

# Profile



## Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman State Senator Pat Browne 16TH DISTRICT

Senator Pat Browne was elected by his colleagues in the Senate Republican Caucus to serve as Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman for the 2015-16 Legislative Session. The committee, one of the most powerful of the Senate's standing committees, reviews all legislation for its fiscal impact and plays a crucial role in developing the state budget.

Before being elected Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman, Senator Browne served as Senate Majority Whip for the 2011-12 and 2013-14 Legislative Session. Besides serving as Appropriations Committee Chairman, Senator Browne is also a member of four Senate Committees: Banking and Insurance; Education; Finance; and Transportation. He is also a member of the Senate Majority Policy Committee.

Senator Browne is Co-Chair of the bi-partisan, bi-cameral Early Childhood Education Caucus and the Legislative Arts and Culture Caucus. He is currently Co-Chairing the Basic Education Funding Commission after previously Co-Chairing the Special Education Funding Commission.

He also serves as a member of the Public Employee Retirement Commission, the board of the Public School Employees' Retirement System, the Pennsylvania Minority Business Development Authority, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Legislative Audit Advisory Committee.

Senator Browne was re-elected in November 2014 to his third full term as state Senator for the 16th District, representing constituents in parts of Lehigh County. He was first elected to the Senate following a special election in April of 2005 and was re-elected in the fall of 2006 and 2010. Prior to joining the Senate, Senator Browne represented the 131st District for 10 years as a member of the state House of Representatives.

Senator Browne is the author of numerous state laws ranging from child protection legislation to education initiatives to reforming state government. He drafted key portions of Act 120 of 2010 which fundamentally reformed Pennsylvania's public pension systems and created an independent fiscal office to monitor state spending and the budget process. Senator Browne was instrumental in developing the Pennsylvania Web Accountability and Transparency (PennWATCH) Act, which expanded the public's access to state spending records by creating and maintaining a searchable, database-driven budget website.

In 2009, Senator Browne crafted the one-of-a-kind, 130-acre Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ) to help revitalize and expand the tax base of the then financially-struggling city of Allentown by permitting tax revenues – except for property taxes – generated by this new development to be put back into projects within the zone to continue and expand the redevelopment efforts. There has already been \$1 billion of new development investment in Allentown with another billion dollars expected in 2015, and more than \$3 million in school property tax revenues for Allentown School District has been generated through the zone. The NIZ has already served as a model for economic development in other distressed areas – cities, boroughs and townships – throughout the Commonwealth with the creation of the City Revitalization and Improvement Zones (CRIZ) which will afford a similar tax financing program to smaller cities in Pennsylvania.

Senator Browne received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Notre Dame and a law degree from Temple University. Prior to his legislative service, he was employed with the accounting firms of Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse as a tax manager and senior tax associate, respectively. In addition to being a CPA, he is also a member of the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Born and raised in Allentown, Senator Browne attended Allentown Central Catholic High School. He resides in Allentown with his wife, Heather, and son, Alex.

702 W. Hamilton Street  
Suite 101  
Allentown, PA 18101-2471  
(610) 821-8468  
FAX (610) 821-6798

281 Main Capitol Building  
Senate Box 203016  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3016  
(717) 787-1349  
FAX (717) 772-3458

For a listing of Senator Browne's  
satellite office locations,  
please visit his website at  
[senatorbrowne.com](http://senatorbrowne.com)

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