

## Aug. 1 – 7, 2025

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### SESSION STATUS

The House announced that it will now reconvene on Friday, August 8, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. for non-voting session. The House will also meet on Saturday, August 9, at 12:00 p.m. for non-voting session, Sunday, August 10, at 12:00 p.m. for voting session, and Monday, August 11, at 9:00 a.m. for voting session.

At 10:21 a.m. on Thursday, July 17, 2025, the Senate recessed to the call of the President Pro Tempore.

### UPCOMING SESSION DAYS

#### House

Aug. 8 (NV), 9 (NV), 10, 11  
Sept. 22-24 (NV), 29-30  
Oct. 1, 6-8, 27-29  
Nov. 17-19  
Dec. 8-10 (NV), 15-17

#### Senate

Sept. 8-10  
Oct. 20-22, 27-29  
Nov. 17-19  
Dec. 8-9

*The Education Recap is a comprehensive weekly report on legislative and executive actions on education-related legislation in Pennsylvania state government, as compiled and edited by PLS. Additional information, including video, transcript and testimony, is available to [PLSGovTrac](https://www.pls.gov/trac) users. For more information, contact [sales@mypls.com](mailto:sales@mypls.com).*

## Press Conferences

*PLS coverage of Capitol events including press conferences, bill signings and media availabilities*

### GOV. SHAPIRO HIGHLIGHTS SUCCESS OF MY WORK INITIATIVE TO EXPAND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

By Daniel Sachetta, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | August 5, 2025

Gov. Josh Shapiro held a press conference today at Overlook Park in Lancaster County to highlight the impact of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's (OVR) program called the My Work Initiative.

Gov. Shapiro recognized Secretary of Labor and Industry Nancy Walker for her hard work to advocate and promote small business and industry across the commonwealth. He highlighted the new leadership from Rep. Nikki Rivera (D-Lancaster) and Sen. James Malone (D-Lancaster). He detailed the work of OVR and the My Work Initiative in this community and across the commonwealth to assist individuals with disabilities with the services they need and to enter the workplace and make a contribution to their communities. He emphasized this issue as a strong priority for him and his wife, Lori. He recalled the developments and expansion of OVR over his first term. He recalled hosting the Special Olympics bocce tournament recently, where Wawa and Sheetz pledged to increase their commitment to hire individuals with disabilities. He explained the difficult process of entering the workforce in today's society, which often starts with a summer internship. Gov. Shapiro stated that 2,400 students have used the My Work Initiative during his first term, and Manheim Township has hired some of these students to work at Overlook Park. He emphasized the importance of the work these individuals are doing and the happiness that it brings them. He urged the need to continue investing in OVR to expand this program and create other initiatives that benefit individuals with disabilities. He thanked the township commissioners for hosting the event.

Rep. Rivera thanked Gov. Shapiro for his work on the OVR investment. She expressed gratitude as a first-term representative for working with an administration that she said values all Pennsylvanians. She emphasized the importance of every individual feeling dignity and value in their actions. She thanked Sec. Walker for leading the advocacy for this issue and leaders in Manheim Township for their partnership with OVR.

Sen. Malone highlighted the importance of OVR and the My Work Initiative to help individuals reach their full potential.

Gov. Shapiro opened the press conference to questions from the media.

### Governor, it's been 36 days now beyond the budget deadline. What is the current state of the talks?

Gov. Shapiro stated that progress is being made, even though it is slow. He explained that both sides understand the issues and are working to find common ground and compromise. He noted that Pennsylvania is one of the only states with a divided legislature, making it more difficult to find common ground on a multitude of issues. He recalled spending four hours yesterday with House Majority Leader Matthew Bradford (D-Montgomery), making progress, and noted he will be spending time with Senate Majority Leader Joe Pittman (R-Indiana) to discuss issues later today. He expressed his confidence in the passage of a budget soon.

**There is concern after the letters from the budget secretary detailing the delay in funding. What is your message to educators, county commissioners and service providers who may be worried that these delays may persist?**

Gov. Shapiro recognized the concern from school districts, counties and townships who need funding from the state to take care of students, address mental health needs and address the needs of farmers in their communities. He detailed that the budget secretary wanted to lay out what the organizations can and cannot expect at this point. He emphasized the importance of getting funding to these organizations as quickly and as responsibly as possible.

**Are you moving towards a stop-gap conversation at this point?**

Gov. Shapiro emphasized the goal is to pass a full budget for this year that meets all obligations of the state. He noted an understanding of the issues by both sides but acknowledged the disagreements. He explained that there is an agreement on several budget issues, but others are still being worked on. He stressed his confidence that there will be a budget passed for the year.

**What was your reaction to Texas's attempt to redraw congressional lines?**

Gov. Shapiro called the act "shameful" on the Governor of Texas and President Donald Trump's "attempt to rig the election" in a way that preserves a U.S. House majority for them. He noted the coincidence between this action and the passage of the federal budget that will take health care, food assistance and hospital availability away from many Pennsylvanians and Americans. He detailed that he thought the other side "realizes the bill is unpopular across the country and wants to rig the system in a way that preserves their majority." He stressed the actions as "unfortunate" and "not respecting the rule of law and democracy" that was established in Pennsylvania nearly 250 years ago.

**Today, the Justice Department published a list of states, cities and counties having policies that hinder the enforcement of federal immigration laws. Philadelphia was on that list. Do you have any comments on the list?**

Gov. Shapiro stated he had not seen a list recently but knew of a list that was released a month ago but rescinded due to it being wrong. He explained that Pennsylvania is not a sanctuary state, but beyond that did not have any comment because he had not seen the list or what the Justice Department is threatening to do with it. He remarked that he would be happy to follow up once he had a chance to review it.

**There has been talk about whether or not the budget process, the negotiating and funding process itself, is broken, with the delays over the years. Do you think that something needs to change with the way this is carried out?**

Gov. Shapiro detailed that he introduced his budget around 180 days ago, with lawmakers only having around 20-25 days of session. He expressed hope that next year they can begin budget negotiations earlier. He noted that now is not the time to point fingers but highlighted the narrow differences between the House and Senate, emphasizing finding common ground to deliver a budget for the people of the commonwealth. He recognized the fairness of the question due to the ongoing situation.

**The Washington Post reported that Israel plans to launch a full-scale occupation of the Gaza Strip as starvation continues to grow. Can you speak to what's happening in Gaza, and should U.S. leaders be doing more?**

Gov. Shapiro stated that Hamas still continues to hold 50 hostages that need to be returned immediately. He emphasized his praying for both the return of the hostages and for the starvation crisis to be resolved in Gaza. He noted the "moral responsibility" and a need for the leaders of the United States to find a way to get humanitarian aid to the children and people trapped in Gaza. He detailed that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is "wrong" that there is no starvation in Gaza, calling it a reflection of "standing with President Trump's plans to occupy Gaza and drive out all the Palestinians." He called both leaders' words "reckless," emphasizing that it further isolates Israel in the world. He stressed that the U.S. government needs to "dramatically increase aid" sent to the Middle East to provide for Gaza and create a plan to safely distribute the aid. He explained that if "President Trump believes he can negotiate directly with Hamas, he needs to figure out a way to get aid to the starving people without Hamas intercepting it." He emphasized his hope that all hostages will be released, children will be fed and that the war ends immediately, stressing the United States' moral obligation to the cause.



## **SENATE DEMOCRATS CALL ON SENATE REPUBLICANS TO “COME BACK TO HARRISBURG” TO PASS MASS TRANSIT FUNDING AMID BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS**

By Julia Walters, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | August 6, 2025

Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) and Senate Appropriations Minority Chairman Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia) held a press conference in Sen. Costa’s office today to discuss budget delays and the urgency of mass transit funding.

Sen. Costa emphasized he and Sen. Hughes were gathered to discuss “one of the most important issues” amid budget negotiations. He mentioned that while they have been “patient waiting for action,” they are now calling for action. “We’re here today to call upon our Senate Republican colleagues to come back to Harrisburg and pass legislation that allows us to properly fund transit and also roads and bridges,” he explained. Sen. Costa noted the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority’s (SEPTA) press conference that was held this morning at their headquarters in Philadelphia at 10:00 a.m., detailing service cuts if no funding is passed. Sen. Costa noted that although mass transit largely affects both of their regions in southeastern and southwestern Pennsylvania, its impacts will be felt throughout the commonwealth. He stressed the urgency of the situation, mentioning SEPTA’s date of August 14 as their cutoff for when budget cuts must go into effect if no negotiations are passed. Sen. Costa stated it will be “difficult to go back” once SEPTA’s budget cuts are enforced, and it could be “three weeks or a month” to recover from the effects. “Even if we’ve got something on August 16, for example, they still would have three weeks of disruption and chaos as it relates to route reductions,” he described. Sen. Costa expressed concern for the funding not receiving passage in a timely manner, noting the sense of urgency. He stressed the Senate Democrats “stand ready” with 23 Senate Democratic votes to pass the governor’s mass transit funding proposal, “coupled with investments in transportation as well and the commensurate amount.” Sen. Costa stated they support their Republican colleagues requested reform measures. He emphasized their readiness to get mass transit funding “across the finish line,” which includes funding for roads and bridges as well as “addressing the reforms that were discussed.” Sen. Costa continued that “there are votes for this proposal,” noting they have been “documented publicly by more than three members of the Senate Republican Caucus.” He explained it’s now time for the Senate Republicans to “bring us back to Harrisburg” to implement the funding proposal.

Sen. Hughes added that Senate Democrats “have been ready for months” to pass mass transit funding. He explained how the House has passed it four separate times and is “prepared” to pass it a fifth time. Sen. Hughes stressed that 42% of Pennsylvania’s economy is driven out of SEPTA’s community and explained the commonwealth would be “crippled” by these cuts. He explained the August 14 deadline, where SEPTA will “begin the process of phasing out and the restructuring that they’ve been very public about for many months.” Sen. Hughes called on the Senate Republicans to move the legislation forward. He added, “Allegedly, there’s three Republicans who are prepared to be supportive as well.”

Sen. Costa described the “chaos” that would occur if nothing is passed by August 14. He called it “unconscionable” to interrupt the multi-county transportation system as it is how people “get to and from the city for work, for school and for a variety of other purposes.”

The press conference opened to questions from the media.

### **Did SEPTA tell you in advance about their August 14, or were you blindsided?**

Sen. Costa replied, “No, we knew that.” He described that they have been in “constant contact” with major transportation agencies. “Not just SEPTA or [Pittsburgh Regional Transit] PRT, but many others as well,” he added. Sen. Costa reiterated it could take several weeks to reverse the effects of service cuts, harming not only those who rely on SEPTA but also their employees and staff. “It shouldn’t have to happen when we have the means to get something done,” he said.

Sen. Hughes agreed that this deadline was “no surprise.” He explained the purpose of SEPTA’s press conference this morning was to provide information to the public so they understand “what is actually coming their way if this matter does not get resolved.”

### **Is transit funding the final piece of the budget, or are budget negotiations as a whole still being worked out?**

Sen. Costa stated there is a sense of urgency related to mass transit funding, further explaining why they are advocating for that issue specifically. He mentioned they would “ideally” prefer to get everything done comprehensively, and they will continue to work on additional budget discussions as they move forward.

### **To clarify, you're saying you want the Senate to come back, pass something on transit, and then continue working?**

Sen. Costa affirmed this before giving Sen. Hughes the time to comment.

Sen. Hughes mentioned the state budget deadline was June 30 and negotiations should have been “wrapped up.” He continued, “We need to get this whole thing done.” Sen. Hughes reiterated that time is of the essence regarding SEPTA’s service cuts and explained that mass transit needs passage first. “Let’s get the SEPTA thing done, and let’s get everything else done,” he said.

Sen. Costa emphasized the funding also includes support for road and bridge infrastructure investments as well as Republican reform requests. “We feel we have a comprehensive transportation transit reform package that could be passed along those lines,” he stated.

Sen. Hughes agreed with Sen. Costa regarding the reforms. “We’ve talked to SEPTA about them,” he said. “They embraced them.” Sen. Hughes added that the House is also “moving them today,” mentioning their connection with the House of these issues and supporting those reforms.

**What is the actual amount for roads and bridges?**

Sen. Costa said, “Somewhere in that range of 293 to 300, along those lines.”

**What are your thoughts on [HB 1364](#), which authorizes an additional \$500 million in funding for roads and bridges?**

Sen. Costa said they would “be happy to support that” if “that’s the path in which we get there.” He noted how transportation funding has always coupled transit investments with infrastructure. Sen. Costa stated he knows road and bridge infrastructure is important to their Senate Republican colleagues and made it known that the Senate Democrats support those investments.

Sen. Hughes added that road and bridge infrastructure is “relevant to us as well,” noting it is not a partisan issue. “We’ve always accepted the notion that both must be done at the same time,” he continued.

**Have the Senate Republicans ever given you a proposal?**

Sen. Hughes replied, “No.”

**What concessions still need to be made in order to get this done?**

Sen. Hughes remarked, “You need to ask them.” He continued, “I don’t mean to be flip, but you see we’re ready.” Sen. Hughes explained that the Senate Republicans control the session calendar, and they are the ones who can get the Senate back onto the floor to pass this funding.

**Has Senate Republican leadership communicated to you at all about the reforms and been specific about what kind of accountability they want to see?**

Sen. Costa responded, “I believe that there were comments by leadership of Senate Republicans that supported reforms.” He reiterated that the Senate Democrats are willing to support those reforms as they move forward.

Sen. Hughes added, “We have to assume that their team worked with Sen. [Joe] Picozzi (R-Philadelphia) in preparing those reforms.” He mentioned he has not heard any opposition to the reforms from either Senate leadership or Senate Republicans. “Unless they got something else, we got to go with what’s out there,” Sen. Hughes said.

**If you drop around \$300 million for transit and another \$300 million for roads and bridges, how would that impact the rest of the budget, specifically for education, Medicaid, skill games, etc.?**

Sen. Costa explained those would be outside the general appropriations (GA) bill. Regarding skill games, Sen. Costa noted the governor’s proposal was that of a sales tax, “so, that has no bearing, essentially, on the GA bill.”

Sen. Hughes commented that “we’re in a safe space to accommodate a lot of the needs that people have.” He noted the state’s budget revenue “ran \$253 million above projection.” Sen. Hughes explained Pennsylvania currently “sits on \$3 billion in surplus and \$70 million in the Rainy Day Fund.”

**When looking at the whole budget, what is the gap between what the House wants and what the Senate wants?**

Sen. Costa said, “We’re continuing to work on finding a common ground with respect to a spend number.” He stated once that is done, factors such as education, Medicaid, social services and others will be discussed in a comprehensive way.

**Do you have any sense of what the funding mechanism for transit would be?**

Sen. Costa stated, “Ideally, we think it should be the governor’s proposal that we’ve talked about.” He mentioned it would encompass the operational side for transit agencies as well as infrastructure work.

Sen. Hughes emphasized, “The best thing to operate off of on August 6, with eight more days before things start happening, is the proposal that has passed the House four times.” He described it as the foundation before anything else should be discussed moving forward. Sen. Hughes acknowledged other ideas for funding that could be part of the conversation in the future, but due to the August 14 SEPTA deadline, the proposal that has already been set forth by Gov. Josh Shapiro is the most optimal path forward.

**Sen. Hughes, would you support a flat-funded budget that allows for increases in Medicaid and transportation?**

Sen. Hughes said he would not discuss budget negotiations. “We’ve got surplus, we’ve got a substantial Rainy Day Fund,” he continued. “We’ve got people who need real help.”

**How much of that surplus are you going to tap into?**

Sen. Hughes replied, “It’s hard to ignore that number, I’ll just put it that way.”

**Any chance people are looking at PRT reforms?**

Sen. Costa said he believes reforms would be “system-wide.” He mentioned PRT representatives are supportive of the proposed reforms, noting they “see it as a means to be able to get to an end.”

**How far will the reforms extend? Will the Erie Metropolitan Transportation Authority (EMTA) be included in the reforms, for example?**

Sen. Costa said he believes that will be “a function of continuing negotiations.”

**Is there an amount you’re willing to come down by regarding the governor’s proposal, or is there a red line?**

Sen. Costa responded that the red line has been clear. “It’s 293, the number of the governor’s proposal,” he said. “We think that’s appropriate.”

Sen. Hughes agreed that he is “comfortable” with that number.

**How do you respond to the different groups who are becoming more worried about late payments, food banks and social services? What are your messages to them as they prepare?**

Sen. Costa responded, “Our message is that our highest priority right now is transit funding.” He expressed concern for the urgency of SEPTA’s deadline and stated that other budget negotiations should continue once mass transit has a resolution. “We stand ready to do that every day, all day,” Sen. Costa stressed.

**Would it be fair to say that the transit funding is the biggest sticking point in an overall budget deal? What else would be in the way of a full budget?**

Sen. Costa explained, “There’s transit, there’s a comprehensive approach to the general appropriation bill and broader sense of policy issues that are still being worked out.”

**If we get transit funding, is the political pressure to get everything else gone?**

Sen. Hughes remarked, “We can walk and chew gum at the same time.” He mentioned it has been done before in short periods of time and urged the Senate to come back to session either this week or next week to “push through everything that needs to be done.” He emphasized that while mass transit is a “glaring” problem, they are not ignoring the other needs of the commonwealth. “It’s time to just get the whole thing done,” Sen. Hughes said. “Let’s just get this whole thing done and move forward.”



**Committee News**

*Comprehensive coverage of the House & Senate public hearings and voting meetings*

No committee news this week.

**Bullet.in.Points**

**[GOVERNOR’S OFFICE: REGULATORY AGENDA](#)**

The Governor’s Office published the semi-annual agenda of regulations under development or consideration. Additional information is available on the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

## Cosponsor Memos

### HCO2550 - Emancipation of CTE Schools from SDS

#### Sponsor

Rep. Gary W. Day (R)

#### Summary

Aims to provide Career and Technical Education Schools with the ability to operate independently from their sending schools.

#### Intro Date

08/05/2025

#### Actions

08/05/2025 H - Cosponsor memo filed

## Basic Ed Bill Actions

**HB1767 - An Act amending Titles 24 (Education), 71 (State Government) and 72 (Taxation and Fiscal Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in membership, contributions and benefits, providing for supplemental annuity commencing 2025; in benefits, providing for supplemental annuity commencing 2025; providing for special funds and for disposition of Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund; establishing the Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund Interest Account; and making a repeal.**

#### Sponsor

Rep. Kathleen C. Tomlinson (R)

#### Summary

(PN 2176) Amends Titles 24 (Education), 71 (State Government) and 72 (Taxation and Fiscal Affairs), in membership, contributions and benefits, providing for supplemental annuity commencing 2025; in benefits, providing for supplemental annuity commencing 2025; providing for special funds and for disposition of Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund; establishing the Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund Interest Account as a restricted account within the Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund; and making a repeal. Outlines the supplemental annuity commencing in 2025, including benefits and the amounts of additional supplemental annuity. Provides payment procedure under specified terms and conditions. Provides details on benefits to beneficiaries or survivors. Adds funding details and provides requirements for eligible benefit recipients. Outlines the disposition of the budget stabilization reserve fund, including its purpose, appropriation procedure and fund transfers. Effective immediately.

#### Intro Date

08/04/2025

#### Actions

07/28/2025 H - Introduced

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08/04/2025 H - Referred to - House State Government

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**HB1768 - An Act establishing the Keystone Fresh Program; providing for the Fresh Schools Grant Program, for the Keystone Producer Grant Program, for the Keystone Assistance Grant Program and for the administration of the Keystone Fresh Program by the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture; and establishing the Keystone Fresh Fund.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Danilo Burgos (D)

**Summary**

(PN 2177) The Keystone Fresh Act establishes the Keystone Fresh Program; provides for the Fresh Schools Grant Program, for the Keystone Producer Grant Program, for the Keystone Assistance Grant Program and for the administration of the Keystone Fresh Program by the Department of Education (PDE) and the Department of Agriculture (PDA); and establishes the Keystone Fresh Fund. Provides General Assembly findings and declarations. Provides definitions. Establishes the Keystone Fresh Program and the Fresh Schools Grant Program within PDE in consultation with PDA to provide reimbursement for the purchase of local food for school meals. Outlines eligibility requirements and the evaluation process for applicants. Includes grant amounts based on student enrollment. Explains eligible and ineligible uses for grants and reimbursement of eligible costs. Requires the PDE to monitor the Fresh Schools Grant Program. Includes information grantees must provide for reimbursement. Establishes the Keystone Producer Grant Program and Keystone Assistance Grant Program and outlines eligible uses of grant money. Asserts that PDA will develop an application and process for awarding grants, as well as determine grant amounts. Asserts that PDE and PDA will receive the necessary funds from the fund to cover administrative costs. Requires PDE and PDA to biennially contact an eligible entity for an external review to evaluate the efficacy of this act. Includes nonprofit organizations and academic institutions as eligible entities for external review. Provides the contents of the external report. Establishes the Keystone Fresh Fund as an interest-bearing restricted revenue account and includes eligible usages. Sections 5, 6 and 8 are effective in 245 days. Section 10 is effective immediately. The remainder of this act will be effective in 180 days.

**Intro Date**

08/04/2025

**Actions**

07/28/2025 H - Introduced

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08/04/2025 H - Referred to - House Agriculture and Rural Affairs

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**HB1770 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in terms and courses of study, providing for supplemental mathematics program for kindergarten through grade five.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Robert Freeman (D)

**Summary**

(PN 2178) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, providing for supplemental mathematics program for kindergarten through grade five. Directs the Department of Education (PDE) to select a mathematics program to supplement and complement school entities' existing mathematics curricula for kindergarten through grade five learners, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Outlines the qualifications that need to be met. Provides for course design goals. Prohibits PDE from charging a fee for the program. Directs PDE to establish a measurement of outcomes. Requires a report to the General Assembly. Provides definitions. Effective immediately.

**Intro Date**

08/04/2025

## Actions

07/29/2025 H - Introduced

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08/04/2025 H - Referred to - House Education

## Higher Ed Bill Actions

No Bill Actions this Week.

## Upcoming Events

No Upcoming Events this Week.

## In the News

[08/01/2025 - Commonwealth Foundation: Pennsylvania Enters Second Month of Budget Impasse](#)

[08/05/2025 - Shapiro Administration Highlights the Importance of Keeping Students Fed During Summer Months with Free, Nutritious Meals](#)

[08/06/2025 - Commonwealth Foundation: New Report Finds Pennsylvania Violating Law, Endangering Students in Dangerous Schools](#)

Education Recap is a comprehensive weekly report on legislative and executive actions on education related legislation in the Pennsylvania Capitol and is compiled and edited by PLS.

For subscription information, questions or more information contact PLS at [mypls@mypls.com](mailto:mypls@mypls.com) or 717-236-6984. Thank you, Deborah, Cheryl, Derek, Hattie, Sam, Grace, Aaron, Christian, Katie, Zoe, Daniel, Kyle, Nicholas, Dominic, Julia and Noah.

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