

Dwight Evans

State Representative

203rd Legislative District

Democratic Appropriations Chairman Dwight Evans was born and raised in Philadelphia and educated in its public school system. He was first elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in November 1980. Since his first day in the state Capitol, Evans has provided vibrant visionary leadership that has marked his professional career and community-related endeavors.

Rep. Evans is involved in many initiatives to make Philadelphia a better place to live, work, and visit. These initiatives include working with law enforcement and other public officials to reduce violence in the city, promoting education reforms, overriding PUC regulations to help PGW out of its fiscal problems while protecting its customers, promoting the location of supermarkets within the city, and establishing a task force on helping working families to become more financially literate and reducing regulatory burdens on them.

Evans currently serves on the boards of directors of the Public School Employees' Retirement System, Black Alliance for Educational Options, Fox Chase Cancer Center, Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Children's Scholarship Fund, Concerned Black Men, and the Presbyterian Foundation of Philadelphia.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia – On April 21, 2004, Rep. Evans convened an historic meeting of state legislative leaders, top law enforcement officials from the federal, state and local level and community leaders to discuss strategies to stop the violence that has taken the lives of too many city youth. The following 30 days were spent putting together a legislative action plan with an emphasis on action to curb violence. The result was the broad-based anti-violence strategy called the “Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia.” Funded by over \$16 million in state resources championed by Rep. Evans, the Blueprint draws on research-based strategies, including a comprehensive social marketing campaign, to help children “unlearn” violent behavior and provide a broad network of resources to our communities.

Boot Camps – Rep. Evans was the prime sponsor of legislation which brought into existence Pennsylvania's first and only motivational boot camp for adult offenders not yet 35 years of age and who had received a minimum sentence of not more than two years and a maximum sentence of five years or less. The bill passed unanimously both the House and Senate and was signed into law (Act 215-1990) by Gov. Casey. Program evaluations have documented that the Pennsylvania boot camp has lower recidivism rates and is less costly than traditional imprisonment. The boot camp provides an important alternative to incarceration that, for some offenders, is a more successful rehabilitative approach.

Fighting Crime – Rep. Evans has been active in finding ways to reduce the level of violence in our communities. In 1994, he co-chaired the Pennsylvania Anti-Violence Education Initiative (PAVE), and in 1997, he organized the “Gang of Five,” a bipartisan group of legislative leaders interested in improving public safety in Philadelphia. The Gang sponsored a comprehensive series of public safety town meetings throughout Philadelphia's neighborhoods. Rep. Evans organized the Common Sense Firearms Safety Caucus in the spring of 1999 to respond to the need to better prioritize what the General Assembly can and should do to promote the enactment of appropriate and effective state

legislation. Evans also has been a supporter of common sense gun policies such as “One Handgun a Month” and mandatory sentencing for violent criminals who possess firearms.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Fresh Food Financing Initiative – Under the leadership of Rep. Evans, the Commonwealth has appropriated \$20 million for the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative. This innovative program will increase the number of supermarkets or other grocery stores in underserved communities across the state and create thousands of jobs. Together with The Food Trust and the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) formed a public-private partnership to support the initiative. TRF will leverage state funds into a \$40 million multi-faceted pool, which will be a one-stop-shop for financing supermarkets and other grocery retailers.

Helping Working Families – Rep. Dwight Evans initiated an idea for ways to help working families in tight budget times. Gov. Rendell used Rep. Evans’ idea to form a Working Families Task Force, which is about to release recommendations that will connect working families to quality financial education; move working families beyond living “paycheck to paycheck;” help working families create their own jobs and security; and make sure that working families are treated fairly by financial institutions.

Convention Center – Rep. Evans helped lead the effort to fund the Pennsylvania Convention Center in 1986. He sponsored Act 3-2004, reenacting the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority (PCCA), located in center city Philadelphia. The bill passed unanimously in both the state Senate and House and reconstituted the board, including guaranteed representation from the hospitality industry. It also established in statute a requirement that before the Commonwealth releases any money for the expansion, the PCCA must complete a managerial audit and establish a code of conduct, a customer service dispute resolution mechanism, and a customer satisfaction measuring system. Importantly, Act 3 ratified the Customer Satisfaction Agreement between PCCA and labor.

Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation – In 1983, Rep. Evans created the Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation (OARC), a community development corporation in West Oak Lane, whose mission is to create and stimulate economic development and improve the quality of life in the West Oak Lane community. OARC led the rebuilding and regeneration of Ogontz Avenue, considered a model neighborhood redevelopment project.

Economic Stimulus – Rep. Evans played a key role in finalizing the Commonwealth’s comprehensive Economic Stimulus Program to “jumpstart” the state economy. His main contribution successfully included supermarket development in the final package of the bills. Generally, the Stimulus program will support private sector development and increase the number of projects being undertaken throughout the Commonwealth. When all components are fully implemented, Stimulus will invest over \$2 billion to leverage at least \$5 billion in private investment in the following target areas: community revitalization, site preparation, infrastructure improvement, and construction business investment.

Wage Tax – A long-time champion of reducing wage taxes in Philadelphia, Rep. Evans helped shepherd legislation through the General Assembly to do just that. Under Act 72-2004, state funding from gaming revenues will be used to reduce wage taxes for both residents and commuters. It also requires the City to implement already approved wage tax cuts before receiving gaming revenue. This historic tax relief plan will have a positive economic impact on Philadelphia and the entire region.

Predatory Lending – Under the leadership of Rep. Evans, Pennsylvania enacted legislation which established uniform standards to regulate mortgage lending practices in the Commonwealth. Act 55-2001 limits various predatory lending practices, including loan flipping, balloon payments, prepayment

fees, increased interest rates on loan defaults, negative amortization (in which the loan balance actually increases), and call provisions (that accelerate loan payments without cause). The statute provides unprecedented enforcement authority to the state Department of Banking.

Hospitality Industry Promotion and Training – Over the years, Representative Dwight Evans has been leading efforts to provide job training for the hospitality industry in both the Philadelphia School District and the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC). He also led the charge for the Multicultural Affairs Congress (MAC) as an arm of the Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau in developing plans to attract African-Americans, Latino, Asian-American, and Native American tourists and conventioners to Philadelphia.

Neighborhood Improvements – Rep. Evans has been involved in many efforts to improve life in our neighborhoods. Rep. Evans is one of four members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives who adopted a legislative strategy for pursuing new and updated laws to help improve processes to remove and ameliorate vacant and blighted properties. Rep. Evans gained statewide attention in his efforts to eradicate blight in his legislative district, which includes inventorying abandoned properties. The fourth edition of the “Welcome to West Oak Lane Housing Book” is now available on www.pahouse.com/evans. Similarly, Rep. Evans successfully leveraged changes in law and administrative procedures to assist in the removal of abandoned vehicles, which has greatly improved since he took office.

EDUCATION

Philadelphia School District – Rep. Evans was instrumental in securing passage of Act 46-1998, the legislation that stopped a threatened shutdown of the Philadelphia School District. In 2001, Rep. Evans led the passage of Act 83, the legislation that provided for the takeover of the Philadelphia School District by the School Reform Commission, chaired by James Nevels, and the appointment of Chief Executive Officer Paul Vallas.

Charter School Law – Rep. Evans was instrumental in securing the passage of Pennsylvania’s Charter School Law (1997). There are now 52 charter schools serving the students and families of Philadelphia, including the West Oak Lane Charter School, begun by Rep. Evans in 1998. In 2004, Rep. Evans, in conjunction with the Black Alliance for Educational Option and the Lotus Academy, opened the doors to New Media Technology Charter School, a digital project-based learning high school.

Neighborhood School Network – As a result of Act 83, sponsored by Rep. Evans, FOUNDATIONS, Inc., a national educational non-profit organization, was able to establish a relationship with the School District of Philadelphia to provide management services to six low performing schools in the northwest section of the city.

Educational choice and options – Rep. Evans is a founding member of the national and local chapter of the Black Alliance for Educational Options.

TRANSPORTATION

Taxicab Service – Rep. Evans co-sponsored H.B. 2654 (Act 94 of 2004) transferring responsibility of taxicab regulation from the state Public Utility Commission (PUC) to the Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA). Included in this legislation is a \$2 million initiative sponsored by Rep. Evans to make

taxicab service more consumer friendly. Taxicabs often provide tourists with the first impressions of the city. The PUC, which was established to regulate large monopolies, such as electric, gas, and telephone companies, had proved to be cumbersome in regulating taxicabs, and it is believed that PPA will do a better job.

Transit – As Democratic Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, Rep. Evans successfully increased funds for transit in the current year's budget. A clean and efficient transit system not only helps tourists but also helps workers get to and from work, and students get to and from school. The Mass Transportation Assistance appropriation received a 6.6 percent increase for 2004/05, nearly doubling the increase requested by the Governor and bringing the total appropriation to \$287.8 million. Most recently, Rep. Evans has introduced legislation which will provide long-term, dedicated funding of \$110 million a year for all the state's 22 urban, 19 rural and more than 50 community transit systems.