



Commonwealth of  
**Pennsylvania**  
House of Representatives

Majority Policy Committee  
Rep. Dave Reed, Chairman

**Harrisburg Office**  
128 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2062  
Phone: (717) 705-7173

**District Office**  
550 Philadelphia Street  
Indiana, PA 15701  
Phone: (724) 465-0220

# Empowering Opportunities

*Gateways Out of Poverty*

Over the last several years, state policymakers have focused on helping Pennsylvanians recover from the recession by creating more jobs and getting residents back to work. While this focus is critical, the state cannot overlook those who were struggling in a cycle of poverty even prior to the recession.

Today, nearly 12.5 percent of the state's population live in poverty – equal to approximately 1.5 million residents. From urban and suburban settings to the state's most rural communities, poverty continues to grip far too many Pennsylvania families.

To address this issue and work toward breaking the cycle, the House Majority Policy Committee has launched the **Empowering Opportunities** initiative – a public policy agenda that centers on supporting effective gateways out of poverty.

## **Empowering Opportunities: *Gateways Out of Poverty***

The Empowering Opportunities initiative aims to identify and access the challenges facing Pennsylvania's low-income families. The goal is to establish effective and sustainable solutions to serve as the gateways out of poverty through the following principles:

- ***Identifying Barriers***

Families living in poverty are faced with unique challenges that make it more difficult for them to prosper. We must work to better assess government's role in addressing these barriers in order to better support efforts that effectively remove them.

- ***Building Partnerships***

While programs exist to support low-income families, greater collaborative efforts must exist among community organizations, educators, job creators, state government, etc. Unified efforts will better identify gaps in the existing support system and create new options to bridge these gaps.

- ***Developing Solutions***

Helping families transition out of poverty will require comprehensive solutions. We need to consider a step-by-step process that works as a cohesive system rather than programs that operate as individual initiatives.

- ***Maintaining the Commitment***

Support programs for low-income families must have a long-term outlook. More than simply moving families above the poverty line, we must ensure opportunities exist to continue promoting progress and facilitating growth.

***"Our goal is not only to help families escape poverty, but to create permanent gateways toward new opportunities."*** - Rep. Dave Reed

