***

Here is a link to the PA Bureau of Elections with information about circulating petitions: [2021 Nomination Petition Guide 2.5.21.pdf \(pa.gov\)](#)

Here are 2021 PENNSYLVANIA ELECTIONS IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER from the PA Department of State:

First day to circulate and file nomination petitions.....	February 16
Last day to circulate and file nomination petitions.....	March 9
Last day to file objections to nomination petitions.....	March 16
Last day for withdrawal by candidates who filed nomination petitions.....	March 24
Last day to REGISTER before the Municipal Primary	May 3
Last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot.....	May 11
Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted mail-in and civilian absentee ballots (must be received by 8:00 P.M.)	May 18
MUNICIPAL PRIMARY	May 18
GENERAL ELECTION	November 2

Support Local Food Banks & FRSD Backpacks-To-Go

Our local food banks, food pantries and Meals on Wheels continue to be vital resources for children and families here in Murrysville and Export and we urge support in all seasons, but especially during this pandemic.

MEDC is making a special effort to support the Backpacks-To-Go Program in the Franklin Regional School District and is accepting donations to be presented to the Program early in March. You can donate by sending a check by February 28 to "MEDC" (with note "for Backpacks") to MEDC, P.O. Box 392, Murrysville, PA 15668.

SIGN-UP FOR MEDC NEWSLETTER

If you received this newsletter from a friend, but wish to be added to the MEDC mailing list to receive the newsletter directly, please go to <http://www.murrysvilledemocrats.org/getinvolved.html>.