



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

August 3, 2023

TO THE HONORABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 16 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, I am returning this appropriation bill, House Bill 611, Printer's Number 1811, to your chamber.

For the first time in a dozen years, Pennsylvania has a divided legislature. In fact, Pennsylvania is the only state in the nation with a full-time, divided legislature — meaning nothing gets done unless it can make it through our Republican-led Senate and our Democratic-led House.

Over the past several months, I have worked with leaders in both chambers to craft a commonsense, responsible budget that makes critical investments in public safety, agriculture, education, workforce and economic development, delivers tax cuts for our seniors, and much more. This budget will help train more workers for good-paying jobs, support farmers as they work to feed our families, expand access to mental health treatment, and provide resources for our first responders and law enforcement. This budget also includes historic investments in public education, including the largest increase in basic education funding in history, universal free breakfast for 1.7 million Pennsylvania students, more funding for special education, stipends for student teachers, and expanded dual enrollment programs for high school students.

Regrettably, the House and Senate were unable to reach an agreement on legislation establishing the Pennsylvania Award for Student Success Scholarship Program (PASS); a proposal I support. As I said in my budget address, this budget is a first step towards a comprehensive solution that makes progress for our children over the long term, and I look forward to continuing this work with both chambers as we discuss additional programs to help our children, including PASS.

Knowing that the two chambers cannot reach consensus at this time to enact enabling legislation for PASS and my unwillingness to hold up our entire budget process and all of this progress for the people of Pennsylvania over this one issue, I am line-item vetoing the full \$100 million appropriated for PASS and signing this budget so we can make the critical investments our communities need. Improving and expanding opportunities for children remains a priority for me, and I consider this to be unfinished business all parties must work together on as we move forward.

It has become clear through this budget process that our divided legislature needs to find ways to work together so that we can address the challenges facing our Commonwealth, from education to public safety to economic development. Leaders from both parties need to talk with one another, understand each other's perspectives and meaningfully engage each other.

I look forward to continuing to work with both chambers — and both parties — to move Pennsylvania forward.

For these reasons, I return the bill to your chamber partially approved and signed. The bill is approved with the exception of the item listed below:

Section 215. Department of Education

The following amounts are appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Education for the current fiscal year:

For Pennsylvania Award for Student Success
Scholarship Program.
State Appropriation..... 100,000,000

I withhold my approval from this entire item.

Respectfully,



Governor Josh Shapiro