

October 3 – 9, 2025

Contents

Press Conferences.....	1
Committee News	8
Bullet.in.Points.....	21
Cosponsor Memos	22
Basic Ed Bill Actions	23
Higher Ed Bill Actions.....	30
Upcoming Events	32
In the News	33

SESSION STATUS

At 5:25 p.m. on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, the House stands adjourned until Monday, October 27, 2025, at 12:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

At 3:35 p.m. the Senate returned briefly and now stands in recess to the call of the President Pro Tempore.

UPCOMING SESSION DAYS

House

Oct. 27-29
Nov. 17-19
Dec. 8-10 (NV), 15-17

Senate

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.plsgovtrac.com) users. For more information, contact sales@mypls.com.

Press Conferences

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

SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS CALLS 100-DAY BUDGET IMPASSE “INEXCUSABLE”

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

Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) and other members of the Senate Democratic Caucus gathered at the Lieutenant Governor’s Balcony today to discuss the state of the budget impasse.

Sen. Costa stated the state budget is now “over 100 days late.” He explained how Pennsylvania has almost \$11 billion in surplus accounts that could be used to help balance the budget. Sen. Costa said while the issues have “narrowed,” there is still no agreement. He recalled Gov. Josh Shapiro’s initial \$51.7 billion budget proposal in February and mentioned how House Democrats passed a bipartisan measure reducing the spending by \$1 billion in [HB 1330](#). Sen. Costa explained that Senate Republicans came back with [SB 160](#), which reduced the spending number to \$47.9 billion. He said SB 160 “ignored nearly \$2 billion in mandatory spending increases related to health care contracts and the Department of Human Services.” Sen. Costa added that SB 160 would have “flat funded” basic education, special education and pre-kindergarten, as well as “every single other line item” in the budget. He criticized SB 160 for not being a “serious proposal.” Sen. Costa said, “Over the past three months, Senate Democrats, working together with our House Democratic colleagues in the superior administration, have presented multiple compromise proposals.” He said all have been rejected by Senate Republicans.

Sen. Costa accused Senate Republicans of “moving the goal post” and “spreading falsehoods” about tax increases in Gov. Shapiro’s proposed budget. He mentioned it was “absolutely untrue” and criticized Senate Republicans for wanting tax increases. “Senate Republican leadership is saying that they will pass a budget that we give them if they give us Democratic tax increases,” he said. “Resolving this budgeting capacity does not require a tax increase.” Sen. Costa mentioned Gov. Shapiro’s budget proposal cuts taxes for residents. “The purposeful lying about Democrats and what Democrats stand for is unconscionable, and there’s a reason why we are not able to get things done,” he stressed. Sen. Costa added that SB 160 would result in increased taxes due to programs being underfunded. He explained how on September 24, State Treasurer Stacy Garry “announced that she was going to save the day and effectively end this impasse by offering loans” and waiving interest. Sen. Costa noted that loans had been offered to state agencies dealing with challenges during the budget impasse. He explained how Treasurer Garry does not have the authority to loan funds during a budget impasse. Sen. Costa noted her upcoming gubernatorial campaign and highlighted the “political benefit in injecting herself into the budget conversation.” Sen. Costa explained how [SB 1040](#), granting Treasurer Garry the authority to waive interest on budgetary impasse investment loans, additionally gives her this authority for the next two years. Sen. Costa questioned, “You have to ask yourself, why is that necessary?” He continued, “It’s long past time that we get to the bargaining table and negotiate and hammer out a budget deal.”

Sen. Patty Kim (D-Dauphin) shared an interaction she had with a superintendent of a school district in her area who said they would have to “close their doors” if no budget was finalized by December 1. She emphasized how “the pain that parents and students will experience” as a result

of no budget should act as a focal pressure point in budget conversations. Sen. Kim said it was “so frustrating” to see “Senate Republicans sit there on their hands.”

Sen. Costa added that SB 1040 “cherry picks organizations and entities” to receive budgetary impasse investment loans without interest. He mentioned how school districts are not included in the legislation. Sen. Costa emphasized how “the time wasted” on SB 1040 should be used for budget discussions. He then opened the press conference to questions from the media.

Has Senate Republican leadership communicated about a budget deal from their end?

Sen. Costa replied, “They have not.” He explained how Senate Democrats have been working closely with the Shapiro administration and House Democrats.

Do you believe Senate Republicans are having an issue getting 26 votes?

Sen. Costa responded that he “clearly” believes that is an issue. “They don’t want to recognize that and want to negotiate this,” he said.

How does the federal government shutdown affect Pennsylvania districts, especially in the wake of Pennsylvania’s budget impasse?

Sen. Costa said the federal shutdown poses problems but mentioned the lack of a state budget will affect Pennsylvania residents to a larger degree.

Sen. Judy Schwank (D-Berks) added that “people are beginning to feel it,” regarding the consequences of no state budget. She mentioned reductions in service and furloughed employees as central issues state agencies are challenged with. “I don’t know when compromise became a dirty word, but the fact is, we need to get something done,” Sen. Schwank emphasized.

Do Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans feel the same sense of urgency?

Sen. Costa responded that there is a “tremendous” sense of urgency for the Senate Democrats. “We don’t sense the same urgency on the other side,” he stated. Sen. Costa stressed the importance of finalizing a state budget soon due to the “cumulative effects” of the budget impasse and federal government shutdown. He added that there have been “very infrequent meetings with all parties involved.”

Have Senate Democrats and Republicans agreed on a spending number?

Sen. Costa said there currently is not a discrepancy over the overall spending number. He reiterated that the budget proposal has reduced its spending amount by \$1 billion. Sen. Costa said they are “prepared to go further” if necessary but stated discussions are “not at the point where it needs to be.”

Would Senate Democrats consider allowing state agencies to receive interest-free loans like nonprofit organizations, as suggested in SB 1040?

Sen. Costa responded that it would be “difficult” to support that. He explained how SB 1040 “usurps” the General Assembly’s authority on appropriating funds. “We cannot have another entity like the treasurer come in at the last minute through an impasse,” he said. Sen. Costa mentioned it is “hard to mask these loans as investments.” He questioned what would happen during the 2026-2027 budget season if Garrity is given authority for this year, asking, “Is she going to step in and do it again?” Sen. Costa said he understood the challenge of agencies taking out loans to continue conducting their work. “That’s why we’re standing here today to prevent that from happening,” he stated.

What is the biggest hurdle for the budget now?

Sen. Costa responded, “It depends on the day of the week.” He mentioned how transit was an initial issue but that other problems have been “injected” into budget conversations. Sen. Costa explained how he “didn’t know” what the major issues are and said, “They keep changing.” He accused Senate Republicans of “moving goal posts.” Sen. Costa reiterated that Gov. Shapiro’s budget proposal includes no tax increases and criticized Senate Republicans for “misleading” the public.

Sen. Steven Santarsiero (D-Bucks) mentioned how “in 2009 and 2015 when we last had budget impasses” the state was dealing with “shortfalls in terms of our revenue stream.” He stated Pennsylvania currently holds about \$11 billion in surplus accounts. Sen. Santarsiero called it “inexcusable” to be without a budget on October 6. “We’re not staring at any major problem,” he said. “They need to govern if they’re in the majority.”



COLLEGE DEMOCRATS HOLD DAY OF ACTION RALLY

By Dominic Kenny, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | October 6, 2025

Pennsylvania College Democrats (PACD) called for change across the commonwealth at a press conference on the Main Capitol Steps today.

Austin Wise, president, PACD, said his organization was “sounding the alarm” on Senate Republicans. He accused them of holding the commonwealth hostage by “strangling” the budget and enabling tyranny.

Goldia Kiteck, member services and political director, Pennsylvania House Democratic Campaign Committee (HDCC), said HDCC is trying to engage young people and make sure they feel part of the legislative process and understand the issues.

Rep. Joseph Ciresi (D-Montgomery) argued that the government does not currently do a good job of supporting students and funding their education. He criticized interest rates on student loans, arguing for a 2% rate. He stressed the importance of short and concise messaging to appeal to voters. He voiced his support for funding public transportation in the upcoming budget. He said he hoped for a budget to be passed by this Wednesday.

Breanne Francis, communications director, PACD, said she relies on public transportation to pursue her education at the University of Pittsburgh. She said elected officials are letting college students down. She noted that she is currently waiting for thousands of dollars in aid from the state government so she can afford to stay at school. She argued that the issue of public transportation reaches outside of “blue cities,” affecting rural areas as well.

Rep. Tarik Khan (D-Philadelphia) criticized the Trump administration for its role in the federal government shutdown, as well as for cutting back student loan programs. He advocated for investing in public education and protecting the environment. He said Democrats need to do a better job of spreading their message and expressed hope that young people would spearhead that change. He said his father moved to the United States from Pakistan to give him a better life, expressing regret that many children currently do not have a better life than their parents did.

Rep. Paul Takac (D-Centre) said investing in public education is the best thing the commonwealth can do with its money. He criticized attempts to place caps on students, calling it “crazy.” He said many young people cannot afford to live in their hometowns due to low wages, instead flocking to big cities. He advocated for funding public transportation across all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

Rep. Dan Miller (D-Allegheny) argued that public transportation is “essential” for many in Pennsylvania. He praised the members of PACD for their interest in government. He said the future depends on young people.

Hans van Mol, president, Pennsylvania Young Democrats (PAYD), said Pennsylvanians deserve to have a government that listens and represents them. He said young people across the country have the ability to make change through voting and making their voices heard. He said he hoped that the budget would be passed soon.

Wise stressed the importance of passing the state budget, noting that many organizations and school entities are being forced to make hard decisions. He argued that Senate Republicans are choosing “partisan stunts over paychecks for working families.” He said many students may lose their campus jobs due to a lack of state funds. He discussed the upcoming Supreme Court races, urging voters to keep Justices Christine Donohue, David Wecht and Kevin Dougherty on the bench. He urged young people to stop “doomscrolling” and join PACD.



EDUCATION, ENERGY TOP ISSUES FOR REPUBLICANS IN BUDGET TALKS

By Derek Danneker, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | October 8, 2025

House Republican leadership weighed in on the state of budget talks at a press conference in the Ryan Office Building today.

Rep. Jesse Topper (R-Bedford), House minority leader, explained his caucus has worked hard to advance public policy to positively impact the commonwealth. He said the governor's proposal in February was "so out of line with the fiscal realities of this commonwealth that it has led us to this point." He stated that budget negotiations are still outside of the economic realities of Pennsylvania.

Rep. Topper commented that budgets are dependent on sustained economic growth, but the state has continued to see jobs flee Pennsylvania. He stated that the commonwealth has continued to miss opportunities to grow its energy economy because of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). "It is imperative that we bring stability to this industry, we bring certainty to the market that can grow our economy, we have to get out of RGGI once and for all," he remarked. Rep. Topper said his caucus is prepared to issue a discharge resolution to bring a vote to a Senate bill that would remove Pennsylvania from RGGI. He warned that if the state continues to lose jobs, the state will be in a deficit.

Rep. Topper said the state is tasked with providing a high-quality education to all students, but it cannot guarantee success for every student. He stated that although his caucus is prepared to provide funding to invest in students' future, they should also work to ensure the system is working. "For those students who that traditional public education doesn't work for, or maybe the school system of which they were born into doesn't allow for them to be successful, there have to be other options," he said.

Rep. Topper highlighted that divided government does not have to mean dysfunctional government. "We can set a tone in this chamber, in this state government, that can reverberate throughout America, if we put our minds to it and do it, and there are opportunities for us to do just that, but we have to be willing to have the difficult discussions," he said. Rep. Topper explained that when representatives go back to their districts, they will continue to talk about a path forward for the budget that includes economic growth and changes in the education system.

What is your caucus doing to work with Senate Republicans to finish the budget?

Rep. Topper said his caucus has been willing to work with all sides, and they have. He said they've been in constant communication with Senate Republicans. "I believe that everyone has the same goal," he said.

It looks like you are all about to drive home, and nothing has been accomplished. Why did those difficult discussions not happen?

Rep. Topper said the discussions have been happening, but they haven't produced results because not everyone has "come to the reality of what we're facing."

Where is the fault line? Can you be more specific?

Rep. Topper said that if the state continues to spend at a high level, without changes to economic policy, it will be in a deficit that will require a large tax increase. He explained that he has always maintained that government has grown too large. "What's frustrating about this moment right now is that we really have something that's out there in terms of economic growth that is so readily achievable," he said. "We can just reach out and grab it, and we can put shovels in the ground."

Gov. Josh Shapiro at the energy summit in Pittsburgh said the state needs to move forward on projects. What is not happening on the energy front?

Rep. Topper said there is an ongoing lawsuit regarding RGGI. "If you talk to people within the energy industry, they are saying that until that is resolved, they are not going to commit to the kind of investment in terms of generation builds that we need," he said. "The lawsuit is before the court, but we can take that away. The governor could get out of the lawsuit anytime he wants. That's up to him, but we still have the responsibility to pass a bill that actually takes it out of the equation for good."

How far can things go on without state funding until this becomes a real emergency?

Rep. Topper said it's an emergency for some now, and others later. "What has to drive us is, where can you get to an actual good product. The quality matters as well, and that's what's holding it up there," he said.

The House is slated to consider a budget bill today. Have you been brought into any budget conversations at this point?

Rep. Topper said, "They're not going the way they should go, is what I'll say." He added that any budget bill passed from the House is not agreed to.

Is there a magic number at this point where if you've got that spending figure, you could make a deal?

Rep. Topper said the spending must match a policy that allows for growth. I don't see any option on the table where people are talking about cutting billions of dollars so that we can make sure, in several years, we're not in deficit spending, which means there has to be policy to match to grow the economy on any number," he said.

The skill games issue is also going before the court soon. Are you concerned about the outcome there and how that might be shaping budget talks?

Rep. Topper said he wants to make sure any policy that is advanced is good for Pennsylvania. He said he has stopped guessing what the courts will decide.

The Senate will consider a bill allowing the treasurer to issue loans. What do you make of what the Democrats are saying?

Rep. Topper said the Senate Democrats could be helpful in passing a budget.



“ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE,” HOUSE DEMOCRATS SAY AS BUDGET DELAYS DRAG ON

By Julia Walters, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | October 8, 2025

House Democratic Caucus members, along with Senate Democrats, gathered in the Main Capitol Rotunda today to discuss the severity of the state budget delay.

Speaker of the House Joanna McClinton (D-Philadelphia) said, “I want to say it’s a good afternoon, but it’s 100 days since the Senate Republicans have not passed a budget.” She highlighted how rape crisis centers, county offices and senior centers have either shut down or laid off workers due to lack of state support. She highlighted how state agencies have been forced to turn people away at the “worst moments of their lives” because they do not have the resources to operate. Speaker McClinton criticized Senate Republican leadership for stating each week is “closer” to a deal but then creating more “excuses.” She stressed the House is “ready to rumble” and “always ready to compromise.” Speaker McClinton accused Senate Republicans of “trying to shut us down” and called it “absolutely unacceptable.” She accused Senate Republicans of following the lead of lawmakers in Washington, D.C., regarding the federal government shutdown. Speaker McClinton urged Senate Republicans to get serious about compromise and mentioned how they “refuse to negotiate in good faith.” Speaker McClinton added that Senate Democrats have 23 votes within their caucus to pass a budget and urged Senate Republicans to return to fiscal conversations. She stated that House Democrats have “more than 102” votes to pass a budget in their chamber and praised how “almost every bill” passed in the House is bipartisan. Speaker McClinton added that many Pennsylvanians are “wanting to give up on government” due to incompetence in passing the budget.

Rep. Jordan Harris (D-Philadelphia), chairman, House Appropriations Committee, highlighted that they are now at day 100 of a delayed budget. He outlined the timeline of events to explain why Pennsylvania is in this situation. Rep. Harris stated Gov. Josh Shapiro gave his initial budget proposal in February, followed by a few weeks of budget hearings. He added that the budget hearings give the General Assembly the opportunity to “question the administration” regarding the contents of the budget proposal. Rep. Harris recalled how the House sent the Senate their amended version of the budget bill, [HB 1330](#), on July 14. He noted the House reduced Gov. Shapiro’s original proposal by \$1 billion and emphasized the importance of compromise. Rep. Harris stated the Senate sent their version of the budget bill on August 13, which was a “copy and paste of last year’s budget.” He explained how the Senate’s budget bill would have defunded police, schools and health care services among other industries. Rep. Harris mentioned how many Pennsylvanians have seen overall cost increases in the past year. “You have an increase in your bills at home,” he said. “The same way you have an increase, so does the state.” He criticized the Senate for sending a budget that cuts funding for vital services. Rep. Harris explained how mass transit was an initial “holdup” on budget conversations and mentioned how it is now off the table because of a temporary solution. “In 18 months, we’ll be right back here in the same conversation about mass transit,” he said, reinforcing the need for a long-term solution for mass transit funding. Rep. Harris said Senate Republicans then mentioned their desire for additional funding streams. He continued and said the House passed an adult-use cannabis bill, which would have created extra revenue for the state that the Senate voted down. Rep. Harris stated they are “still waiting” for the Senate’s bill on skill game regulation. He expressed the need to be “very clear and very direct” about the severity of the budget delay. “Now here we stand 100 days with the Senate Republican shutdown,” Rep. Harris said. He accused Senate Republicans of believing “politics is more important than doing the people’s business.”

Sen. Jay Costa (D-Allegheny), Senate minority leader, denounced Senate Republicans and stated they have “no intention” of passing a budget. He criticized them for their consideration of giving State Treasurer Stacy Garrity the authority to administer interest-free loans. He mentioned the General Assembly would not need to discuss handing out loans if it passed a state budget. Sen. Costa mentioned how the Senate Republicans accuse Gov. Shapiro’s budget proposal of raising taxes for Pennsylvanians,

which he called “not true.” He added, “Senate Republicans are the only ones talking about raising taxes.” Sen. Costa described being “joined at the hip” with their House leadership counterparts and opposed the Senate for not having more urgency around budget conversations. He criticized Senate leadership for continuing to change their goals and adding conversations around the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and cuts to Medicaid. Sen. Costa said these issues should not be discussed “at this late date.” He mentioned the Senate Democrats “stand ready” with 23 votes to pass the budget. “I’m grateful that the House Democrats are going to send us a budget in [SB 160](#) to be able to allow us the opportunity to be able to vote and put pressure on our Republican colleagues,” he said.

Sen. Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia), minority chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee, called on the Senate Republicans to “fund the schools, fund human services, put the money into the community.” He continued, “This is Harrisburg, Pennsylvania — not Washington, D.C.” Sen. Hughes reiterated that the Senate Democratic Caucus has 23 votes ready to pass a budget. He accused Senate Republicans of “putting the people last for political reasons.” Sen. Hughes mentioned that Senate Republicans want to “make all the Democrats look bad” by delaying the budget. He praised Senate Democrats, House Democrats and “even House Republicans” for “putting the people first.” Sen. Hughes praised House Majority Leader Matt Bradford (D-Montgomery) for “trying to find compromise” and “trying to work this thing out.”

Rep. Bradford said the Senate is “not united.” He continued, “It is time for that chamber to be allowed to work its will.” Rep. Bradford praised the House for being “flexible” and “humble.” He said the House understands the necessity of compromise and mentioned “heartbreaking” decisions that have had to be made, including foregoing a long-term mass transit solution. Rep. Bradford criticized the Senate for their “internal dysfunctions and divisions” and inability to pass a budget with leadership. He stated he “gave them space” at the end of June when Senate Majority Leader Joe Pittman (R-Indiana) said they would not have a budget by the June 30 deadline. Rep. Bradford said he “tried to maintain a level of calm” within the House Democratic Caucus amidst the delay. He highlighted how Senate Republicans have consistently raised issues of fiscal responsibility throughout the budget process. “We are willing to compromise on every single issue, and there are 102 Democrats that will be heartbroken by almost every one of those compromises,” he said. Rep. Bradford stated he recognized that government “must be nimble” and stressed the need to “respect our democracy.” He added, “We have to work with the Senate, no matter how hard that is.” Rep. Bradford mentioned he will “no longer stay quiet.” He mentioned he initially “believed” Sen. Pittman when he said the Senate does not have 26 votes to pass a budget. “But then he must let that caucus stand aside and let that chamber do the business for him,” Rep. Bradford continued. He mentioned that the issues the General Assembly is facing are not fiscal-related or policy issues. “It’s about the politics of those who want to break down a governor that is unbelievably popular,” Rep. Bradford asserted. “It is the most cynical politics in the world.”

What compromises are House Democrats still willing to make?

Rep. Bradford mentioned the House does not want to implement school vouchers or pull out of RGGI without something to replace it. “Go talk to the leader of that caucus over there and ask if we haven’t made offers on every one of those issues,” he added. “We break hearts every day in this caucus, but we know we have divided government.”

What is the total spend number for the current budget bill, and what is in it that Senate Republicans would prefer?

Rep. Bradford replied, “We have yet to caucus, and I’m going to let us caucus before we talk about the details.” He said their budget shows a “good faith compromise.”

Why are we leaving session today when the Senate still has not agreed to the budget?

Rep. Bradford said they have been conducting conversations with chamber leaders. “We believe, even at this late hour, that hope springs eternal,” he remarked.

Why not go into a room and not leave until you come out with a budget?

Rep. Bradford responded, “We have literally done that.” He mentioned that a deal is “there” and now is the time to move forward. He added that if there were a policy issue at hand, he would let the public know about it. “We all know this is about politics, not policy,” Rep. Bradford said.

When you say “politics,” are you talking about the internal issues with the Senate Republicans, or are you talking about Treasurer Garrity?

Leader Bradford replied, “I don’t talk about Stacy Garrity.” He accused individuals “both inside this building and outside this building” who “enjoy the spectacle.” Rep. Bradford continued, “There are 23 Senate Democrats, and there are enough Senate Republicans to agree with them tomorrow to pass the budget today.”



GOV. SHAPIRO'S CALL ON SENATE TO PASS BUDGET

By Zoe Buchmann, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | October 8, 2025

Gov. Josh Shapiro provided an update on the state budget negotiations and addressed questions at a press conference in the Main Capitol today.

Gov. Shapiro commended the House of Representatives for passing a budget, [SB 160](#), that is “about \$1.2 billion less than what I proposed” and represents “real compromise on the House’s part.” He emphasized that the budget “cuts taxes, does not raise them, protects the Rainy Day Fund” and still funds key priorities like education, safety and economic opportunity. He thanked House leaders and Republicans who supported the bill, noting that it “shows what happens when people put politics aside and focus on governing.” He added that Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) has committed to providing the votes necessary to pass the bill through the Senate.

Gov. Shapiro criticized Senate Republicans for failing to act, pointing out that “when the going got tough, they took off and they went back home.” He said, “They bailed... just like they’ve been doing all summer.” He underscored that it has been 246 days since he gave his budget address, stating, “The Senate has only managed to come to work 32 times.” He described their inaction as “unbelievably disrespectful to the people of Pennsylvania,” and demanded they return to Harrisburg to finish the job.

“They get paid full-time to do one job: to pass a budget,” argued Gov. Shapiro. “It is time for the Senate to come back to work and be serious about governing.” He continued, “Either they are going to keep playing politics or they do not have their act together.” He stressed, “But either way, neither is an excuse to not come to work and do the job Pennsylvanians elected them to do.”

Can you comment on the way things have gone forward with the interpersonal meetings?

Gov. Shapiro reiterated his readiness to sign the budget, emphasizing again that he introduced it 246 days ago. He stressed that he personally cannot vote on a budget under the Pennsylvania Constitution, so it is the Senate’s responsibility to act. He criticized Senate Republicans for not passing a bill, saying the legislature must “do its job” instead of “running away when the going gets tough.” He described spending the summer mediating between the leaders of both the House and the Senate to encourage dialogue. He highlighted the House’s recently passed budget as a bill that responsibly meets the needs of Pennsylvanians and now awaits Senate action.

Lawmakers today seemed pretty agitated with budget negotiations. Where do you see negotiations going from here?

Gov. Shapiro stated that he regularly engages with the media and answers questions frequently, emphasizing his commitment to accountability. He contrasted this with the Senate Republicans’ limited media engagement, noting that while they spoke with reporters today, he would prefer they focus on completing the state budget in Harrisburg. He reiterated that the House just passed a bipartisan compromise budget, and according to Sen. Costa, Senate Democrats are prepared to provide the votes needed for passage. He added that only three additional Republican votes would be required in the Senate for the budget to move forward and ensure funding for state programs.

What are your thoughts on the fact that we have not gotten to 26 votes for anything other than a flat-funded budget?

Gov. Shapiro answered that the proposed budget is not a flat-funded or unreasonable plan, distinguishing it from the previous year’s budget. He noted that internal divisions within the Senate Republican caucus are making it difficult for their leaders to secure the 26 votes needed to pass a budget, and that the caucus leader has acknowledged lacking the votes. He emphasized that, as the majority party, it is the Senate Republicans’ responsibility to assemble the necessary votes. He added that Sens. Costa and Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia), minority chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee, have both offered to provide 23 Democratic votes, describing them as acting responsibly, while saying Senate Republicans “have to figure out their deal.”

Republicans said today that they want the state to withdraw from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), calling it a serious problem. Given that RGGI does not appear to be part of the current budget negotiations, how do you feel about that?

Gov. Shapiro responded that while he appreciates the question, he is not going to speak on the specifics and negotiations he has with individual leaders. He added that it would not help to get the process done but stressed that the Senate “getting its act together” would be.

Considering that proposals on skill games and marijuana legalization have not advanced, are you disappointed that these potential sources of revenue are not included in the budget, especially given the discussions about structural deficit?

Gov. Shapiro highlighted that Pennsylvania currently holds a \$11 billion surplus, contrasting this with neighboring states that began their budget cycles with deficits. He said he is willing to leave the Rainy Day Fund untouched and is proposing to cut taxes rather than raise them, yet the Senate still has not finalized a budget. He stated that the Senate needs to “look in the mirror” and fulfill its responsibilities, suggesting that if political gridlock continues, Senate Republicans should consider accepting Sen. Costa’s offer of

23 Democratic votes and add three Republican votes to pass the budget. He emphasized that doing so would ensure that schools, counties and nonprofits receive the funding they need.



Committee News

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

Joint Senate Education and Senate Communications & Technology Committees

10/06/2025, 10:30 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building
Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committees held a joint public hearing on artificial intelligence (AI) in education and workforce development.

Chairman Lynda Schlegel Culver (R-Northumberland), Senate Education Committee, emphasized the importance of adapting to AI, preparing students for its use and ensuring their safety. She noted hearing the testimony from a father whose son committed suicide after being influenced by an AI chatbot.

Chairman Tracy Pennycuick (R-Berks), Senate Communications and Technology Committee, emphasized the permanence of AI in society, its transformative impact and the necessity for Pennsylvania to adapt by crafting policies to make the state a leader in the AI economy.

Minority Chairman Lindsey Williams (D-Allegheny), Senate Education Committee, noted the lack of progress on student data privacy since their last joint hearing three years ago and expressed hope for productive discussions in the current meeting.

Minority Chairman Nick Miller (D-Lehigh), Senate Communications and Technology Committee, highlighted the challenges and opportunities presented by AI, including safeguarding children's access and utilizing AI to improve services and the state's economy, as demonstrated by Gov. Josh Shapiro's ChatGPT Enterprise pilot.

Lauren S. Holubec, executive director, PA Workforce Development Association, discussed the impact of AI on the workforce and education, highlighting that AI could affect up to 60% of jobs in the next decade. She emphasized the importance of preparing Pennsylvanians through training programs focusing on digital literacy, critical thinking, ethics and judgment. Holubec pointed to Carnegie Mellon University's point on AI readiness and examples of employers investing in upskilling, such as Caterpillar's \$100 million investment. She advocated for a statewide ethical framework for AI use and called for policy, funding and partnership alignment across education, workforce and industry.

Chairman Culver asked about the gaps in skills employers are seeking due to AI and how to prepare the workforce for these changes. Holubec emphasized the importance of a continuous feedback loop with employer partners to align training programs with employer expectations and technological advancements.

Chairman Williams asked about specific policy changes that could help eliminate barriers for schools and employers interested in developing AI-focused training programs, mentioning the importance of considering the ethics of AI use. Holubec reflected on how employers want more than just technical skills and connected this idea to digital literacy and ethics, arguing that adaptability and lifelong learning are essential skills. She suggested that AI should now be considered part of this "toolbox" of essential skills that support professional growth throughout a person's career.

Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill (D-York) highlighted a Pew Research report predicting job reductions due to technological advancements and questioned the state's understanding of its implications for the Pennsylvania workforce, suggesting a need for a deeper investigation to retool for the future. Holubec emphasized the importance of preparing the workforce for future success, noting the decline in population and the need to engage underrepresented groups. She suggested evaluating open occupations and population trends, involving school partners to understand future directions.

Dr. Katie Kennedy-Reilly, director of curriculum, instruction, assessment and technology, K-12, Souderton Area School District, discussed the Souderton Area School District's approach to integrating AI into education, focusing on developing foundational AI understanding, digital literacy and human-centered skills. She emphasized the importance of supporting educators and administrators through this transformation.

Dr. Michael Stauffer, executive director, Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC), shared how BCTC is preparing students for a changing workforce through AI integration, highlighting the training of staff on AI, developing custom AI tools and the need for a balanced AI policy.

Chairman Pennycuick inquired about the alignment of AI integration at BCTC with the evolving needs of industry and local employers, mentioning the collaboration with the occupational advisory committee. Stauffer discussed the misconception that AI does not impact trade-specific careers and credited the benefits of this approach to collaboration with business and industry partners. Kennedy-Reilly addressed the challenges of integrating AI into education, focusing on teacher preparation, student and family concerns and resource constraints. She stressed the importance of collaborative conversations among educators and the need for safeguards and support in a human-centered educational approach.

Chairman Williams discussed the process of evaluating contracts with private vendors for educational technology, emphasizing the importance of vetting for compliance with laws like the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the Securities Investor Protection Act (SIPA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to protect student data privacy. She highlighted the necessity of aligning potential applications with curriculum goals and ensuring terms of service and privacy policies remain appropriate. Kennedy Reilly acknowledged that the process is complicated but emphasized that the goal is to support innovation while maintaining safety and compliance with necessary rules and regulations. She noted that teachers understand the reasoning behind the system, which aims to balance progress with stability and prevent the system from becoming overwhelmed. She also highlighted the importance of being able to adapt or make changes midstream when needed. Stauffer described the process of evaluating educational tools at BCTC, noting a 60% adoption rate of AI tools by educators and emphasizing a cautious approach to AI integration, focusing on ethical use and compliance with state standards.

Sen. Dawn Keefer (R-Cumberland) discussed the challenges of protecting student data in compliance with FERPA and the possibility of reaching agreements with vendors for beneficial data sharing. Stauffer highlighted the center's strict processes for using AI tools and confidence in protecting student data. Kennedy-Reilly explained the predetermined data integration processes before agreements with vendors and the implementation of strict regulations for students' use of AI chat partners, emphasizing the importance of keeping discussions focused and protecting data. Sen. Keefer emphasized the need for balanced policy development regarding AI in education, highlighting the benefits of AI and the importance of stakeholder inclusion and data protection.

Sen. James Malone (D-Lancaster) discussed the importance of careful thought in AI application development and the significance of understanding licensing and copyright issues. Stauffer emphasized the integration of tool development into lesson plans and the importance of ethical and responsible use of AI. Kennedy-Reilly stressed the importance of educators and students understanding AI to make informed decisions and handle unexpected issues effectively.

Sen. Phillips-Hill reflected on the evolution of educational strategies, noting a shift from pride in device-to-student ratios to concerns about device use in classrooms. She asked how to balance these shifts to meet students' comprehensive needs. Kennedy-Reilly emphasized the importance of meeting students' fluid needs and the significance of this approach since the 1970s. Sen. Phillips-Hill discussed the changing educational strategies over decades and highlighted the need for balance in device use, questioning how to measure the impact of these strategies on children's education. Kennedy-Reilly highlighted the importance of evaluating educational effectiveness through the "6 Cs" and stressed using technology, such as AI, appropriately and intentionally. She highlighted the opportunity technology provides for enhancing accessibility for students.

Dr. Camille Dempsey, associate professor, director, Center for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies, PennWest University, discussed the cultural shift brought about by AI, highlighting PennWest University's initiatives in AI education and the need for shared resources and support for teacher credentialing in AI.

Fotis Sotiropoulos, executive vice president and provost, Pennsylvania State University (Penn State), emphasized the importance of integrating AI into higher education for Pennsylvania's competitiveness and workforce readiness, outlining Penn State's initiatives to embed AI across academic and administrative operations and making AI literacy a graduation requirement.

Dr. Gregor Thuswaldner, vice president for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, La Roche University, discussed La Roche University's approach to integrating AI into education, focusing on curriculum integration, campus-wide technology access, fostering a community of practice and a value-driven approach. He mentioned a partnership with Grammarly and plans to introduce a FERPA-compliant tool for AI model access.

Mark Choman, professor, Luzerne County Community College, testified about using Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Copilot at Luzerne County Community College to enhance teaching, learning and research. He emphasized the importance of dual literacies in technical and communication skills and how AI tools facilitate understanding of complex concepts and skill development.

Chairman Culver expressed concerns about ensuring students develop critical thinking, ethics and communication skills in the context of AI. She highlighted the importance of these skills and asked how to ensure the accuracy of information and safety in AI use. Thuswaldner emphasized the importance of training students in critical thinking to evaluate the reliability of AI-generated information. He stressed the necessity for students to question and research beyond a single source. Dempsey discussed the importance of critical thinking in the age of AI and shared an example from her teaching experience. She highlighted the significance of evaluating the reliability of AI-generated information and stressed the importance of educating about AI use and critical thinking. Dempsey noted her involvement with a committee on AI and called for significant investment in education about AI. Sotiropoulos emphasized the importance of recognizing the exponential growth of technology and the need to invent the future. He advised students to critically engage with AI tools and stressed the importance of AI safety. Sotiropoulos highlighted Penn State's initiatives like the Center for Socially Responsible Artificial Intelligence and underscored the need for significant investment in future AI research.

Chairman Pennycuick discussed the importance of AI safety and the legislation passed to protect children from AI-generated pornography. She asked whether students are using AI unethically and admitted to her own limitations in understanding AI's potential misuse due to her age. Dempsey emphasized the need for AI education and ethical training across all curriculum levels to prevent negative use of AI by students. She mentioned the role of regulations like the deep fakes law in Pennsylvania and stressed the importance of engaging students with AI through research and critical discussions in various classes. Thuswaldner highlighted the dangers of combining synthetic biology and AI, referencing Mustafa Suleyman's book on the risks of technologies like 3D printers creating harmful viruses. He stressed the importance of ethics in education to address the mental health crisis and loneliness among students. Sotiropoulos discussed the challenges and opportunities of AI, noting that concerns about AI and cheating were more prominent among Penn State students than issues like pornography. He emphasized the need to adapt educational methods to leverage AI tools effectively.

Chairman Williams expressed that Sotiropoulos's testimony resonated with her, highlighting the ongoing dialogue about challenges in higher education. She inquired about the reaction to La Roche University's focus on the humanities to address the need for ethical reasoning and critical analysis in response to AI. Thuswaldner discussed the integration of humanities and AI education at La Roche University, emphasizing the importance of humanities in teaching critical thinking and communication skills. He raised concerns about partnerships with large tech companies and the protection of student and educator data. Sotiropoulos agreed on the importance of humanities in education and referenced Mark Cuban's prediction about the value of philosophy degrees. He mentioned Penn State's focus on educating students to be creative problem solvers and the efforts to protect student data, including potential entrepreneurial solutions for compensating data contributions. Dempsey described how PennWest is handling a surge in partnership requests, especially related to AI opportunities. She stressed the importance of involving multiple university stakeholders, such as career services, experiential learning, internship and administration, to manage these collaborations responsibly. She stated that the top priority is protecting students, ensuring that any external offers or partnerships are vetted and routed through proper channels. She noted that demand from businesses has grown rapidly, often without the university needing to do outreach, which makes internal coordination and critical evaluation even more essential.

Sen. Keefer commented on the impact of AI on employment, emphasizing the importance of adapting to technological advancements to avoid job losses, not to AI itself, but to those proficient in using it. She compared this to the computer science era, where tasks were outsourced, underscoring the need to keep pace with technological changes. Sotiropoulos stressed the importance of integrating AI across various disciplines, aiming to equip students with the skills to use AI tools for solving complex problems rather than making everyone a computer scientist. He discussed the application of AI in agriculture to help farmers identify diseases and propose remedies, indicating a cultural shift in education supported by faculty and students. Sen. Keefer discussed the slow nature of legislation affecting the application of new technologies in education, pointing out that policies often become outdated by the time they are implemented. She argued that this delay poses a challenge for students who are unaware of what they are missing out on.

Heena Kuwayama, policy analyst, Education Commission of the States, noted that 29 states have task forces or commissions on AI, with at least 17 publishing reports or guidance. She highlighted legislation in Florida, New Jersey and Texas supporting AI implementation and training in K-12 education.

Adrienne Fisher, senior policy analyst, Education Commission of the States, discussed post-secondary and workforce development related to AI, mentioning trends from an EDUCAUSE survey that showed training for faculty and staff and making AI tools more accessible as common strategies. However, she stated concerns about cybersecurity, privacy and funding were noted. Fisher highlighted less state-level action in post-secondary education and mentioned efforts to develop AI-connected workforce pathways and new degree pathways in AI across various disciplines.

Chairman Pennycuick asked Fisher about the most promising approach to AI in education for Pennsylvania. Fisher responded that it is too early to determine the most promising approach, as many pilot programs lack sufficient progress or reports, but the Education Commission of the States is monitoring these initiatives.

Chairman Culver acknowledged ongoing concerns about AI, specifically privacy, ethics and potential bias. She asked for examples of states or school systems that are taking proactive steps to address these risks. Fisher discussed the incorporation of AI-specific protections into existing student privacy systems by some states, emphasizing the need for a solid infrastructure for integrating AI protections without naming specific states.

Sen. Malone highlighted the lack of policies prepared to address security issues, sharing an incident in his district involving the misuse of students' photos, and mentioned efforts to address this through [SB 1034](#). He asked about policies for educating teachers and mandatory reporters on basic safety. Fisher responded that she has a limited familiarity with mandatory reporting but noted that some states have enhanced their cyberbullying policies to address similar concerns and offered to investigate further. Kuwayama shared that Texas has mandated AI training for school district employees this year, integrating it into their cybersecurity requirements.

Chairman Pennycuik emphasized the importance of adapting to AI's rapid changes in education, aligning education with workforce demands, promoting innovation and establishing guardrails. She stated the insights from the discussion would guide policy considerations.

Chairman Culver emphasized prioritizing student safety and preparedness in the face of new technology.



Joint House Agriculture & Rural Affairs and House Education Committees

10/07/2025, 9:30 a.m., Room 515, Irvis Office Building

Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee held a public hearing on [HB 1768](#).

[HB 1768](#) - (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.

Chairman Eddie Pashinski (D-Luzerne), House Agriculture and Rural Affairs, opened a joint meeting to discuss HB 1768, the Keystone Fresh Act.

Rep. Danilo Burgos (D-Philadelphia), the bill's prime sponsor, explained that HB 1768 aims to increase the use of Pennsylvania-grown produce in schools. He noted that less than 2% of the over \$700 million school food budget is currently spent on local products. He detailed that the bill seeks to provide resources for schools to purchase local ingredients and support farmers in meeting school meal standards. He emphasized the importance of local food purchasing programs and expressed his eagerness to work on passing the bill.

Chairman Pashinski thanked Rep. Burgos for his work on the bill and highlighted the importance of addressing child hunger for effective learning.

Vonda Ramp, state director of child nutrition programs, Division of Food and Nutrition, Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management, Department of Education (PDE), spoke about the significance of incorporating fresh, local foods into school meals. She detailed

PDE's efforts to promote these initiatives through educational materials, resources, training and mini-grants. She discussed the federal child nutrition programs managed by her bureau, the increase in breakfast participation due to the governor's free breakfast initiative and the partnership with the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) to promote local food sourcing. She emphasized the importance of exposing students to new foods through interactive methods and invited attendees to observe culinary sessions and explore the Harvest of the Month website. She recognized the Farm to School Census conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), noting the challenges that remain with sourcing products for school nutrition operators. She urged the need for a program that is locally flexible with substantial funding to purchase and prepare local foods. She thanked Rep. Burgos for his work on this issue.

Caryn Long Earl, director, Bureau of Food Assistance, Department of Agriculture (PDA), discussed the department's efforts to strengthen local and regional food systems, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She recognized the implementation of policies like the Keystone Fresh Act to support local food systems and ensure healthy school meals. She detailed the bureau's work with regional food banks, school food authorities and local food pantries to distribute food and funding through various programs, including the USDA Foods program. She emphasized the critical role of USDA child nutrition programs in meeting the needs of vulnerable children, with over 475,000 children in Pennsylvania at risk of hunger in 2003. She highlighted the importance of ensuring children have access to healthy, nutritious foods from an early age and discussed the collaboration between PDA and other state departments to administer food assistance programs. She cited the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture and detailed the Farm to School grant program, which has allocated over \$2.8 million to 281 schools, and a training program for producers to facilitate partnerships with schools. She detailed the challenges in increasing local food sourcing in Pennsylvania schools, citing budget constraints and complex standards as barriers. She spoke about the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) programs and advocated for the Keystone Fresh Act.

Rep. John Schlegel (R-Lebanon) asked about the administrative responsibilities that increase for early care educational programs under the Keystone Fresh Act. Ramp discussed the advantages of preschools and early childhood care centers in sourcing local food through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. She noted the challenges of offering culinary training to childcare center staff.

Minority Chairman Dan Moul (R-Adams), House Agriculture and Rural Affairs, raised concerns about a bill that would give preference to socially disadvantaged groups based on various criteria, including race, color and religion. Earl stated that both departments would adhere to the directives of any enacted legislation. Ramp described Chairman Moul's point as significant and acknowledged the need for further discussions on determining socially disadvantaged groups under the bill. Chairman Moul raised concerns about how the Amish community fits into the bill, emphasizing the importance of promoting healthy eating among children and supporting agriculture. Chairman Pashinski suggested using amendments to define the bill's objectives clearly. He stressed the importance of feeding children and supporting local Pennsylvania farmers through the PA Preferred program. He expressed his willingness to work with others to ensure the bill benefits everyone.

Rep. Paul Takac (D-Centre) raised concerns about the impact of the abrupt cancellation of the \$13 million in the LFPA Program, asking about efforts to recover these funds and how schools, food banks and farmers are coping with the loss. Earl explained that the Shapiro administration has sued USDA to restore funding for the program but has not yet received a response. She highlighted the challenges faced by food banks due to federal budget cuts and the efforts of schools to provide healthy meals despite needing more support. Rep. Takac emphasized the importance of the Keystone Fresh initiative, given the federal cuts.

Rep. Barbara Gleim (R-Cumberland) inquired about the criteria for determining funding amounts within the non-uniform ranges specified in the bill, and how PDA and PDE will collaborate on these decisions. Ramp explained that grant amounts are based on school enrollment size. However, Ramp acknowledged that further discussion is needed to specify how exact funding amounts will be determined and how grant applications will establish these amounts. Rep. Gleim asked if a veteran farmer would get preference over a beginning farmer. Ramp stated that the details of whether a veteran farmer would receive higher preference over a new beginning farmer still need to be worked out.

Crystal Hampton Davis, co-owner, Davis Grown, discussed her efforts in promoting farm-to-school initiatives. She detailed her journey from concern over her child's diet to supplying local schools with fresh produce and meat. She highlighted the success of integrating ground beef into school menus through federal and Pennsylvania Farm to School grants, despite challenges like the discontinuation of the PA Beef Grant. She emphasized the positive impact on student health and lunch participation, and her efforts to educate students about agriculture.

Joseph Edmondson, culinary instructor, Columbia-Montour Area Vocational Technical School (CMAVTS), voiced his support for HB 1768, emphasizing the importance of investing in student health and supporting local farmers through school food purchases. He shared how his school benefits from local sourcing, partnering with Davis Grown for ground beef, sweet corn and fresh eggs. He discussed the financial challenges school cafeterias face. He highlighted how the Keystone Fresh Act could help schools buy local products consistently by giving them the opportunity to be more flexible in local purchases. He stated that this investment will help strengthen local economies and educational opportunities for all children.

Gage Monroe, senior in the culinary arts program, CMAVTS, shared his lifelong experience with cooking and the importance of locally sourced ingredients in culinary arts. He emphasized that local ingredients support the rural economy and local farmers, citing an increase in farm bankruptcies without local purchases. He highlighted the educational and economic benefits of incorporating locally sourced ingredients into school meals. He argued that the Keystone Fresh Act would improve student health and support Pennsylvania's agricultural economy.

Chairman Pashinski expressed admiration for the previous speakers and emphasized the importance of the PA Preferred program, which promotes Pennsylvania-grown products. He advocated for supporting local farmers to enable them to continue their work.

Chairman Moul expressed strong support for vocational-technical education and the importance of sourcing food locally for school districts across Pennsylvania. He highlighted the issue of farm bankruptcies and suggested that local sourcing could help mitigate this problem.

Rep. Christina Sappey (D-Chester) expressed her passion for education and farming. She highlighted the importance of children having access to fresh, local food for better performance in school. She inquired about the use of cold storage facilities for food used in schools, questioning whether the food goes through such facilities before reaching the school for preparation or if it is delivered directly. Edmondson explained that products from Davis Grown are received directly, while other items are acquired through a procurement process involving a partnership that consists of several school districts across the state. He stated he is unaware of whether these distributors use cold storage facilities in their supply chain. Rep. Sappey expressed concerns about the duration food items have been stored in cold storage facilities and questioned if this practice aligns with their goals. Monroe detailed that his school received 12 baskets of ears of corn from Davis Grown, which were processed and prepared for school lunches the same day. He noted they were then set in the walk-in freezers that are ready for use for school lunches.

Chairman Pashinski mentioned that cold storage is often utilized to ensure food availability when needed.

Rep. Charity Grimm-Krupa (R-Fayette) shared her personal connection to farming and expressed concerns about whether Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) and Career and Technical Institutes (CTIs) would be eligible to participate in the program. She asked if the bill's language needs adjustments for CTCs and CTIs to fully engage with the initiative. Edmondson reviewed the bill and found nothing that would exclude his CTC, explaining that his school is "comprehensive," serving students all day and participating in the National School Lunch Program, unlike other CTCs that do not serve lunch due to their part-time schedules. Rep. Grimm-Krupa asked if a CTC that is not a full-time model could supply agricultural products they produce to the home school districts. Edmondson detailed that creating a process for CTCs to supply agricultural products to home school districts is feasible, despite the limitations due to the half-time model many centers operate under. Rep. Grimm-Krupa asked about the bill's stipulation that preference be given to certain groups of farmers and ranchers, questioning whether the race of the farmer providing goods should matter to educators and consumers. Edmondson emphasized the importance of using public funds equitably to assist groups in overcoming their struggles. Rep. Grimm-Krupa questioned the relevance of a farmer's marital status or political beliefs in connecting schools with nutritious, locally grown products. She expressed concerns about potential "reverse discrimination" in the bill.

Kelly Price, director of food services, Manheim Township School District (MTSD), testified in support of the Pennsylvania Keystone Fresh Act, emphasizing the importance of connecting students to fresh, local foods through the Farm to School program. She highlighted the program's impact on student nutrition and engagement with local agriculture. She detailed initiatives like farm visits, cooking clubs and educational materials that help students understand where their food comes from. She highlighted the district's goal of serving one million meals in the district and using social media for transparency and community support. She shared experiences from farm visits and classroom activities that extend learning. She discussed the benefits and challenges of sourcing food directly from farms for school meals. She emphasized the freshness of produce and the logistical difficulties in processing large quantities, such as broccoli. She urged the Keystone Fresh Act as a potential solution to support Pennsylvania producers in meeting school district needs. She noted the broader impact of Farm to School programs on students' healthy choices and cultural diversity.

Scotty Miller, farm manager, Masonic Villages of Elizabethtown, spoke in support of HB 1768, sharing his experience as a farm manager and the importance of providing local, quality food to schools. He detailed his farm's operations and contributions to local food services, including a grant match program with the PA Beef Council. He emphasized the benefits of farm-to-school connections and advocated for this legislation to enable more schools to access local products. He highlighted the current positive impact on Pennsylvania's students and the agricultural community.

Donna Robbins, COO, MTSD, testified in support of the Pennsylvania Keystone Fresh Act, highlighting its benefits for students' health and academic success. She emphasized that the Food Service Fund is self-sufficient and separate from educational funds, ensuring no additional burden on taxpayers. She argued that the bill would support Pennsylvania farmers and the local economy while providing healthier meals for students. She detailed the limited funding of the current Pennsylvania Farm to School grant program. She discussed the legislation's role in improving local food procurement processes, including staff training and navigating

food safety requirements. She commented on the positive impact of local food procurement on her district, including student engagement and financial sustainability.

Rep. Takac asked Price to elaborate on the challenges of transitioning school cafeterias from using canned foods to processing fresh foods. He wondered about the need for capital expenditure for equipment and the availability of funds to cover the operational costs of additional manpower. Price described the operational setups of school cafeterias across five districts, noting variations in their ability to process food. She highlighted the challenges and benefits of bulk purchasing and processing fresh produce, often done manually. She noted equipment purchases for preparing items like pepper strips for fajitas, to improve efficiency.

Chairman Pashinski highlighted the importance of HB 1768, emphasizing its goal to provide nourishing food for children and the educational value of children visiting farms. He noted the possibility of amendments to the bill and encouraged suggestions and questions, stressing the importance of collaboration for effective solutions.



House Finance Committee

10/08/2025, 9:30 a.m., Room 523, Irvis Office Building

By Zoe Buchmann, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee held a public hearing on HB 1556 and HB 1900.

HB 1556 - (PN 1951) Amends the Tax Reform Code, in Pennsylvania Economic Development for a Growing Economy (PA EDGE) tax credits, providing for an advanced clean manufacturing project and further providing for definitions. Adds definitions. Establishes the qualified advanced clean manufacturing tax credit equal to 30% of the qualified production costs for the taxable year with respect to any qualified advanced clean manufacturing project of the taxpayer. Authorizes the tax credit and limits it to not exceeding \$10 million per taxable year. Requires the Secretary of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Department of Community and Economic Development and the Department of Environmental Protection, to establish a qualified advanced clean manufacturing tax credit program. Outlines application and annual cap requirements. Provides for certification, applications, period of issuance requirements and outlines criteria guidelines. Provides for carry forward, recapture and redistribution. Establishes public disclosure requirements and adds an expiration of the credits beginning after December 31, 2035, unless reauthorized by the General Assembly. Includes an advanced clean manufacturing project facility as defined in section 1790-L in the definition of “qualified project facility” and a qualified taxpayer as defined in section 1790-L in the definition of “qualified tax credit recipient.” Effective in 60 days.

HB 1990 - (PN 2405) Amends the Tax Reform Code, adding an article to provide for teacher tax credit. Provides definitions. Permits a taxpayer who is a certified teacher and incurs expenses for the purchase of classroom supplies in a taxable year to apply for a tax credit. Asserts that the tax credit shall be equal to 100% of the amount that the taxpayer spent on unreimbursed classroom supplies during the taxable year, up to a maximum of \$100. Adds that if the amount of credit that the taxpayer is eligible to receive exceeds the taxpayer’s tax liability, the Department of Revenue (DOR) shall pay the excess amount to the taxpayer. Outlines eligibility, providing for the determination of eligibility and ineligibility. Prohibits a taxpayer from carrying forward, carrying back, selling, or assigning all or a portion of a tax credit granted to the taxpayer. Permits DOR to develop written guidelines for implementation. Applies this act to taxable years commencing after Dec. 31, 2025. Effective immediately.

Rep. Nikki Rivera (D-Lancaster), the prime sponsor of HB 1900, explained that the bill would establish a \$100 state tax credit for teachers who spend their own money on classroom supplies and equipment. She noted that while the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) already provides a federal deduction for such expenses, Pennsylvania currently offers no comparable benefit. She drew on her 30-year career teaching high school Spanish, emphasizing that teachers often pay out of pocket to provide necessary materials, particularly in low-income districts where schools may lack adequate resources or climate control. She cited data from E-Learning World and explained that teachers nationwide spent an average of \$979 on classroom materials in the 2024-2025 school year, up from \$895 the previous year. With Pennsylvania’s average starting teacher salary around \$53,000 before taxes, she argued that these expenses are a significant burden. She urged the committee to advance HB 1900 to recognize and support teachers’ personal investment in their students’ success.

Chairman Steve Samuelson (D-Northampton) thanked Rep. Rivera for her work and elaborated on the difference between a tax deduction and a tax credit, noting that the federal deduction of \$300 typically saves teachers between \$36 and \$66, depending on their tax bracket, whereas Pennsylvania’s flat 3.07% tax rate would yield only about \$9.21 in savings if structured as a deduction. He explained that a \$100 state tax credit, as proposed in HB 1900, would provide teachers with a more direct financial benefit.

Nelson Suarez, 2025-2026 senior fellow, Teach Plus, supported HB 1900, explaining that teachers routinely spend their own money on supplies, decorations, books, snacks and rewards for students, often reaching the IRS deduction cap each year. He shared results from a Teach Plus survey of educators statewide showing that 88% spent more than \$100 annually, with many paying several hundred dollars out of pocket. He emphasized that this financial burden falls hardest on new teachers and those in lower-income or under-resourced districts, yet even teachers in affluent areas incur similar costs. He acknowledged that \$100 would not cover all expenses but said it would provide meaningful financial relief and recognition of teachers' contributions. He argued that the tax credit would send a "powerful message" of respect and support for educators and help sustain the teaching workforce amid low starting salaries and high student debt. Suarez thanked the committee and urged them to advance HB 1900 as "a first step" toward broader teacher support and retention efforts in Pennsylvania.

Chairman Samuelson noted that DOR prepared a fiscal note reporting that about 125,592 teachers would qualify for the proposed tax credit under HB 1900, resulting in an estimated fiscal impact of \$12.5 million. He specified that teachers who spend at least \$100 out of pocket would receive the full \$100 credit, while those spending less would receive a credit equal to their actual expenses.

Rep. Leslie Rossi (R-Westmoreland) questioned whether the traditional community-based support practices for classrooms, such as parents and families donating supplies or books from teacher "wish lists", are still being used. She recalled that when her children were in school, parents received lists of needed items like pencils, tissues and cough drops, and families were encouraged to contribute. She expressed that these older practices fostered community involvement and student responsibility, as families and children directly participated in supporting classrooms. She added that her daughter, who is also a teacher, continues to share supplies and collaborate with colleagues, demonstrating mutual support among educators. She expressed hesitation about expanding government spending to fund the proposed \$100 teacher tax credit, arguing that the existing culture of community donations and teacher cooperation may already address these needs effectively and build stronger local connections. Rep. Rivera responded that teachers are resourceful and often share materials or rely on centralized district supply systems when possible. She emphasized that these resources and donations are not always sufficient, especially when families face financial strain and cannot contribute to classroom needs. She emphasized that the proposed \$100 teacher tax credit is not a "freebie" or unnecessary government expansion but rather a form of recognition for teachers who spend their own money as a last resort to ensure students have what they need. She underscored that educators typically give far more than they receive in return, and the credit would simply acknowledge and support that ongoing personal investment in Pennsylvania's classrooms. Suarez noted that his own experience teaching in an affluent district differed greatly from that of teachers in underfunded schools across Pennsylvania. He explained that while some well-resourced districts can pool funds to purchase supplies collectively, many others cannot. This disparity, he said, was a key reason he surveyed Teach Plus fellows from diverse settings to capture a fuller picture of teacher spending across the state. He emphasized that teachers in less affluent districts often spend significant amounts of their own money simply to provide basic classroom supplies, underscoring the need for the proposed \$100 tax credit as a small but meaningful form of support.

Rep. Rossi inquired whether the issue stems from how schools allocate their existing taxpayer funding rather than a lack of resources overall. She asked if teachers are requesting additional supplies through their districts and, if so, whether those requests are being denied or unmet. Rep. Rivera responded that district budgets have strict limits, similar to the state's, and once allocations are used up, there is no flexibility to cover additional needs. She explained that while schools provide annual materials, teachers often fill gaps out of pocket, especially in lower-income communities where families cannot contribute even small amounts. She shared an example from her own experience creating a program to recycle and reuse leftover supplies at year's end. She emphasized that the proposed \$100 tax credit is meant for situations where no reimbursement is possible, noting that even basic items like tissues sometimes run out midyear with no budget left to replace them, leaving teachers to cover those costs themselves.

Rep. Rossi asked whether the books are needed for learning or are extras for libraries. Suarez answered that while he was working in an affluent district, they had organizations where parents would donate from the wish lists. Rep. Rossi questioned whether the need for out-of-pocket teacher spending applies universally across all school districts. She asked if students already have access to school libraries with books accumulated over time and whether classroom teachers could rotate or share library books instead of purchasing new ones. Suarez stated that not all districts have libraries. Rep. Rossi argued that school libraries and books should be supported by community donations, not teachers' personal funds. She suggested book drives and leveraging families' existing resources rather than expecting teachers to spend their own money or the government to provide a tax credit. She expressed concern about schools without libraries and noted that community engagement could address the issue more effectively than out-of-pocket teacher spending or state tax credits.

Rep. John Inglis (D-Allegheny) expressed support for the bill, emphasizing that teachers often spend their own money to provide students with quality educational experiences. He agreed that relying on family donations is insufficient, noting that tax dollars should ensure all schools can provide necessary resources. He thanked Rep. Rivera and expressed his intent to vote in support of teachers across the state.

Rep. Perry Stambaugh (R-Perry) acknowledged the historical and ongoing nature of teachers purchasing classroom supplies, noting that this has been a reality for decades. He expressed cautious openness to the proposed tax credit, citing the relatively low fiscal cost and the potential burden in under-resourced districts. He questioned how many teachers would actually claim the credit, suggesting many see these expenses as part of the teaching role. He recognized the issue but framed it as longstanding rather than new, with growing impact due to rising material costs.

Chairman Samuelson reiterated his support for the \$100 teacher tax credit, emphasizing its symbolic value in showing that Pennsylvania values its educators, even though federal deductions already exist. He noted that teachers frequently spend significant amounts out of pocket and highlighted examples of teachers' resourcefulness and external programs like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Lehigh Valley's Cops and Kids. He outlined the legislative process, stating the bill would be brought up at the committee meeting on Tuesday, October 28, with three weeks to propose amendments. He encouraged members to reach out to the chairs or Rep. Rivera for discussions on potential amendments.

Rep. Elizabeth Fiedler (D-Philadelphia), the prime sponsor of HB 1556, the Advanced Clean Manufacturing Tax Credit, emphasized the bill's goal of helping Pennsylvania manufacturers adapt to new technologies and remain competitive in a changing global market. She highlighted Pennsylvania's longstanding role in U.S. manufacturing, from steel mills to advanced materials labs, and pointed out current challenges such as global competition, tariffs, automation and supply chain disruptions. She discussed the growing importance of clean manufacturing technologies, including clean steel, aluminum and cement, noting that clean steel is expected to account for 35% of crude steel production by 2050. She stated that the legislation is designed to support existing Pennsylvania businesses, attract new businesses and jobs and secure a competitive advantage in upstream manufacturing markets. She expressed hope for bipartisan support and reaffirmed the goal of ensuring that Pennsylvania industry continues to thrive.

Hannah Thonet, manager, U.S. Program, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), testified on HB 1556, highlighting how the bill can encourage private investment in clean energy and industrial technologies while promoting economic growth in Pennsylvania. She emphasized the bill's potential to modernize existing facilities, support clean commodity and equipment manufacturing and create skilled jobs. She provided examples of successful projects leveraging public funds to attract multiple times the amount in private investment and noted that Pennsylvania has a strong workforce ready to support emerging industries like low-carbon iron and steel, heat pumps and grid equipment. She explained that the bill could reduce emissions and pollution while expanding production, but recommended clarifying the definitions of clean steel, aluminum, cement, and glass and ensuring renewable electricity requirements are achievable. She stated that HB 1556 represents a pragmatic, forward-looking approach to industrial policy that aligns economic growth with emissions reduction.

Joshua Ash, director and assistant clinical professor, Environmental Law & Policy Clinic, University of Pittsburgh School of Law, emphasized how the bill fosters innovation and bridges supply-demand gaps in industries like cement, aluminum, steel and glass. He explained that clean manufacturing policy acts as a catalyst rather than long-term subsidies, encouraging producers with ready technologies to scale by creating market incentives. He used cement as an example, noting the bill would support major facilities, small concrete producers, haulers, quarries, contractors and design-build firms, create jobs and encourage cleaner production methods across the economy. He described the policy as a "trellis" that supports growth, enabling self-sustaining innovation, and highlighted Pennsylvania's strategic opportunity to lead in these sectors.

Hilary Lewis, steel director, Industrious Labs, testified in support of HB 1556, emphasizing Pennsylvania's opportunity to lead in clean manufacturing. She highlighted that industrial emissions account for nearly a third of Pennsylvania's climate pollution and cause significant health and economic costs. She stressed that state-level clean manufacturing tax credits, like HB 1556, can attract private investment, create high-quality jobs and reduce pollution. She cited federal and state programs as examples of successful incentive structures, noting that even smaller programs can catalyze significant industrial investment. She recommended additional measures, including workforce development, project labor agreements, public education campaigns and clean electricity investments, to bolster the bill's effectiveness. Using the Mon Valley steel region as an example, she illustrated how transitioning to clean steel could increase employment and economic activity, reversing long-term industrial decline. Lewis urged the committee to support and strengthen HB 1556 to benefit Pennsylvania's economy, communities and environment.

Rep. Rossi asked about the difficulty in finding traditional concrete without recycled materials. She noted that contractors are resistant to using it, claiming it performs poorly and is hard to source. She added that she wanted standard concrete for a major project but almost could not find anyone willing to supply or install it, raising concerns about longevity and reliability. Ash explained that in Pennsylvania, and generally in the U.S., no one is required to use "green" or recycled concrete, especially on non-public projects. He continued that recycled materials may be added for performance or cost reasons and noted that the concrete industry is rigid due to strict standards. He argued that introducing innovations is difficult because of the complex approval processes, so changes are not made lightly. Rep. Rossi expressed skepticism about the cost competitiveness of green concrete compared to traditional concrete. She said that the push towards green alternatives is driving up costs unnecessarily and questioned the validity of claims that green concrete is economically viable. Ash stated that he would like to follow up with Rep. Rossi and continue that discussion.

Chairman Samuelson acknowledged Rep. Inglis for earlier efforts in passing the Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program, which included multiple tax incentives for clean energy and advanced manufacturing, highlighting that the EDGE package passed the House with bipartisan support. He noted that Rep. Fiedler's proposed legislation fit well within the EDGE framework, offering a tax credit of up to 30% of qualified production costs, capped at \$10 million per facility, with a total annual cap of \$50 million and an expiration in 2035. He stated that the bill defines qualified taxpayers, facilities and advanced clean manufacturing project facilities, including clean sugar, steel, aluminum, cement and glass. He asked about comparable clean energy tax incentives in other states, noting that some federal incentives from the 2022 Infrastructure Act had recently been lost, and emphasized that the committee would continue working on the bill in the following weeks. Ash noted that the discussion focused more on cement and concrete, given the industry's strong presence in the Lehigh Valley. He explained that at the federal level, several clean manufacturing and low-carbon materials programs had been developed under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and related legislation, though they were at varying stages of implementation. He said that the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program provided funding to some states, while others lost allocations. He added that Pennsylvania applied for and received funding through the Reducing Industrial Sector Emissions in Pennsylvania (RISE PA) industrial decarbonization program, one of the largest of its kind, supporting plant upgrades and decarbonization efforts. He continued that some states had adopted mandatory "Buy Clean" policies, such as Maryland's, which required state projects to use construction materials that met specific global warming potential thresholds, a regulatory "stick" rather than an incentive "carrot." He described the Low-Carbon Transportation Materials Program, which funded state departments of transportation to incorporate low-carbon materials into infrastructure projects. He stated that although funding for this program was retracted for many states, five states retained their awards and were making progress by requiring environmental product declarations and establishing qualified vendor systems.

Chairman Samuelson asked how a facility with \$33.3 million in qualified production costs could receive the maximum \$10 million tax credit. He inquired about the typical size and scale of such facilities both nationally and in Pennsylvania, noting that the discussion applied to both new facilities that could be attracted to the state and existing facilities already operating there. Ash noted that the answers to questions about facility size and costs varied by industry. He stated that for cement specifically, Pennsylvania had roughly half a dozen very large facilities, mostly in the Lehigh Valley, with one elsewhere in the state. He explained that these facilities were highly carbon-intensive and that making fundamental changes to their processes would cost many millions of dollars. He emphasized that there were fewer intensive ways to reduce emissions in cement production than more complex conversions like those for steel mills. Thonet explained that the bill, as proposed, offers multiple economic development benefits for clean tech manufacturing. She said, Pennsylvania already has available infrastructure for production, but the bill focuses on providing a tax credit for producing clean technology rather than imposing specific clean production requirements. She gave the example of Prysmian, which used \$3.8 million in federal funds and invested \$22.5 million of its own funds to double its production capacity. She said, in contrast, very large facilities like Edgar Brown or industrial-scale steel plants, which produce millions of tons of steel per year at costs around \$500 per ton, were far too large for the credit alone to make a meaningful impact. She noted that while the program might not match the scale of these major investments, it could still be paired with other incentives or expanded to support larger projects. Lewis emphasized the importance of the RISE program as a major opportunity for Pennsylvania, highlighting the significant funding available for plant upgrades across industries. She noted that while the program helps pay for expensive improvements, facilities still needed to invest their own funds to fully realize the benefits, making the "right-sizing" discussion critical. She distinguished between RISE PA, which focuses on cleaning up and improving incumbent facility processes, and the proposed bill, which could support smaller-scale improvements, new innovations or market entry. She argued that the two programs worked in complementary ways and could potentially be stacked, even though they served different purposes.

Rep. Inglis expressed support for HB 1556, noting its relevance to his district in the Mon Valley. He highlighted the inclusion of clean steel, particularly in light of U.S. Steel's acquisition by Nippon, whose plans already involved producing clean steel. He emphasized the value of supporting companies through tax credits to help implement these plans, particularly given the job creation potential and the importance of preparing for Pennsylvania's future energy needs and grid stability. He thanked Rep. Fiedler for the opportunity to serve as a co-prime sponsor and expressed interest in seeing the bill advance.

Rep. Dallas Kephart (R-Clearfield) thanked the chair for hosting the hearing and acknowledged prior experience with Professor Jamie Colburn. He expressed skepticism about government support for green energy initiatives, noting that while certain divisions of companies like Hitachi supported the bill, the overall organization included businesses that might not. He cautioned against central planning, citing examples like Solyndra and Sunnova Energy, which had received government funding and later failed. He argued that private investors, such as BlackRock, could make investment decisions without government intervention and questioned why the government continued to favor specific industries, noting that the free market had historically allocated resources effectively. He highlighted his personal connection to coal mining in Pennsylvania and suggested that minimizing government interference could benefit traditional industries like coal and steel. Ash argued against the view that incentive programs constituted central planning. He explained that programs which incrementally incentivize good behavior nudge the industry in a desired direction without picking winners and losers. He emphasized that much of America's industrial development, including sectors like automobiles, fracking and the internet, had historically relied on bipartisan government intervention to thrive. He stressed that free markets alone do not guarantee outcomes, likening markets to gardens that need tending. He noted that effective economic policy accounts for both

negative and positive externalities, businesses should bear costs for harmful impacts and receive rewards for beneficial impacts, framing programs like this bill as incentivizing positive externalities in purely economic terms.

Rep. Kephart expressed skepticism about the government's ability to determine positive and negative externalities, noting that while economists like Ronald Coase have described negative externalities, he questioned whether legislators and bureaucrats could effectively decide which actions should be treated as positive or negative in society. Ash acknowledged that there are limitations to being too prescriptive with government incentives but emphasized that the bill in question does not mandate specific actions for industries. He explained that it provided a slight nudge to encourage companies to adopt practices that could position them competitively in a global economy, where environmental performance increasingly affects market success. He noted that similar policies were already in place in other U.S. states and internationally, and argued that supporting Pennsylvania industries in a flexible, non-prescriptive way was a prudent strategy for future competitiveness.

Rep. Kephart argued that the public had rejected reliance on government "infinite wisdom" to determine what was good or bad. He cautioned against using neighboring states like New York as models and referenced population trends projected for 2030, noting that states with the highest growth, such as Florida and Texas, were conservative-led, while states like California, New York and Illinois were projected to lose population. He suggested that people were "voting with their feet" in response to policy environments and referenced the outcomes of the November 2024 elections as further context. Lewis added context on Pennsylvania's historical role as a hub for coal-based steelmaking, noting that its location between Minnesota's iron ore reserves and local coal around Pittsburgh has been advantageous. She explained that modern, clean steel facilities require different inputs and are located in other states, such as Louisiana and Texas, where new plants are being built. She argued that the legislation is important to maintain Pennsylvania's competitive edge, highlighting the state's strong workforce and other advantages and emphasized that the bill is intended not as a handout but as a way to retain a critical local industry in the face of market forces pushing the industry elsewhere.

Rep. Fiedler emphasized Pennsylvania's potential to be a leader in clean manufacturing, particularly in steel, aluminum and other advanced industries. She noted that other states, including Texas and Kentucky, are actively growing this sector and argued that Pennsylvania, with its industrial heritage, is well-positioned to compete. She framed the issue as bipartisan, focused on economic growth rather than partisanship, and expressed openness to legislative modifications, such as clawback provisions, to ensure that businesses meet expectations and taxpayer investments are used wisely. She thanked the committee and testifiers and expressed interest in collaborating on advancing the legislation.

Chairman Samuelson stated that the committee will be working on this bill over the next several weeks, allowing for input by the members. He added that they will have a meeting on October 28, where he intends to bring up HB 1900.



House Children and Youth Committee

10/08/2025, 10:00 a.m., Room B-31, Main Capitol

By Derek Danneker, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider two bills.

HB 460 - (PN 444) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, further providing for child abuse recognition and reporting training; and, in terms and courses of study, providing for child abuse awareness and prevention. Requires school entities to develop age-appropriate child abuse awareness and prevention educational materials and resources for students in kindergarten through 12th grade starting in the 2026-2027 school year. Asserts that these curriculums be modeled after a curriculum developed between the Department of Education (PDE) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) and then distributed to all public school entities and non-public school entities upon request. Directs the curriculum provided by PDE and DHS to be posted on publicly accessible websites. Provides definitions. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as committed**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

A motion to re-refer the bill with a recommendation that it be referred to the House Education Committee **failed**, on a party-line vote, with Democrats voting in the negative.

Rep. Mary Jo Daley (D-Montgomery), prime sponsor of the bill, explained her legislation would provide children with the tools to identify child sexual abuse. She reported that 15% to 25% of girls and 5% to 8% of boys experience sexual abuse by the time they reach 18. She detailed the increasing dangers of online child sexual abuse. "It is vital that sexually abused children know that

resources are available to help them deal with the trauma and to stop abuse that is currently taking place,” she said. Rep. Daley described the success of a pilot program called Safe and Healthy Communities and said her bill would expand those successes.

Minority Chairman Kate Klunk (R-York) said the bill places additional requirements on school districts and teachers, which is under the purview of the House Education Committee. She urged members to support her motion to re-refer.

Rep. John Schlegel (R-Lebanon) said he was “unconvinced” the bill is ready to move forward. He said “age appropriate” should be defined, as well as determining if training should be provided at every grade level. He suggested the pilot program should be revisited with advocacy groups and parents and examine feedback.

Chairman Klunk said the committee held a hearing on the bill, and several concerns were shared. She noted that although an amendment was suggested, an amendment is not before the committee. She highlighted that the bill will put additional burdens on teachers and administrators who feel they may not be the best deliverers of the information. She added that PDE and DHS would be hard-pressed to make changes to the curriculum in the middle of the school year. She detailed that different school districts have different populations with different religious and ethnic groups, and she urged the committee to consider allowing flexibility for teaching their children.

Chairman Jeanne McNeill (D-Lehigh) noted her childhood best friend died by suicide while still a teenager because she was sexually abused. “I feel if we had had something like this back then, it would have prevented a lot of this and possibly more suicides that have happened due to it,” she said.

Rep. Heath Boyd (D-Delaware) said she does not believe the legislature should set the curriculum, and she appreciates that the administration has professionals to do that work. She detailed how she had a sexual abuser in her family, and she was unaware for a time. She emphasized how teaching materials that would allow children to be alerted of abuse would be beneficial.

[SB 766](#) - (PN 987) Amends the Human Services Code, in departmental powers and duties as to licensing, adding Subarticle E to provide for childcare center attendance eligibility. Establishes attendance eligibility, specifying the conditions that need to be met for 55 Pa. Code Ch. 3270 (relating to childcare centers) to not apply to a part-day school-age program. Defines “part-day school-age program.” Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 823). The bill was **reported as amended**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

[A01510](#), by McNeill, adds language related to the attendance eligibility of a part-day school-age program. The amendment was **adopted**, on a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Chairman Klunk remarked that the amendment would require camps to register with the department. She explained the amendment is an additional burden and fee for camps that seek to provide options for parents and children. She added that the Pennsylvania Municipal League (PML) opposes the amendment. “This amendment adds more bureaucratic red tape to programs that don’t need it, just let kids be kids,” she said. Chairman Klunk urged the chairman to withdraw the amendment.

Rep. Boyd questioned where the bill requires a fee. Chairman Klunk said the information is available on the Department of Health’s website, and the fee is \$10. Rep. Boyd explained that many camps run into issues obtaining insurance. “I see this as an access opportunity where these kinds of pop-up opportunities can quickly become registered, rather than having to become childcare programs because they couldn’t do that, that was too expensive and they didn’t have the resources,” she said. Chairman Klunk said registration and insurance have not previously been brought up as a necessary component of the amendment.



House Appropriations Committee

10/08/2025, 1:30 p.m., Room 140, Main Capitol

By Dominic Kenny, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider several bills.

HB 1702 – (PN 2089) Amends the Liquor Code, in preliminary provisions, further providing for definitions; and, in licenses and regulations, liquor, alcohol and malt and brewed beverages, further providing for unlawful acts relative to liquor, alcohol and liquor licensees. Excludes the blending and storing overnight by a retail licensee of alcohol and liquor into a ready-to-draft pre-mixed keg cocktail from the definition of “manufacture” and adds a definition for “ready-to-draft pre-mixed keg cocktail.” Excludes the keg or any containers used in making ready-to-draft pre-mixed keg cocktails from the definition of “other similar receptacles.” Effective immediately. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

HB 1874 – (PN 2419) Amends the Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) Act, in value capture approaches, further providing for creation of value capture area and adding a section to provide for redevelopment authority use of incremental tax revenue in value capture area. Adds that the designated management entity may deposit incremental revenues in a separate tax increment fund for the benefit of a redevelopment authority and implement the TRID planning study. Provides that after the termination of the TRID, participating municipalities, school districts and the county may continue to deposit a portion of the incremental tax revenue from the value capture area into the fund for the benefit of the redevelopment authority. Directs the redevelopment authority to use the revenues within the value capture area if the designated management entity deposits incremental revenues in a separate tax increment fund for the benefit of a redevelopment authority or if participating municipalities, school districts and counties continue to deposit a portion of the incremental tax revenue from the value capture area into the separate tax increment fund for the benefit of the redevelopment authority after the termination of a TRID. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 2328). The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

HB 664 – (PN 2417) Amends the State Highway Law, in special provisions affecting local authorities, providing for Road Salt Management Best Practices Guide. Requires the creation and usage of the Road Salt Management Best Practices Guide for local jurisdictions and the commonwealth to minimize the adverse environmental impact of road salt runoff. Mandates the Department of Transportation to annually update the guide. Revises what the department may put in the guide. Defines “department,” “guide” and “road salt.” Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 671). The bill was **reported as committed**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

HB 1701 – (PN 2418) Amends the Public School Code, in grounds and buildings, further providing for referendum or public hearing required prior to construction or lease; providing for school facilities; establishing the Public School Facility Advisory Committee; in construction and renovation of buildings by school entities, repealing provisions relating to building condition assessments; and imposing duties on the Department of Education (PDE). (PN 2364) Amends the Public School Code, in grounds and buildings, further providing for referendum or public hearing required prior to construction or lease; providing an article for school facilities; establishing the Public School Facility Advisory Committee; in construction and renovation of buildings by school entities, repealing provisions relating to building condition assessments; and imposing duties on the Department of Education (PDE). Includes the addition of administrative space as a secondary building as part of the applicable aggregate building expenditure standard for the total amount calculated for each building or substantial addition. Adds article VII-A and provides several definitions, including for “athletic facility,” “facility condition assessment” and strikes the definition for “building condition assessment.” Establishes the powers and duties of PDE. Stipulates the collection of information from each public school facility. Outlines required information. Requires PDE to develop a form and electronic process for each public school entity to submit the required information no later than April 1, 2027, and for each school entity to submit the information no later than December 31, 2027. Permits the provision of technical assistance. Mandates updating inventories beginning with the 2028-2029 school year and every three years thereafter. Establishes the duties of the Public School Facility Advisory Committee. Details the committee’s member composition, striking the requirement of legislature-appointed members. Outlines the frequency of committee meetings. Asserts that the members serve without compensation but are reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Mandates the development of a statewide facility condition assessment and outlines requirements. Provides applicability of the assessment. Requires reporting and lists the required contents. Revises the executive summary requirement. Stipulates that within one year of its receipt of a facility condition assessment under section 705-A(c), each public school entity shall develop a plan for the modernization of its facilities based upon the assessment results and shall post the plan on its website. Repeals the section regarding building condition assessments. The amendment of section 701.1 of the act is effective in 60 days. The remainder of the act is effective immediately. (Prior PN: 2364, 2101). The bill was **reported as committed**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Chairman Jordan Harris (D-Philadelphia) announced that the committee would have another meeting at 3 p.m.



House Appropriations Committee

10/08/2025, 3:00 p.m., Room 140, Main Capitol

By Dominic Kenny, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider two bills.

SB 160 – (PN 529) The General Appropriation Act of 2025 provides appropriations from the General Fund for the expenses of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Departments of the commonwealth, the public debt and the public schools for the fiscal year July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and for the payment of bills incurred and remaining unpaid at the close of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025; to provide appropriations from special funds and accounts to the Executive and Judicial Departments for the fiscal year July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and for the payment of bills remaining unpaid at the close of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025; to provide for the appropriation of federal funds to the Executive and Judicial Departments for the fiscal year July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and for the payment of bills remaining unpaid at the close of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025; and to provide for the additional appropriation of federal and state funds to the Executive and Legislative Departments for the fiscal year July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, and for the payment of bills incurred and remaining unpaid at the close of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Section 8101 shall take effect immediately. The remainder of this act shall take effect July 1, 2025, or immediately, whichever is later. The bill was **reported as amended**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

A01873, by Harris, revises general appropriation amounts. The amendment was **adopted**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Rep. Charity Grim Krupa (R-Fayette) said she could not support the over 100-page-long amendment due to only receiving it less than 40 minutes before the start of the meeting. She criticized the timing of the amendment, arguing that it gave no time for public input from agencies that are “desperate” for funding.

Minority Chairman Jim Struzzi (R-Indiana) said he was glad to see the reduction of the proposed number but agreed with Rep. Krupa’s assertion that there was not enough time to digest the amendment. He said budget negotiations were “close,” stressing the importance of achieving a product that all parties can agree to.

Chairman Jordan Harris (D-Philadelphia) said the email was sent out roughly 90 minutes before the meeting began. He highlighted the fact that many teachers and direct care staff are being furloughed due to a lack of funds. He said he and Chairman Struzzi have had many good conversations. He noted that the budget proposal has decreased by over \$1 billion since the introduction by Gov. Josh Shapiro, currently sitting at \$50.25 billion. He suggested that many Republicans would still vote against the bill even if they had more time to read it.

SB 315 – (PN 249) Amends the Public School Code, in career and technical education, further providing for career and technical education equipment grants. Requires the Department of Education (PDE) to use data for the calculations under this section based on the most recent years for which data is available, as determined by PDE, and shall fix the data as of the first day of June preceding the school year in which the allocation occurs. Stipulates that if, after the data based on the first day of June is found by PDE to be incorrect, PDE shall revise the calculations accordingly. Effective immediately. The bill was **reported as amended**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

A01868, by Harris, revises general appropriation amounts. The amendment was **adopted**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Chairman Struzzi said the Republican caucus would not support the bill due to a lack of time to process it.



Bullet.in.Points

No Bullet.in.Points this week.

Cosponsor Memos

HCO2755 - Aligning the Child Labor Act with the Public School Code

Sponsor

Rep. Robert E. Merski (D)

Summary

Aligns the Child Labor Act's definition of "regular school week" with the Public School Code.

Intro Date

10/06/2025

Last Action

10/06/2025 H - Cosponsor memo filed

SCO1349 - Mental Health First Aid Student Support

Sponsor

Sen. Patty Kim (D)

Summary

Allows schools, with help from the Department of Education, to implement suicide prevention policies and training programs that increase suicide awareness and prepare an educator and staff to intervene before a student's suicide.

Intro Date

10/07/2025

Last Action

10/07/2025 S - Cosponsor memo filed

SCO1350 - Upgrading Requirements for School Security

Sponsor

Sen. Jarrett Coleman (R)

Summary

Requires school security personnel to be hired on a per building basis

Intro Date

10/07/2025

Last Action

10/07/2025 S - Cosponsor memo filed

Basic Ed Bill Actions

HB1405 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in certification of teachers, further providing for career and technical instructional certificate.

Sponsor

Rep. Brian Munroe (D)

Summary

(PN 1604) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, further providing for career and technical instructional certificate. Includes evidence that a veteran has served in the United States Armed Forces for a minimum of 8,000 hours, equivalent to four years full-time, in the occupational area to be taught, for the issuance of a career and technical instructional certificate. Defines "veteran." Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

05/05/2025

Actions

06/26/2025 S - Voted Favorably From Committee - Senate Appropriations

06/26/2025 S - Re-reported as committed - Senate Appropriations

10/07/2025 S - Laid out for discussion

10/07/2025 S - Third consideration and final passage

10/08/2025 H - Signed in House

HB1701 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in grounds and buildings, further providing for referendum or public hearing required prior to construction or lease; providing for school facilities; establishing the Public School Facility Advisory Committee; in construction and renovation of buildings by school entities, repealing provisions relating to building condition assessments; and imposing duties on the Department of Education.

Sponsor

Rep. Elizabeth Fiedler (D)

Summary

(PN 2418) Amends the Public School Code, in grounds and buildings, further providing for referendum or public hearing required prior to construction or lease; providing for school facilities; establishing the Public School Facility Advisory Committee; in construction and renovation of buildings by school entities, repealing provisions relating to building condition assessments; and imposing duties on the Department of Education (PDE). (PN 2364) Amends the Public School Code, in grounds and buildings, further providing for referendum or public hearing required prior to construction or lease; providing an article for school facilities; establishing the Public School Facility Advisory Committee; in construction and renovation of buildings by school entities, repealing provisions relating to building condition assessments; and imposing duties on the Department of Education (PDE). Includes the addition of administrative space as a secondary building as part of the applicable aggregate building expenditure standard for the total amount calculated for each building or substantial addition. Adds article VII-A and provides several definitions, including for "athletic facility," "facility condition assessment" and strikes the definition for "building condition assessment." Establishes the powers and duties of PDE. Stipulates the collection of information from each public school facility. Outlines required information. Requires PDE to develop a form and electronic process for each public school entity to submit the required information no later than April 1, 2027, and for each school entity to submit the information no later than December 31, 2027. Permits the provision of technical assistance. Mandates updating inventories beginning with the 2028-2029 school year and every three years thereafter. Establishes the duties of the Public School Facility Advisory Committee. Details the committee's member composition, striking the requirement of legislature-appointed members. Outlines the frequency of committee meetings. Asserts that the members serve without compensation but are reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Mandates the development of a statewide facility condition assessment and outlines requirements. Provides applicability of the assessment. Requires reporting and lists the required contents. Revises the executive summary requirement. Stipulates that within one year of its receipt of a facility condition assessment under section 705-A(c), each public school entity shall develop a plan for the modernization of its facilities based upon the assessment results and shall post the plan on its website. Repeals the section regarding building condition assessments. The amendment of section 701.1 of the act is effective in 60 days. The remainder of the act is effective immediately. (Prior PN: 2364, 2101)

Intro Date

07/09/2025

Actions

10/07/2025 H - Placed on HVS

10/08/2025 H - Voted Favorably From Committee - House Appropriations

10/08/2025 H - Re-reported as committed - House Appropriations

10/08/2025 H - Laid out for discussion

10/08/2025 H - Third consideration and final passage

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

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

09/16/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 10/07/2025, 9:30 AM - Public Hearing (House Agriculture and Rural Affairs), Room 515, Irvis Office Building

09/16/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 10/07/2025, 9:30 AM - Public Hearing (House Education), Room 515, Irvis Office Building

10/07/2025 H - Discussed during public hearing with House Education - House Agriculture and Rural Affairs

10/07/2025 H - Discussed during public hearing with the House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee - House Education

HB1900 - An Act amending the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971, providing for teacher tax credit.

Sponsor

Rep. Nikki Rivera (D)

Summary

(PN 2405) Amends the Tax Reform Code, adding an article to provide for teacher tax credit. Provides definitions. Permits a taxpayer who is a certified teacher and incurs expenses for the purchase of classroom supplies in a taxable year to apply for a tax credit. Asserts that the tax credit shall be equal to 100% of the amount that the taxpayer spent on unreimbursed classroom supplies during the taxable year, up to a maximum of \$100. Adds that if the amount of credit that the taxpayer is eligible to receive exceeds the taxpayer's tax liability, the Department of Revenue (DOR) shall pay the excess amount to the taxpayer. Outlines eligibility, providing for the determination of eligibility and ineligibility. Prohibits a taxpayer from carrying forward, carrying back, selling, or assigning all or a portion of a tax credit granted to the taxpayer. Permits DOR to develop written guidelines for implementation. Applies this act to taxable years commencing after Dec. 31, 2025. Effective immediately.

Intro Date

10/06/2025

Actions

10/06/2025 H - Introduced

10/06/2025 H - Referred to - House Finance

10/08/2025 H - Discussed during public hearing - House Finance

SB246 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in student supports, providing for parental and employee notification of weapon incidents.

Sponsor

Sen. Jarrett Coleman (R)

Summary

(PN 1030) Amends the Public School Code, in student supports, adding a section to provide for parental and employee notification of weapon incidents. Directs schools to notify parents, guardians and school employees of an incident involving the possession of a weapon on any school property that constitutes a violation of Section 1317.2, 18 PA.C.S. § 912 (relating to possession of weapon on school property) or locally established policies of the school's governing body relating to weapons. Stipulates that the notification be made within 24 hours of the incident. Permits schools to limit notification to parents and guardians of students enrolled in or attending, or school employees assigned to, the school building where the incident occurred. Directs the school to notify parents, guardians and school employees if the school building at which the incident occurs shares a campus with other school buildings. Provides guidelines to be followed if the incident occurs at a school-sponsored activity or on a public conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity. Prohibits notification from containing personally identifiable information about a compliant student. Provides definitions. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 199, 752, 764, 1009)

Intro Date

02/13/2025

Actions

09/23/2025 H - Removed from table

10/06/2025 S - Meeting Scheduled - 10/07/2025 - Voting Meeting (Senate Rules and Executive Nominations), Rules Committee Conference Room

10/07/2025 H - Laid out for discussion

10/07/2025 H - Third consideration and final passage

10/08/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Rules and Executive Nominations

SB315 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in career and technical education, further providing for career and technical education equipment grants.

Sponsor

Sen. Lynda Schlegel Culver (R)

Summary

(PN 1226) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, providing an assessment of basic skills; in pupils and attendance, further providing for exceptional children and education and training; in school safety and security, further providing for School Safety and Security Grant Program and providing for school safety and mental health grants for 2025-2026 school year; in Drug and alcohol Recovery High School Program, further providing for scope of program and selection of students and for enrollment of students; in charter schools, further providing for funding for cyber charter schools; in career and technical education, further providing for career and technical education equipment grants; in community colleges, further providing for financial program and reimbursement of payments; in state colleges, further providing for powers and duties of State Board of Higher Education, for definitions, for Performance-Based Funding Council and for public institution of higher education reporting, establishing the State-Related University Performance Fund and providing for Performance-Based Funding formula and for public accountability; in funding for public libraries, providing for state aid for Fiscal year 2025-2026; in reimbursement by commonwealth and between school districts, further providing for student-weighted basic education funding beginning with 2023-2024 school year, for assistance to school districts declared to be in financial recovery status or identified for financial watch status and for Ready-To-Learn Block Grant; and, in construction and renovation of buildings by school entities, further providing for applicability. Removes the requirement of a basic skills assessment for admission into a commonwealth educator preparation program or required for issuance by the Department of Education (PDE) for a certificate type or area, including an instructional, career and technical, education specialist, intern or administrative certificate. Subjects reporting of expenditures related to exceptional students to PDE guidance and lists required contents. Appropriates \$100,000,000 for school safety and mental health grants and \$27,700,000 for targeted school safety grants for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Elaborates on school safety and mental health grants and the purpose of grants for the 2025-2026 school year. Lists amounts of grants. Provides for the availability of applications. Requires random auditing and monitoring of grant recipients. Defines "school entity." Stipulates beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, a maximum of 35 students in grades 9 through 12 may be enrolled in the Recovery High School under the program at any one time. Provides for non-special education students. Elaborates on the amounts a cyber charter school shall receive for each non-special education student enrolled. Requires PDE to use data for the calculations required under this section based on the most recent years for which data is available, as determined by PDE, and shall fix the data as of the first day of June preceding the school year in which the allocation occurs. Mandates PDE to revise calculations accordingly if the data based on the first day of June is found by PDE to be incorrect. Lists how much each community college shall receive for the fiscal year 2025-2026. Provides several definitions relating to the State Board of Higher Education. Directs the Performance-Based Funding Council to oversee the funding formula by assigning performance goals and weights and make legislative recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly regarding the formula. Provides for council terms of service. Requires the General Assembly and PDE to provide administrative support. Revised powers and duties of the council. Provides for workforce outcomes. Mandates each state-related university to annually transmit data to PDE no later than February 1 of each year and PDE shall transmit data to the Council in a timely manner. Requires PDE to share data with the council and lists applicability. Explains the section's construction. Elaborates on the composition and appropriations of the State-Related University Performance Fund. Provides for the Performance-Based Funding Formula and the student-weighted count. Outlines maximum performance allocation and performance metrics and goals. Provides for other allocation calculations. Highlights the public accountability requirements. Provides for state aid for fiscal year 2025-2026. Specifies amounts and calculations for student-based allocations. Provides applicability. Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 249)

Intro Date

02/26/2025

Actions

10/08/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 10/08/2025, 3:00 PM - Voting Meeting (Second Meeting) (House Appropriations), Room 140, Main Capitol

10/08/2025 H - Voted Favorably From Committee as Amended - House Appropriations

10/08/2025 H - Re-reported as amended - House Appropriations

10/08/2025 H - Laid out for discussion

10/08/2025 H - Third consideration and final passage

SB766 - An Act amending the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the Human Services Code, in departmental powers and duties as to licensing, providing for child care center attendance eligibility; and abrogating a regulation.

Sponsor

Sen. Rosemary M. Brown (R)

Summary

(PN 1223) Amends the Human Services Code, in departmental powers and duties as to licensing, adding a subarticle to provide for child care center attendance eligibility. Establishes attendance eligibility, specifying and listing all the conditions that need to be met for 55 Pa. Code Ch. 3270 (relating to child care centers) to not apply to a part-day school-age program. Adds language related to attendance eligibility to a part-day school-age program. Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 987, 823)

Intro Date

05/22/2025

Actions

10/01/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 10/08/2025, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Children and Youth), Room B31, Main Capitol

10/08/2025 H - Voted Favorably From Committee as Amended - House Children and Youth

10/08/2025 H - Reported as amended - House Children and Youth

10/08/2025 H - First consideration

10/08/2025 H - Laid on the table

SB1026 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in Safe2Say Program, further providing for definitions and for Safe2Say Program; in postsecondary institution sexual harassment and sexual violence policy and online reporting system, further providing for definitions, for policy for postsecondary institution sexual harassment and sexual violence and for online reporting system; and making an editorial change.

Sponsor

Sen. Jay Costa (D)

Summary

(PN 1190) Amends the Public School Code, in Safe2Say Program, further providing for definitions and for Safe2Say Program; in postsecondary institution sexual harassment and sexual violence policy and online reporting system, further providing for definitions, for policy for postsecondary institution sexual harassment and sexual violence and for online reporting system; and making an editorial change. Defines "hate-based intimidation." Outlines program requirements for the Safe2Say Program and additional requirements for school entities. Provides postsecondary institution policy requirements for sexual harassment, sexual violence and hate-based intimidation. Asserts that nothing in section 2002-J prohibits postsecondary institutions from including a provision in their sexual harassment, sexual violence and hate-based intimidation policy to govern the receipt of reports. Asserts that nothing in section 2002-J may be construed to infringe an individual's protected rights or freedoms. Effective immediately.

Intro Date

10/03/2025

Actions

10/03/2025 S - Introduced

10/03/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Education

Higher Ed Bill Actions

HB1405 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in certification of teachers, further providing for career and technical instructional certificate.

Sponsor

Rep. Brian Munroe (D)

Summary

(PN 1604) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, further providing for career and technical instructional certificate. Includes evidence that a veteran has served in the United States Armed Forces for a minimum of 8,000 hours, equivalent to four years full-time, in the occupational area to be taught, for the issuance of a career and technical instructional certificate. Defines "veteran." Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

05/05/2025

Actions

06/26/2025 S - Voted Favorably From Committee - Senate Appropriations

06/26/2025 S - Re-reported as committed - Senate Appropriations

10/07/2025 S - Laid out for discussion

10/07/2025 S - Third consideration and final passage

10/08/2025 H - Signed in House

HB1831 - An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in other offenses, providing for wearing masks on public property prohibited.

Sponsor

Rep. Martina A. White (R)

Summary

(PN 2426) Amends Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses), in other offenses, providing for wearing masks on public property prohibited. Prohibits a person from wearing a mask or other device designed to conceal the person's face, voice or identity on public property. Grades the offense as a misdemeanor of the third degree and provides exceptions. Provides for the construction of the act. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

10/07/2025

Actions

10/07/2025 H - Introduced

10/08/2025 H - Referred to - House Judiciary

HB1935 - An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in assault, further providing for the offense of terroristic threats.

Sponsor

Rep. Tim Briggs (D)

Summary

(PN 2434) Amends Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses), in assault, further providing for the offense of terroristic threats. Allows the court to order restitution in the amount equal to the cost of supplies, equipment and materials, including the salary, overtime pay or other wages of affected employees and first responders. Requires the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing to provide a sentencing enhancement for courts to consider in cases of terroristic threats against a school entity or an institute of higher education. Provides definitions. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

10/08/2025

Actions

10/08/2025 H - Introduced

10/08/2025 H - Referred to - House Judiciary

SB432 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in the State System of Higher Education, providing for educational opportunities for foster and adopted children.

Sponsor

Sen. Tracy Pennycuick (R)

Summary

(PN 1209) Amends the Public School Code, in the State System of Higher Education, providing for educational opportunities for foster and adopted children. Requires an institution to provide each eligible nonresident student who enrolls full-time with a fostering independence waiver for in-person undergraduate courses beginning with the semester starting in fall 2025. Provides eligibility requirements for the fostering independence waiver, including an individual having experienced foster care at 16 years of age or older or, after attaining 16 years of age, exited foster care to adoption or permanent legal custodianship. Stipulates the fostering independence waiver shall be available for up to five years, whether or not consecutive, or until the individual reaches 26 years of age by July 1 of the upcoming academic year, whichever occurs first. Requires reporting by Dec. 31, 2028, and by Dec. 31 each year thereafter. Directs the public school system to develop uniform guidelines. Directs institutions to independently verify a nonresident student's status as a foster care eligible and monitor a fostering independence waiver recipient's eligibility and academic progress. Defines "fostering independence waiver." Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 935, 399)

Intro Date

03/17/2025

Actions

10/06/2025 S - Laid out for discussion

10/06/2025 S - Amended on third consideration

10/08/2025 S - Laid out for discussion

10/08/2025 S - Third consideration and final passage

SB998 - An Act providing for the Nurse Education Capacity Expansion Grant Program; and imposing duties on the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Sponsor

Sen. Rosemary M. Brown (R)

Summary

(PN 1216) The Nurse Education Capacity Expansion Grant Program Act provides for the Nurse Education Capacity Expansion Grant Program; and imposes duties on the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Provides definitions. Establishes the program in DCED to expand the capacity of accredited nursing education programs to increase the number of qualified students. Details grant eligibility, specifying what an eligible nursing education program shall have. Stipulates that no grant may exceed \$500,000 to any one nursing education program during the length of the program. Requires the nursing education program application to include a detailed explanation of the proposed use of the grant and lists what proposed uses may include. Directs DCED to develop a standard application for the program and publish guidelines for the administration of the program, and prioritize grant applications from eligible nursing school providers that serve underrepresented student populations and underserved communities. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

10/07/2025

Actions

10/07/2025 S - Introduced

10/07/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Institutional Sustainability and Innovation

Upcoming Events

THURSDAY – 10/16/2025

10:00 AM, Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC)

Commission Meeting, 14th Fl., Conference Rm., 333 Market St., Harrisburg

Public hearing on the following regulations: No. 3427 Environmental Quality Board #7-584: Corrections to Additional RACT Requirements for Major Sources of Nox and VOCs for the 2015 Ozone NAAQS (RACT 3); No. 3438 State Board of Pharmacy #16A-5430F: Child Abuse Reporting Requirements; No. 3383 Environmental Quality Board #7-577: Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards; No. 3388 Department of Human Services #14-544: Covered Outpatient Drugs; No. 3455 Department of Labor and Industry #12-125: Uniform Construction Code (Final-Omit); No. 3456 Environmental Quality Board #7-590: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Consistency Rule Incorporation by Reference (Final-Omit) – [Agenda](#)

In the News

[10/03/2025 - Northeast Republican Delegation: State Budget Still in Limbo](#)

[10/03/2025 - Street calls on Penn to resist Trump Attack on Academic Freedom](#)

[10/06/2025 - Auditor General DeFoor, Be Money \\$mart Partners Kick off Financial Planning Month with New Art Contest for PA Students](#)

[10/07/2025 - House Agriculture, Education committees hear testimony on Keystone Fresh Act](#)

[10/07/2025 - PASSHE Universities Increase Enrollment, Set Retention Record](#)

[10/07/2025 - Senate GOP: Joint Senate Hearing Explores Artificial Intelligence in Education and Workforce Development](#)

[10/08/2025 - Senate Democrats To Introduce Legislation Forgiving Budget Impasse-Related Loan Interest for Counties, Non-Profits, and School Districts](#)

[10/09/2025 - PA Senate Democratic Leadership Shares Statement on Latest House Budget Legislation](#)

[10/09/2025 - Senate Passes Bill to Waive Interest on Short-Term Budget Impasse Loans](#)

[10/09/2025 - IRRC: Tentative October 16, 2025 Public Meeting Agenda](#)

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.

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